

AmeriCorps Seniors Impact Study Fast Facts

Study Summary

AmeriCorps Seniors programs provide opportunities for older adult volunteers to be socially and physically active thus promoting healthy aging. This was especially important during the public health pandemic so older adults could continue to be engaged during a time when Americans were facing an increase in social isolation. To continue serving communities and engaging older adults, some AmeriCorps Seniors projects adopted new volunteer activities and strategies to deliver services to their beneficiaries while other grantees continued to operate like pre-COVID without adverse consequences to volunteer recruitment and service delivery. This study will gather information on how AmeriCorps programs adapted to serve through the pandemic and the lessons learned related to programming and operations. For example, we hope to understand innovations in programming, effective recruitment and retention strategies, what support volunteers need to continue to serve in challenging times, and the impact volunteers have on grantees meeting their goals in their communities.

Study Background/Goals

This study has four research objectives that tie directly to implications for AmeriCorps Seniors programs. These four research objectives were refined through preliminary research, and communication with a Field Working Group (FWG) comprised of grantee organizations funded by AmeriCorps Seniors across the different programs.

These objectives are to:

- Examine if the stipend supports volunteers and offsets the cost of service and what other incentives volunteers would suggest
- Examine the programmatic and service delivery changes adopted since the pandemic
- Examine the connection between these changes and volunteer/beneficiary experiences and outcomes
- Examine the effectiveness of programmatic components adopted by SDP grantees
- Examine the ways in which grantee organizations were able to serve their community and volunteers





Why is the study important?

This study builds upon existing AmeriCorps Seniors research. This program:

1. Remains a strong public health intervention that promotes healthy aging for the volunteers
 - Improves the mental health of older adult volunteers. This has particularly become of importance as the US Surgeon General has outlined the “crisis of loneliness”
2. Addressed community needs amid a national emergency
 - AmeriCorps Seniors delivered services during the Covid-19 pandemic to address older adult isolation, establishing and supporting contact tracing, vaccination sites and providing vaccine education, transportation, and registration, supporting students and families for successful transitions in returning to the classrooms)
3. Further demonstrates the effectiveness of AmeriCorps Seniors programs to policymakers, private funders, and community partners.
 - [Return On Investment \(ROI\) study](#) estimates that the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Senior Companion Program (SCP) generate an ROI of \$3.50 per funder dollar. FGP alone has an ROI of \$2.75 per funder dollar, while SCP has an ROI of \$5.08 per funder dollar.
 - FGP & SCP contributed to significant savings in healthcare expenditures and assisted living expenditure savings from their improvement in health outcomes of participants, volunteers, and caregivers.

Year 3 Activities (September 2024 – September 2025)

September 2024 – March 2025	Conduct random sampling of volunteer and SCP beneficiaries. Administer survey to selected participants.
January 2025 – June 2025	Analyze volunteer and beneficiaries survey data. Analyze SDP case studies data.
June 2025 – July 2025	Meet with technical and field working groups (TWG and FWG).
August 2025 – September 2025	Year 3 annual webinar to discuss survey findings and SDP case studies. Complete final report of findings.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



What happens if my program decides not to participate in the study?

There is an option to opt-out, AmeriCorps Seniors. AmeriCorps Seniors wants to know what challenges are preventing grantees from participating and what support can be provided to participate in the research.

Can I self-nominate my program to participate? Because we do not have the opportunity to include **ALL** the AmeriCorps Seniors programs, we have conducted a random sample. The sample selected is representative of the AmeriCorps Seniors programs and is therefore less likely to be biased.

How was my program selected to participate in the study? How are volunteers selected?

A sample of programs has been drawn from the funded and active programs in FY2023. Volunteers are randomly selected from participating programs.

What is the process for survey data collection?

JBS has contacted grantees informing them of their selection to participate in the study and shared training and technical assistance materials to help selected grantees with the entire survey administration process.

What is the survey administration process for volunteer and SCP beneficiaries?

- Grantees send JBS their initial volunteer and/or SCP beneficiary lists.
- JBS randomly selects volunteers and/or SCP beneficiaries for participation and informs grantees.
- Grantees contact selected volunteers and/or beneficiaries to discuss their participation in the study, preferred survey method (paper or online), and contact information. Grantees provide this information to JBS.
- JBS mails out paper surveys and emails online surveys to selected volunteers and/or SCP beneficiaries who agreed to participate.
- Participating volunteers and/or SCP beneficiaries complete and return their survey to JBS.
- JBS mails gift cards to volunteers and SCP beneficiaries within a week of receiving their completed survey.

JBS has emailed grantees whose stations were selected to participate in the station staff surveys. Not all programs invited to participate in the volunteer and/or SCP beneficiary surveys were selected to participate in the station survey, and not all programs invited to participate in the station survey were selected to participate in the volunteer and/or SCP beneficiary surveys.



What is the survey administration process for stations?

- JBS emails grantees a survey link to confirm their active stations and to provide staff contact information for each station.
- JBS emails station staff survey links to the station staff.
- Station staff complete an online survey.

In addition, a few of the sampled projects will be invited to participate in a 75-minute focus group.

Will I get help through this process?

All participants (grantees, volunteers, beneficiaries, station staff) can contact the JBS help desk at 800-207-0750 or Email: AmeriCorpsSeniorCOVIDStudy@jbsinternational.com. At the end of the data collection period, grantees will receive a check with \$20 for each of their selected current volunteers who returns a completed survey.

How much is the gift card amount if I participate in the study?

Type of Participant	Amount per completed response
Grantees	\$20
Current Volunteers	\$30
Former Volunteers	\$40
SCP caregivers/clients	\$30
SDP case studies	\$30

What should I do if I do not receive my gift card? JBS mails gift cards within a week of receiving the completed survey. Gift cards may take up to 5 business days to be delivered. Participants contact the JBS help desk at 800-207-0750 or Email: AmeriCorpsSeniorCOVIDStudy@jbsinternational.com with questions about their gift card.

Will there be restrictions on how grantees use the incentives received? AmeriCorps does not have any restrictions on how grantees use their incentives outside of existing operational policies and practices.

Questions/Contact

- If you have any questions about any part of this survey, you are welcome to contact Dr. Melissa Gouge, AmeriCorps Research Analyst: Phone Number 202-606-6736, Address 250 E Street SW, Washington, DC. 20024.
- For questions about the survey or this study, please contact the JBS help desk at 800-207-0750 or Email: AmeriCorpsSeniorCOVIDStudy@jbsinternational.com
Hours: Monday – Friday 10:30 AM to 6:30 PM Eastern Time (7:30 AM to 3:30 PM Pacific Time)