MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.
PREFACE

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) engages four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities each year. The Corporation supports service at the national, state, and local levels, overseeing three main initiatives:

- The Senior Corps, through which adults age fifty-five and older contribute their skills and experience through three programs: the Senior Companion Program (SCP), RSVP, and the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP);
- AmeriCorps, whose members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs and, after their service, receive education awards to help finance college or training; and
- Learn and Serve America, which helps link service and education for students from kindergarten through college.

The Handbook provides ideas and suggestions for effective practices in operating and managing many aspects of local SCP projects. It is a technical assistance document and not a compliance guide. Many of the suggestions refer to specific sections of the Federal regulations that govern the Senior Companion Program, but the Handbook does not address all issues covered in the regulations. Sponsors and project directors are required to follow the Federal regulations, published in Title 45, Chapter XXV, Section 2551, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which are included as Appendix 2. Sponsors and project directors with concerns or questions with respect to compliance should first consult the Federal regulations governing the Senior Companion Program and, if necessary, contact the appropriate Corporation State Office.

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Finding Your Way Around in This Handbook

- **Table of Contents**: By clicking on the page numbers for each Chapter or section in the Table of Contents you can go directly to the top of that section.

- **Hotlinks**: Throughout the Handbook are underlined words in blue that represent links to cross referenced material in other parts of the Handbook or to materials posted on both on the Corporation’s or other Internet websites. Click on these links to go to the referenced section or website.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS


**Adult with Special Needs** is any individual over 21 years of age who has one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and is in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living.

**Advisory Council** is a group of persons that the project sponsor formally organizes to assure community participation in the project. Projects may also use other organizational structures to achieve this goal. (See Community Advisory Group.)

**Allowable Cost** refers to a cost that conforms to any limitations or exclusions set forth in the Notices of Grant Award as well as the program regulations at 45 CFR 2551.93, which incorporate the OMB Cost Principle Circulars. The OMB Cost Principle Circulars define for all Federal grants which costs are allowable and not allowable.

**Annual Income**
- For serving volunteers annual income is the total cash and in-kind receipts from all sources over the preceding 12 months including: the applicant or enrollee’s income, and the applicant or enrollee’s spouse’s income if the spouse lives in the same residence. The value of shelter, food, and clothing, must be counted if provided at no cost by persons related to the applicant/enrollee, or spouse.
- For applicants *annual income* is projected for the following twelve months.

**Assignment** refers to the activities to be performed by a volunteer after the matching of an individual Senior Companion with an individual client by the SCP project. Assignment also refers to the action taken to designate or assign the volunteer's functions or responsibilities.

**Budget** is a financial blueprint projecting expenditures for the grant award period. It must include all costs (cash or in-kind) necessary to meet the program work plan’s goals and objectives. It will also include both Corporation funds and the sponsor’s non-Federal contribution in the budget (cash or in-kind).

**Budget Period** is the time interval for which funding for a project grant is awarded.

**Chief Executive Officer**, or CEO, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation appointed under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA), 42 U.S.C. 12501 *et seq.*

**CFR** is the abbreviation for the Code of Federal Regulations, which is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government.
Community Advisory Group is an organizational structure determined by the sponsor, termed an “advisory council” in the SCP regulations, comprised of a group of persons that the project sponsor formally organizes to secure community participation in the project.

Corporation is the Corporation for National and Community Service established under the National Community Service Act (NCSA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 1201 et seq., which administers the Senior Companion Program. The Corporation is sometimes referred to as “CNCS.”

Corporation State Office is the office of the Corporation for National and Community Service serving the state in which a project is located. It may be staffed by a State Program Director, State Program Specialists, and State Program Assistants. The Corporation State Office is a grantee’s primary point of contact with the Corporation.

Cost Reimbursements are reimbursements provided to volunteers such as stipends to cover incidental costs, meals, and transportation, to enable them to serve without cost to themselves. Also included are the costs of annual physical examinations, volunteer insurance, and recognition which are budgeted as Volunteer Expenses.

Department of Health and Human Services/Payment Management System, abbreviated as HHS/PMS, is an automated service managed by HHS. The PMS is a system that provides grant payment services which include the flow of cash and corresponding disbursement data between awarding agencies and grant recipients.

Direct Costs are costs which can be readily associated with a particular budget line item.

Director is the Director of the Senior Corps.

Disability is a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities such as: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Exceptional Needs are one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitation(s).

Excess Non-Federal is the amount of non-Federal cash and in-kind contributions generated by a sponsor in excess of the required percentage.

FAQs are Frequently Asked Questions

Field Financial Management Center (FFMC), maintains the financial, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Senior Corps. The FFMC is responsible for the receipt, approval and monitoring of all required financial documents from Senior Corps grant programs.

Handicap is a term sometimes used to describe a disability.
Hard-to-Reach individuals are those who are physically or socially isolated because of factors such as language, disability, or location.

Household refers to related or unrelated persons living under the same roof and sharing common living expenses.

Independent Living refers to a person’s capacity to function outside a residential care facility in a family or community setting.

Indian Tribal Government means any Indian Tribe, Band, Nation, or other organized group or community (including any Alaskan Native Village or Regional Village Corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act) which is recognized by the United States or the state in which it resides as eligible for special programs and services provided to Indians because of their status as Indians.

Indirect Costs are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot readily be associated with a particular budget line item. The cost of operating and maintaining facilities, depreciation, and administrative salaries are examples of the types of costs that may be treated as indirect.

Internal Controls are a process, effected by an entity’s management and other personnel, designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives in the categories of effectiveness and efficiency of operations, reliability of financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

In-Home is the non-institutional assignment of a Senior Companion in a private residence.

In-Kind Contributions refer to budgeted amounts representing the value of non-cash contributions that may be provided by (1) the sponsor; or (2) public agencies and organizations, including Native American organizations; or (3) private organizations or individuals. They represent values of real property, equipment, goods, maintenance, and services that directly benefit the project. [See 45 CFR 2541.240 for local and state governments and 45 CFR 2543.23 for institutions of higher education, hospitals and non-profit organizations.]

In-Service Training refers to group meetings scheduled for an average of four hours each month, arranged by the sponsor to provide Senior Companions with expanded knowledge about assignment-related activities, supportive services available to them and the adults served, and special-interest subjects related to the program. Volunteer stations orient the volunteer to the station and provide any in-service training necessary to enhance performance of assignments at the station.

Leave, in referring to volunteers, refers to project-approved volunteer absences, and is administered according to the sponsor's policies for Senior Companions, which may allow for accumulation of stipended leave based on hours of service. Other absences are unstipended.
**Letter of Agreement** is a written agreement between a volunteer station, the sponsor, the Senior Companion, and the adult served or the persons legally responsible for that adult. It authorizes the assignment of a Senior Companion in the client’s home, defines the Senior Companion's activities and delineates specific arrangements for supervision.

**Local Support** refers to contributions to the budget from non-Corporation cash resources, allowable in-kind contributions, or a combination of both. This may include funds from certain other Federal agencies, as permitted by law. These funds are categorized in the project budget plan as non-Federal resources.

**Long-Term Care Facility** is a facility that provides rehabilitative, restorative, and/or on-going skilled nursing care to patients or residents in need of assistance with daily living activities. Long-term care facilities include nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, inpatient behavioral health facilities, and long-term chronic care hospitals.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is a written statement prepared and signed by the Senior Companion Program sponsor and the volunteer station, which identifies project requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities.

**NCSA, or the National Community Service Act**, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq., is the act that established the Corporation for National and Community Service.

**Non-Corporation Funded SCP Volunteer** is an eligible volunteer whose stipend and other costs are supported with non-Corporation resources.

**Non-Corporation Stipended Senior Companions** are volunteers whose stipends are paid by the sponsor from funds other than those provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

**Non-Stipended Senior Companions** are persons aged 60 or older with incomes that exceed the Corporation’s eligibility guidelines who are enrolled in an SCP project and serve as Senior Companions without receiving a stipend.

**OMB** is the Office of Management and Budget, which oversees and coordinates the Administration’s procurement, financial management, information, and regulatory policies. In each of these areas, OMB’s role is to help improve administrative management, to develop better performance measures and coordinating mechanisms, and to reduce any unnecessary burdens on the public.

**Performance Measure** is the part of the PFI work plan that includes the results (accomplishments and outcomes) that a grantee selects to fulfill performance measurement requirements. A strong performance measure contains the result, indicator(s), measure(s), and target.

**Placement** is the assignment of a Senior Companion to a volunteer station in response to a request from the volunteer station.
Programming for Impact, abbreviated as PFI, is Senior Corp’s approach to developing, assessing, and reporting on outcome-based assignments that achieve measurable results in response to community needs. The five elements of PFI are community need, service activity, inputs, accomplishments, and impact or outcomes.

**Project** is the locally planned and implemented Senior Companion activity or set of activities as agreed to by the Corporation and the sponsor.

**Project Period** is the three-year period of performance of an SCP grant.

**Proprietary Health Care Facilities** are health care facilities that are privately owned and operated for profit.

**Required Non-Federal Share** is the percentage share of non-Federal cash and in-kind contributions required to be raised by the sponsor in support of the grant, including non-Corporation Federal as permitted by law, state and local governments and privately raised contributions. Also called grantee share.

**Senior Corps or National Senior Service Corps (NSSC)** is the collective name for the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Senior Companion Program (SCP), and Demonstration Programs established under Title II, Parts A, B, C, and E, of the Act.

**Service Area** is a geographically defined area in which Senior Companions are recruited, enrolled, and assigned.

**Service-learning**, in the context of Senior Corps programs, is a learning method that allows volunteers to reflect on their volunteer experiences and apply their insights.

**Service Schedule** is a written delineation of the days and times a Senior Companion serves each week.

**Sponsor** is public agency or private non-profit organization, either secular or faith-based, which is responsible for the operation of a Senior Companion project.

**Stipend** is a payment to Senior Companions to enable them to serve without cost to themselves. The amount of the stipend is determined by the Corporation and is payable in regular installments. The minimum amount of the stipend is set by law and is adjusted by the CEO from time to time. In accordance with the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, the stipend is not taxable income.


**United States** and **States** mean the several states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands.
Volunteer Assignment Plan is a written description of a Senior Companion’s assignment with a client. The plan identifies specific outcomes for the client served and the activities of the Senior Companion.

Volunteer Service Year (VSY) is a budget term which equals 1,044 hours.

Volunteer Station is a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of Senior Companions in health, education, social service or related settings such as multi-purpose centers, home health care agencies, or similar establishments. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Private homes are not volunteer stations.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook was developed for the use of sponsors of Senior Companion Program (SCP) projects, including executive directors or their designees, SCP project directors and other project staff, Community Advisory Group members, and others involved in managing local projects. It contains suggestions, ideas, and effective practices for managing and operating local projects. These suggestions are based on the experience and ideas of SCP project directors and staff of the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation).

For further guidance on fiscal, programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters, sponsors and project directors should consult the SCP regulations [45 CFR 2551], the Terms and Conditions of the sponsor’s Notice of Grant Award (NGA), or their Corporation State Office. If there is a conflict between the contents of this Handbook and the Federal regulations or the Terms and Conditions of the NGA, the regulations governing the grant or the Terms and Conditions of the NGA are the controlling authority.

2. HANDBOOK DESIGN

The Handbook is designed to provide SCP sponsors with ideas and suggestions for operating their SCP projects. Many parts of the Handbook refer to specific sections of the program regulations that govern the SCP program in 45 CFR 2551, but the Handbook in no way replaces the program regulations. Sponsors are required to follow the Federal regulations issued in the Federal Register March 24, 1999, as amended. These regulations are included as Appendix 2 of the Handbook, and references to regulations throughout the Handbook are hyperlinked to the electronic version of the Code of Federal Regulations (“eCFR”). [For more details on the CFR, see Section 7.h]. Additionally, sponsors who want to clarify official policies should refer to the Terms and Conditions listed in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) and any official policy guidance issued by the Corporation. The ideas and suggestions included in the Handbook were solicited from sponsors, project directors, and Corporation staff and reflect many years of experience. It is expected that sponsors and project directors will use these ideas to stimulate their own creative thinking and adapt the suggestions to meet their own local needs.

The Handbook is divided into numbered sections, each addressing a specific project management issue. The sections are grouped together thematically into thirteen chapters. The chapters are –

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Project Operations
3. Programming for Impact and Performance Measurement
4. Community Participation
5. Project Staff
6. Volunteer Stations
7. Senior Companion Assignments
3. THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE -- AN OVERVIEW

The Corporation for National and Community Service ("the Corporation") was created when President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Congress stated its expectations for the Corporation in this statement of its purpose (42 U.S.C. § 12501):

(1) meet the unmet human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs of the United States, without displacing existing workers;

(2) renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States;

(3) expand educational opportunity by rewarding individuals who participate in national service with an increased ability to pursue higher education or job training;

(4) encourage citizens of the United States, regardless of age, income, or disability, to engage in full-time or part-time national service;

(5) reinvent government to eliminate duplication, support locally established initiatives, require measurable goals for performance, and offer flexibility in meeting those goals;

(6) expand and strengthen existing service programs with demonstrated experience in providing structured service opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and community;
(7) build on the existing organizational service infrastructure of Federal, state, and local programs and agencies to expand full-time and part-time service opportunities for all citizens; and

(8) provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed.

To fulfill these purposes, the operations of three entities came together to form the Corporation: ACTION (the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency), which operated service programs dating back to the War on Poverty of the 1960s; the Commission on National and Community Service, which began in 1990; and the Office of National Service, a division of the White House that shepherded the new national service legislation into existence. These organizations came together as the Corporation to offer programs providing service opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds. Together they promote the ethic of service and help solve critical community problems in every state, many Indian tribes, and most territories.

The Corporation organizes its programs into three streams of service: Senior Corps, Learn and Serve America, and AmeriCorps.

SENIOR CORPS

Each year Senior Corps taps the skills, talents, and experience of nearly 500,000 persons age 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: the Senior Companion Program, the Foster Grandparent Program, and RSVP. Senior Companions help homebound seniors and other adults maintain independence in their own homes. RSVP volunteers help local police departments conduct safety patrols, participate in environmental projects, provide intensive educational services to children and adults, and respond to natural disasters, among many other activities. Foster Grandparents serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to young people with special needs. These programs use a “Programming for Impact (PFI)” approach for designing volunteer assignments to ensure that priority community needs are addressed while the lives of the volunteers are enriched. This approach allows measurement of the accomplishments and impact of volunteer efforts.

Senior Companion Program

- **Program Elements.** Since 1974, Senior Companions have provided assistance to adults with physical, emotional, or mental health limitations, most of whom are elderly. These clients have difficulties with daily living tasks and Senior Companions help them retain their dignity and independence. Senior Companions serve from 15 to 40 hours a week and receive hourly stipends. They must be 60 or older and meet established income eligibility guidelines. In addition to the stipend, they receive accident, personal liability, and excess automobile insurance coverage; assistance with the cost of transportation; an annual physical examination; recognition; and, as feasible, meals during their assignments.

- **Levels of Participation.** In fiscal year 2007, there were approximately 15,200 Senior Companions in service. Through 223 projects, Senior Companions served more than 57,000 clients.
- **Types of Service.** Among their assignments, Senior Companions help home-bound clients with chores such as light housekeeping, paying bills, buying groceries, and finding transportation to medical appointments. Senior Companions receive training in how to assist persons diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, diabetes, mental illness, etc., and when to alert doctors and family members to potential health problems.

- **Funding.** Local sponsors apply each year to CNCS for funds to operate Senior Companion projects. In fiscal year 2007 the appropriation for SCP grants was $46.5 million. Budgeted non-Federal contributions of $32 million represented a local investment of 69 cents for every Federal dollar invested, well over the 10 percent non-Federal share required in the legislation.

### Foster Grandparent Program

- **Program Elements.** Since 1965, the Foster Grandparent Program has provided valuable aid to children and youth with special and exceptional needs. Foster Grandparents serve from 15 to 40 hours a week and receive hourly stipends. Foster Grandparents must be 60 or older and meet established income eligibility guidelines. In addition to the stipend, they receive accident, personal liability, excess automobile insurance coverage; assistance with the cost of transportation; an annual physical examination; recognition; and, as feasible, meals during their assignments.

- **Levels of Participation.** In fiscal year 2007, there were nearly 30,000 Foster Grandparents serving in 341 local projects. These participants provide service to more than 240,000 children with special and exceptional needs.

- **Types of Service.** Foster Grandparents serve in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, juvenile offender facilities, Head Start centers, child care centers, and other community and home-based sites. Among their diverse assignments, Foster Grandparents help children who have been abused, neglected, or are otherwise at-risk; mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers; care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities; and teach reading to children who are falling behind their grade level. Foster Grandparents receive training related to working with children and other aspects of their service.

- **Funding.** Local sponsors apply each year to the Corporation for grants to operate Foster Grandparent Programs. In fiscal year 2007, Congress appropriated $108.6 million for Federal Foster Grandparent Program grants. Budgeted non-Federal contributions of $42.5 million represented a local investment of 39 cents for every Federal dollar invested, demonstrating the broad support that exists for the Foster Grandparent Program around the country.

### RSVP

- **Program Elements.** RSVP, one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation has matched local problems with older adults who are willing to help since 1971. RSVP projects link the skills of the volunteers with identified community needs. The volunteers determine how many hours a week they can serve. RSVP volunteers do not receive any monetary incentives or stipend, but the RSVP project may reimburse them for certain out-of-pocket costs associated with their service activities. In addition, RSVP volunteers receive
accident, personal liability, and excess automobile insurance, as well as community recognition.

- **Levels of Participation.** Each year nearly 430,000 older persons, age 55 and over, provide community service through more than 740 locally sponsored RSVP projects. The amount of service can vary from a few hours a month to almost full-time, with the average hours of service being about four hours a week. Fourteen percent of RSVP volunteers serve at least eleven hours a week.

- **Types of Service.** RSVP volunteers, who serve through nonprofit and public organizations, organize neighborhood watch programs, tutor children and teenagers, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, teach computer software applications, help people recover from natural disasters, serve as museum docents—and do whatever else their skills and interests lead them to do to meet the needs of their community.

- **Funding.** Local sponsors apply each year to the Corporation for grants to operate RSVP projects. In fiscal year 2007, Congress appropriated $56.9 million for Federal RSVP grants. Budgeted non-Federal contributions of $59.7 million represented a local investment of 1.05 cents for every Federal dollar invested in RSVP, demonstrating the broad support that exists for RSVP across the country.

For more information about Senior Corps, visit [www.seniorcorps.gov](http://www.seniorcorps.gov).

**LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA**

Learn and Serve America provides an "on-ramp" to a lifetime of civic engagement for approximately 1.4 million students each year. The program awards grants to state education agencies, schools, nonprofit groups, and institutions of higher education to engage students in service to the community as a part of their academic curriculum. This type of learning, called service-learning, increases academic achievement while developing in young people the habits of citizenship. As part of its goal of making student service and service-learning a common practice across the country, Learn and Serve America provides resources to teachers, faculty members, schools, and community groups.

For more information, visit [www.learnandserve.gov](http://www.learnandserve.gov)

**AMERICORPS**

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for 75,000 Americans each year to give intensive service to their communities and country through three programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps). AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, and build the capacity of nonprofit groups to become self-sustaining, among many other activities. In exchange for a year of full-time service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of $4,725 that can be used to pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans. Since 1994 more than 500,000 Americans have served in AmeriCorps.
The great majority of AmeriCorps members serve through AmeriCorps State and National, which operates in a decentralized manner that gives a significant amount of responsibility to states and local nonprofit groups. Roughly three-quarters of all AmeriCorps grant funding goes to Governor-appointed state service commissions, which award grants to nonprofit groups, who recruit AmeriCorps members to respond to local needs. Most of the remainder of the grant funding is distributed by the Corporation directly to multi-state and national organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, City Year, Teach for America, and the Catholic Network for Volunteer Service through a competitive grants process.

AmeriCorps VISTA members work full-time towards ultimately bringing low-income individuals and communities out of poverty through the creation, expansion, and capacity-building of programs in community organizations and public agencies.

AmeriCorps NCCC is a team-based, residential program designed specifically for young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. Approximately 1,100 members serve in AmeriCorps NCCC each year.

For more information about AmeriCorps, visit www.americorps.gov.

4. THE CORPORATION’S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Corporation’s Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive vision for the Corporation to support volunteering and service in America through three interlocking goals of:

- Meeting Critical Needs in Local Communities through Service
- Strengthening Communities to Engage Citizens Locally
- Engaging Americans in a Lifetime of Volunteering and Service

The 2006-2010 Strategic Plan identifies four strategic focus areas where our programs are already leading the way and where the Corporation intends to make an even more profound difference:

- Mobilizing More Volunteers
- Ensuring a Brighter Future for All of America’s Youth
- Engaging Students in Communities
- Harnessing Baby Boomer’s Experience

Recently, the Corporation expanded the Strategic Plan to include a fifth focus area:

- Supporting Disaster Preparedness and Response
Focus Area 1: Mobilizing More Volunteers

Throughout our history, Americans have valued service. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote over a century and a half ago, an ethic of service “...prompts [Americans] to assist one another and inclines them willingly to sacrifice a portion of their time and property to the welfare of the state.”

Today, that ethic remains strong. Across our country, Americans of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities donate their time and talents to schools, churches, hospitals, and local nonprofits to improve their communities and serve a purpose greater than themselves. According to data collected over the past 30 years by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans are volunteering at historically high rates, with 61.2 million giving their time in 2006 to help others by mentoring students, beautifying neighborhoods, restoring homes after disasters, and much, much more.

A greater percentage of American adults are volunteering today than at any other time in the past 30 years. Volunteers include late teens, Baby Boomers, and those ages 65 and older. In addition, more and more young people are becoming involved in their communities through school based service-learning and volunteering. The personal intervention of our citizens is an essential aspect of meeting the most pressing needs facing our nation: crime, gangs, poverty, disasters, illiteracy, and homelessness. It is also an important part of maintaining the health of our citizens, as research consistently shows that those who volunteer, especially those 65 years and older, lead healthier lives than those who do not engage in their communities.

Focus Area 2: Ensuring a Brighter Future for All of America’s Youth

Today’s youth face a set of daunting challenges on their way to becoming adults capable of contributing positively to their communities. In particular, youth who grow up in severely distressed communities – neighborhoods characterized by high poverty rates, high crime rates and single-parent homes – are far more likely than other youth to be at risk of school failure, unemployment, criminal or high-risk behavior, and persistent poverty.

The Corporation is dedicated to improving the lives of these and other youth by leveraging national service program resources to meet children’s most pressing academic, health-related, environmental, and social needs. In response to research that shows that one of the principal reasons why many children struggle is the absence of a consistent, reliable, and caring adult in their lives, the Corporation is focusing on increasing the number of mentors nation-wide.

The Corporation is also committed to engaging youth as contributing members of their communities through service. While America’s youth are volunteering at an unprecedented rate, recent research by the Corporation indicates that youth from disadvantaged circumstances are significantly less likely to participate in volunteer activities (43 percent to 59 percent, respectively). The research also indicates that those who do engage in volunteering and other positive activities are far more likely to be successful at school, to attend college, and to avoid risky behaviors.
Focus Area 3: Engaging Students in Communities

Student service and service-learning produces valuable benefits to local communities and enables young people from kindergarten through college to become active, contributing community members. Through thoughtfully organized service and service-learning, students develop an understanding of the importance and impact of service, strengthen their character, improve their citizenship skills, and enhance their academic performance.

College students across the nation are leading the way forward in service. Both on campuses and in surrounding communities, millions of college students are bringing both passion and skills to bear on a wide range of service activities: teaching and mentoring children from disadvantaged circumstances; improving the environment; providing health education and services; and helping their fellow Americans recover from hurricanes and other disasters.

The Corporation is making significant investments to stimulate and support student volunteering and service-learning on college campuses. Research suggests that college experience and substantial volunteering are associated with higher levels of civic engagement. When colleges and universities incorporate service to the community into academic curriculum, the relationship is even stronger.

Focus Area 4: Harnessing Baby Boomer’s Experience

America is on the verge of an unprecedented demographic revolution, with older members of the 77 million-strong Baby Boomer generation approaching age 65. Beginning in 2010, the share of the population 65 and over will climb substantially, resulting in profound implications for our society, including our social service delivery systems, our economy, and our Social Security and Medicare systems.

Engaging Baby Boomers as volunteers can be a national strategy to help defray the costs of some of these systems for the American public as well as to support nonprofit organizations in executing their missions.

Research tells us that Boomers, as a whole, will not withdraw completely from the workplace in “traditional retirement.” Instead, they will seek a balance of varied interests including work, leisure, and civic engagement. They bring the advantage of experience and education, and are motivated to make a difference. But they also bring different aspirations for and expectations from their volunteer experiences than members of prior generations, choosing more flexible, high impact volunteer activities. If we want to leverage this asset, we must educate and support charitable organizations in offering opportunities that meet Boomers expectations and captures their skills.

The Corporation seeks to provide Baby Boomers and other older persons with valuable volunteering opportunities that draw upon their talents, education, and experience. The Corporation’s programs are well-positioned to help community organizations attract and retain Boomers with the kind of flexible, high-impact service that they seek.
**Independent Living for Seniors.** A particular focus of the Corporation’s Baby Boomer initiative is to increase the number of frail elderly and people with disabilities receiving assistance from the community to live independently. The Corporation’s investment in Baby Boomers’ service capacity represents an investment in our nation’s future that could save society millions of dollars by reducing the need for expensive professional in-home care or nursing home care. This investment has an added benefit in that older people who receive assistance report lower rates of depression and better ability to function. Moreover, family and other informal caregivers receive the respite they require in order to continue to play a critical role in supplying the bulk of our nation’s long-term care. Civic engagement by older adults has added benefits: those who volunteer are more connected with the community, which contributes to the health of the community. Those who volunteer also remain more active, are healthier, and have a more optimistic outlook than those who are not engaged—which contributes to their individual health and may allow individuals to maintain their own independence as they grow older.

**Focus Area 5: Supporting Disaster Preparedness and Response**

Disasters strike throughout the United States each year, bringing massive property destruction and disrupting millions of lives. The hurricanes of 2005 flooded almost 80 percent of New Orleans and washed away many towns along the coast, leaving hundreds of thousands of Americans without homes. Tornadoes swept through Greensburg, Kansas, in destroying 95% of all structures in the community. Widespread wildfires threatened communities across the country last spring and continue to burn in many drought-stricken areas. Flooding is a constant hazard in hundreds of communities throughout the United States.

While Corporation programs have always supported disaster preparedness and response efforts, they have played a much broader and more extensive role in recent years. This experience demonstrated that national service participants can provide a wide range of preparedness and response roles—management and coordination of volunteers and resources, training and development of coordinated response plans, and providing direct service to affected communities. Under the current National Response Plan (NRP), the Corporation provides:

- Trained volunteer and donations management staff;
- Teams of trained volunteers to assist in response for mass care, housing and human services emergency support; and
- Teams to assist with disadvantaged populations (including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income communities).

To help meet these responsibilities and better position the Corporation to provide leadership to volunteer management and preparedness efforts, in June 2007 the Corporation’s Board of Directors designated disaster preparedness and response as an agency strategic initiative. While the initiative is still under development, the intent is to build national, state, and local response capacity to use volunteers and plan effectively to provide volunteer support when, where, and how it is needed.
The Corporation seeks to ensure effective community preparedness through coordinated planning and effective response from immediately prior to a disaster through the ongoing support necessary to rebuild affected communities, including their civic, nonprofit, and volunteer infrastructure.

5. RESOURCES OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE


The OIG is an independent and objective office established to help improve the Corporation's programs and operations, including the Senior Corps. It has the responsibility of keeping the Corporation’s CEO and the Congress informed about any problems and deficiencies relating to the Corporation’s programs and operations. The OIG carries out this role by conducting and supervising audits and investigations that promote economy and efficiency, as well as prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in the Corporation's programs. The OIG also coordinates the Corporation's relationship on these types of matters with other organizations, including Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

When to Contact the OIG: The OIG should be promptly contacted whenever information is discovered that indicates that there has been waste, fraud, abuse, or any violation of criminal law at a program or at a sub-recipient.

b. Office of Public Affairs

(1) Major Functions

The Office of Public Affairs coordinates communications efforts for the Corporation and its programs. The staff works closely with other offices and departments to enhance and support efforts to reach out to external audiences. The staff is organized into three teams:

Media Relations. Public Affairs plans and executes strategic media relations and message management for the Corporation, its programs, the CEO, and the Board of Directors; acts as its official spokespersons; writes speeches and op-eds to promote
national service accomplishments; conducts media training sessions for national service
staff and participants; and advises programs on local media relations.

Recruitment-Marketing. Public Affairs plans and executes multi-media marketing
efforts for national service programs to support local and national recruitment efforts;
produces recruitment materials to reach target audiences; and maintains and promotes
the national service web site, www.nationalservice.gov, as a
communication vehicle with programs, potential members, the media, and
interested citizens.

Publications. Public Affairs establishes and executes national service publishing
priorities, sets and enforces editorial and design standards for print materials, develops materials to meet the information and
training needs of programs, and oversees the writing, design and production of
publications.

(2) Corporation Websites

The Office of Public Affairs, with support from other departments, maintains a family
of four websites – NationalService.gov, SeniorCorps.gov, AmeriCorps.gov, and
LearnAndServe.gov – with a common look and set of contents. The sites are designed
to help customers, including program grantees and other stakeholders, get the
information they need as easily and quickly as possible so they can focus their energies
on serving community needs.

These sites recognize the power of the national service network through stories from
service participants, news from the field, and program spotlights and best practices.
Other features include:

- Search function across all sites
- Phone directory of Corporation staff
- Stories of service
- News from the field
- Photo library
- Best practices
- Program spotlights
- Interactive guides for finding the "Right Program" (for organizations and individuals)
- Service calendar
- Forms library
- FAQs
Finding what you need on the websites:

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions from organizations working with or seeking to work with Senior Corps, with links to their answers at SeniorCorps.gov:

- Where do I find out about Senior Corps funding opportunities?
- How do I submit a grant application?
- Help, I’m having trouble using eGrants. Who can I contact for help?
- Where can I find training and technical assistance information?
- I’m a faith-based organization. Am I eligible to apply for a Senior Corps grant?
- I’m interested in promoting your programs to my organization’s constituents. Where can I order brochures or other promotional materials?
- Do you have any national conferences or trainings?
- How do I find Senior Corps programs in my own community?
- I’m a grantee and am looking for Senior Corps photos to use in our brochures. Where can I find them?

To find answers to other questions and locate resource documents, here are four options:

- **Browsing**: Depending on what kind of information you are looking for, you can click on “About Us,” “For Organizations,” “For Individuals” or “Our Programs” and browse through the various menus for what you are looking for.

- **Search Engine**: The websites have a powerful search engine which will show results for your search terms in three ways: from the website where you were when you requested the search, from CNCS’s Newsroom, and from all four CNCS websites (MEGA Search).

- **Site Map**: Click on the “Site Map” link at the bottom of each web page, to see how each website is organized. Then click on the respective link to visit the section of interest.

- **Site Index**: At the bottom of each web page is a link to a “Site Index” listing all the major topics at that site, with links to each of them.

c. Office of Corporate Relations

The Office of Corporate Relations develops and manages partnerships and alliances that strengthen the impact and broaden the reach of national service. It is authorized to solicit and accept private donations which support Corporation programs and initiatives. Additionally, the Office of Corporate Relations takes the lead in producing many events connected to the agency’s signature projects such as the National Conference on Volunteering and Service and AmeriCorps Week.
(1) National Partnerships

(a) National and Community Service Initiatives

The Corporation encourages participation in community-wide service activities. The Office of Corporate Relations, in consort with the Office of Public Affairs, works with Corporation programs to support both our signature projects such as MLK Day of Service and AmeriCorps Week, as well as other national service initiatives like National Volunteer Week and Make a Difference Day. These annual national service activities provide opportunities to reach out to both traditional service partners and grantees and organizations with which projects might like to form new partnerships.

- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** is a day of service that reflects Dr. King's life and teaching—bringing people together around a common bond of service to others. Responding to a 1994 Congressional charge, the Corporation engages Americans across the country to celebrate the King holiday in a way that reflects his proposition that “everybody can be great because everybody can serve,” making it a day on, not a day off, a day of action, not apathy, a day of responding to community needs, not a day of rest and recreation. The Corporation provides grants to support service projects that reflect Dr. King's life and teaching.

- **AmeriCorps Week** is an annual recognition week designed to bring more Americans into service, thank AmeriCorps members and alumni for their powerful impact, and thank the community partners that help to make service possible. In 2007, AmeriCorps celebrated its 500,000th member. AmeriCorps Week is an ideal time to promote the depth and breadth of the national service family.

- **National Volunteer Week, Global Youth Service Day**. Held the third week of April, National Volunteer Week is generally book-ended by Earth Day and National Parks Day. Global Youth Service Day, coordinated by *Youth Service America*, is the annual global event that highlights and celebrates the contributions of youth to their communities through volunteer service.

- **USA Weekend's Make a Difference Day** is held each year on the fourth Saturday in October. National service participants have found this a wonderful opportunity to show their organizational strength by leading community service projects on this day, positioning their program as a community resource getting things done. Additionally, many have found this a natural time to kick off their year of service.

Additionally, the Corporation from time to time calls attention to other opportunities for the national service network to partner with other nonprofits, government agencies, businesses, educational institutions, foundations, and faith-
based organizations in addressing important national goals. Recent examples include mobilizing support for the victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005 and the Mentoring Children of Prisoners initiative.

(b) Corporation Support of Partnerships

- **Outreach and education programs to businesses and foundations**: Building awareness of Corporation programs and offering support to potential funders who express an interest in investing. For example, the Corporation works closely with Connect America, a network of diverse national organizations (businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies) working together to leverage volunteering and other resources to increase individual and collective impact on communities. This is a national movement that will enhance the way organizations address community needs. The Council on Foundations has produced a variety of publications for their members to encourage investment in high quality programs. Public Affairs also makes presentations, writes articles for publication, and encourages and offers the Corporation’s expertise to business groups and organizations that are seeking new ways to support community service initiatives.

- **Model national partnerships**: Reaching out to national companies and foundations on behalf of local programs. For instance, The Best Buy/Best Buy Children’s Foundation has been a supporter of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service since 2002. The funds that Best Buy donates are used to encourage, educate, and mobilize students in kindergarten through high school as part of the Learn and Serve America program.

Hundreds of companies and nonprofits have made commitments to national programs supporting local initiatives, such as America's Promise Alliance, Amachi, City Year, and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

d. Training and Technical Assistance

The Corporation, through its Office of Leadership Development and Training (OLDT), contracts to provide training and technical assistance for leaders in the national and community service network, including Senior Corps project directors and other sponsor staff. Training topics include: Resource and funds development, performance measurement and evaluation, financial and grants management, disability inclusion, and homeland security.

**National Conference on Volunteering and Community Service.** This annual event, sponsored by the Corporation and the Points of Light & Hands On Network, is the premier training event for volunteer management, community volunteering, and national service leaders in non-profit organizations, businesses, government agencies, and volunteer centers.

**The Resource Center.** The Resource Center at www.nationalservice.gov/resources is a “one-stop shopping” site for tools, training, and information about volunteering and national
service. The Resource Center provides quick and easy access to training and technical assistance resources for national service programs. All Corporation-funded programs benefit from the Resource Center’s services free of charge.

Following is a summary of available features at The Resource Center:

**One Search Engine, Many Databases**
Search on a topic throughout the entire website, or narrow your search to a particular kind of resource – such as online documents, sample forms, lending library, effective practices, links to other sites, calendar events, as well as the Senior Corps Tech Center and the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

**My Improvement Plan**
Get the best resources available to meet your specific needs with My Improvement Plan. Experts in the field developed this new way of connecting your program to training and technical assistance. Identify, store, and track the resources you most need to improve your program. Resources are organized into 10 key component areas: the Building Blocks for Effective Service and Volunteer Programs, which include topics such as Board and Advisory Leadership, and Volunteer Management.

**Effective Practices—Build Better Programs**
Learn how programs solve the same problems you face. Find effective practices in education, environment, human needs, program management, public safety, and volunteer management. Discover good ideas, implemented and widely replicated processes, and studied findings.

**The Online Learning Center**
Learn how to improve your program online! At the Online Learning Center, find online courses created specifically for service and volunteer programs, covering topics from financial management to tutor training to technology, with many more topics added on a regular basis.

**Training and Technical Providers Listing**
The Corporation for National and Community Service has selected and funded a number of expert organizations to provide national service grantees and potential partners with tools, training, and information on a variety of topics. The services of these training and technical assistance providers range from assistance by phone and e-mail to onsite training and statewide training events.

**Senior Corps Tech Center**
The Tech Center offers basic advice related to many common technology challenges -- such as how to use the World Wide Web, e-mail and e-mail discussion lists; choosing hardware and software; backing-up and protecting data from viruses; working with PDFs; and initiating a technology plan. The Tech Center also provides personal support. For more complex problems, the Tech Center offers reference and referral services. It also has a lending library of resources to help Senior Corps projects use technology to improve programs and services. Senior Corps project staff who need help with technology-related
questions or problems can call a toll-free number, 1-800-277-7811, or e-mail to srtech-help@etr.org. The Center’s website is www.seniortechcenter.org.

e. Corporation Support for Baby Boomer Volunteer Recruitment: The “Get Involved” Campaign

The Corporation launched a national awareness recruitment campaign in December 2005 called “Get Involved,” aimed at the nation’s 77 million baby boomers. In collaboration with America’s nonprofit community and private-sector organizations that share a commitment to civic responsibility, the campaign features bilingual newspaper, magazine, radio and television public service announcements (PSAs). Through the PSAs and earned media publicity, boomers are directed to call toll-free 1-800-424-8867 or visit www.getinvolved.gov to find volunteer and community service opportunities that best fit their needs and experience.

At www.getinvolved.gov, individuals can access a search engine, powered by VolunteerMatch, that provides access to real-time volunteer opportunities tailored to the skills and experience of age 55-plus volunteers. Senior Corps projects are integrated into the overall inventory of organizations seeking volunteers ages 55-plus and are highlighted through the VolunteerMatch search process. Potential volunteers can take advantage of the user-friendly system to express their interests in serving and receive a listing of opportunities that meet their specifications.

f. Research and Policy Development

The Corporation's commitment to supporting the American culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility includes measuring the success and impact of our efforts. Performance reviews, research, and policy analysis help develop and cultivate knowledge that will enhance the overall effectiveness of the Corporation and of national and community service programs.

The Corporation conducts and supports high quality, rigorous social science evaluation research designed to:

- Measure the impact of Corporation’s programs and shape policy decisions;
- Encourage a culture of performance and accountability in national and community service programs;
- Provide information on volunteering, civic engagement, and volunteer management in nonprofit organizations; and,
- Assist in the development and assessment of new initiatives and innovative demonstration projects designed to shape future community service policy decisions.
Corporation-supported research studies are available on-line at www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp.

g. The eGrants System

eGrants is an online system designed to automate the entire grants and project management process from application to closeout.

*Sponsors use eGrants to:*
- Submit and track grant applications, amendments, continuations and renewals
- Submit Financial Status Reports, Project Progress Reports and other required reports

*Corporation Program and Grants Officers use the eGrants system to:*
- Review applications and reports
- Award and manage grants efficiently and effectively.

Guidance for using the eGrants system is available at www.seniorcorps.gov/egrants/help.asp. The eGrants Help Desk can be reached at Tel 888-677-7849 or by e-mailing egrantshelp@cns.gov. The Help Desk is staffed from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

6. PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

a. Purpose

Under the authority of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, the Corporation for National and Community Service provides grants to qualified agencies and organizations for the dual purpose of: engaging persons 60 and older, particularly those with limited incomes, in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers. Program funds are used to support Senior Companions in providing supportive, individualized services to help adults with special needs maintain their dignity and independence.

b. Goals

The goals of the Senior Companion Program are to:

1. Enable low-income persons aged 60 and over to remain physically and mentally active and to enhance their self-esteem through continued participation in needed community services;

2. Provide supportive services to adults with physical, emotional, or mental health limitations, especially older persons, in an effort to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living; and
(3) Provide a stipend and other benefits which enable eligible persons to participate as Senior Companions without cost to themselves.

7. HISTORY OF THE SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Congressional interest in establishing a program targeted to service by and for older persons began in 1968, as an outgrowth of the First National Conference on Aging in 1950, a forerunner to White House Conferences on Aging. Efforts to establish a legislative base for the Senior Companion Program failed in 1968 when amendments to the Older Americans Act were not enacted. Consequently, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Administration on Aging funded two Senior Companion demonstration projects called “Senior Friends” in Tampa, Florida, and Cincinnati, Ohio, during 1968-1971.

At the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, states and national organizations frequently voiced recommendations that the concept of the Foster Grandparent Program be broadened to include services by older persons to older persons. On December 2, 1971, in his message to the White House Conference on Aging, President Nixon announced that he would ask the Congress to authorize an expansion of person-to-person volunteer service to enable older persons to “work with older persons who might need their help,” and in 1972, legislation was introduced (H.R. 15657) (S. 3450) to create the Senior Companion Program. The Senior Companion Program was authorized under Title II, Section 211(b) of the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-113).

Eighteen model Senior Companion projects were funded by August 1, 1974. On a national scale, these projects represented a variety of volunteer assignments in rural, urban, and suburban communities. By February 1975, there were over 1,000 Senior Companions serving in projects, which ranged in size from 40 to 120 volunteers. Over 60 percent of the Senior Companions were assigned in private homes.

In September 1975, Booz, Allen and Hamilton, Inc. completed a two-phased evaluation of the program. The contractor assessed each project in terms of its operational procedures and progress in meeting project objectives. In response to several study recommendations, ACTION increased SCP services to homebound chronically impaired older persons. Greater attention was given to the selection of volunteer stations able to develop client selection criteria, provide volunteer supervision, and coordinate meals and transportation arrangements.

A second major expansion took place in Fiscal Years 1976 and 1977 with the funding of 28 additional projects and the expansion of existing projects. Opportunities for 3,000 Senior Companions assisting 9,500 clients in 39 states were developed. The in-home assignment ratio increased to 65 percent.

During Fiscal Year 1978, five new demonstration projects were initiated primarily to test the feasibility of integrating Senior Companions into a health and social plan of care for older clients.
On August 13, 1981, P.L. 97-35 established a separate Part C of the Title II entitled “Senior Companion Program.” The program is now authorized by Section 214 of P.L. 93-113, as amended. In the 1984 amendments to the Act, the Senior Companion Program was authorized to make grants to Senior Companion projects to assist the homebound elderly to remain in their homes.

Major program expansions that focused exclusively on in-home Senior Companion services occurred in the 1980s. For Fiscal Years 1980 to 1987, 42 new projects were funded. Approximately 81 percent of all placements were in-home assignments. In fiscal year 1980, there were also 420 Senior Companion Volunteers serving in nine non-ACTION-funded projects. Further expansion occurred in Fiscal Year 1988 with the addition of 44 ACTION-funded projects resulting in a total of 7,442 Senior Companions serving in 144 projects. In addition, 1,243 Senior Companions served in 29 non-Corporation funded projects.

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service came into being when President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Congress stated its expectations for the Corporation through a statement of purpose (42 U.S.C. 12501) that, in part, included using national and volunteer service by Americans of all ages to –

1. Meet the unmet human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs of the United States without displacing existing vendors;
2. Renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States;
3. Expand and strengthen existing service programs with demonstrated experience in providing structured service opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and the community; and
4. Provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed.

By 2007, Senior Companion projects nationwide numbered 223 with more than 15,000 volunteers. Senior Companions continue to make a difference in the lives of nearly 57,000 adult clients annually, while enriching their own lives through service.

8. THE FEDERAL REGISTER AND THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Senior Corps programs are governed by law and administrative rules or regulations. Making and amending government regulations is controlled by the White House’s Office of Management and Budget. Notices of proposed regulations must be published in the Federal Register for public comment.

a. The Federal Register

Published every Federal working day, the Federal Register is the official gazette of the United States Government. It provides legal notice of administrative rules and notices and Presidential documents in a comprehensive, uniform manner. Visit GPO Access, www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html, for free online access to Federal Register publications.
b. **Code of Federal Regulations**

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government. It is divided into 50 titles that represent broad areas subject to Federal Regulation. Each volume of the CFR is updated once each calendar year and is issued on a quarterly basis.

Each title is divided into chapters, which usually bear the name of the issuing agency. Each chapter is further subdivided into parts that cover specific regulatory areas. Large parts may be subdivided into subparts. All parts are organized in sections, and most citations in the CFR are provided at the section level [such as 45 CFR 2551.21](#). A list of agencies and where they appear in the CFR may be found in Appendix C of the [U.S. Government Manual](#). The Corporation for National and Community Service is found in Title 45, Chapters XII and XXV. The regulations governing the Senior Companion Program are in Chapter XXV, Part 2551, which is also cited as “45 CFR 2551.”

The online CFR or “eCFR “provides the public with enhanced access to Government information and is a convenient way to access the latest version or the program regulations incorporating all amendments. In the eCFR, amended sections are identified with the date of their publication and a reference to the volume of the Federal Register where they were published. The on-line eCFR is available at [http://eCFR.gpoaccess.gov](http://eCFR.gpoaccess.gov).
CHAPTER 2
PROJECT OPERATIONS

9. ELIGIBILITY, AWARDS, AND SPONSORSHIP

a. Sponsor Eligibility

The Corporation awards grants to public agencies, including Indian tribes and non-profit private organizations, both secular and faith-based, in the United States that have the authority to accept and the capacity to administer a Senior Companion project.

b. Solicitation of Proposals

The Corporation accepts applications for new federally funded local SCP grants only when new funding is available or when it is necessary to replace a local sponsor. The Corporation will issue a notice of funding availability. Any eligible agency or organization may then apply for a grant. Notices of funding availability (NOFAs) for nationwide competitions for new grants are posted at www.grants.gov/ and at the New Grant Opportunities page at the Corporation’s website www.nationalservice.gov. NOFAs seeking applicants to replace a sponsor are advertised locally.

c. Submission of a Grant Application

Grant applications are submitted in the Corporation’s eGrants system, described in Section 5.g of this Handbook. Applications are submitted following the instructions using the forms included in the Senior Corps Grant Application. The application must be submitted by a representative of the sponsor who has been authorized by its governing body to certify that all data in the application are true and correct, that the application has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant, and that the applicant will comply with the assurances submitted with the application, if the assistance is awarded. (See Block 18 of the Senior Corps Grant Application.)

Note that current grant resources, including project staff time, may not be spent on preparing and submitting a new three-year grant. However, project staff may prepare and submit second and third year continuation grant applications and charge the time to the current grant. These are administrative actions required by the Corporation to continue the current grant. [See Appendix 23, FAQ Concerning Fundraising, for further information.]

d. Non-Corporation Funded Grants

There is a long and rich history of state governments and other public entities providing funding for community service projects when there were no Federally appropriated funds available. In recent years the private for profit and non-profit sectors have expressed increasing interest in supporting Senior Corps programs entirely with funds other than those appropriated to the Corporation by Congress.
The following applies to non-Corporation funded Senior Companion projects:

(1) Any eligible agency or organization (see Section 9.a above) interested in applying to be a sponsor for an SCP project without Corporation funding will receive technical assistance and materials from the Corporation.

(2) Applicants must submit a grant application package that contains the same documentation as required of any new Senior Companion applicant for a Corporation funded project.

(3) Upon approval of an application that conforms to all program requirements, the Corporation Grant Officer will issue a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) showing zero Federal dollars.

(4) Under no circumstance will the issuance of a NGA to a non-Corporation funded sponsor create a financial obligation on the part of the Corporation for project costs, including increases in required payments to volunteers which may result from changes in the Act or in Corporation regulations. This does not preclude the sponsor from applying for Corporation funds, nor does it preclude the Corporation from awarding funds to such sponsor.

(5) Noncompliance with the NGA may result in suspension or termination of the grant.

(6) Termination of the grant by the project sponsor or by the Corporation will result in loss of tax-exempt status of Senior Companion cost reimbursements. The volunteers will also lose statutory protection from their cost reimbursements being considered in calculating their eligibility for any governmental assistance or services.

e. Characteristics of an SCP Sponsor

Characteristics of a potential SCP sponsor include:

(1) A dedicated interest in or involvement with efforts to resolve community problems, especially the problems of low income, older persons, and adults with special needs.

(2) Good working relationships with a variety of community agencies and organizations.

(3) Experience in developing volunteer service opportunities, particularly those that demonstrate impact.

(4) A strong base of local financial support for social service programs and the capacity to develop additional sources of local funding.

(5) An established commitment and past experience in improving the quality of life for older adults and other adults with special needs in the community.
(6) Links to direct health-care providers and agencies and organizations concerned with the health and psycho-social needs of older persons and adults with special needs.

(7) The capability to employ project staff who have the experience and skill to assume direct responsibility for project management.

(8) A governing body or agency board which understands and endorses the project's nature and purpose.

(9) A capability to establish and manage the program that assures fiscal and programmatic quality controls, compliance with Corporation policy and procedures, and reasonable progress toward stated goals.

(10) Established personnel and compensation policies.

f. “Self-Sponsored” Projects

In some situations project staff, advisory councils, boards, or other interested persons have incorporated as an independent non-profit organization and successfully competed to become a sponsor. These so-called “self-sponsored” projects must meet all the administrative and programmatic requirements associated with sponsorship addressed in the program regulations. The Corporation neither encourages nor discourages self-sponsorship, but recommends that groups considering this option fully explore the advantages and disadvantages applicable to their situation and consult with other organizations who have taken this step. Contact the Corporation State Office for further information.

10. SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Regulations Requirements

The sponsor is legally responsible for fulfilling all project management responsibilities necessary to accomplish the purposes of the program and may not delegate or contract these responsibilities to another entity. In accordance with SCP regulations, 45 CFR 2551.22 through 2551.25, the sponsor has the responsibility to:

(1) Focus Senior Companion resources on critical problems affecting the frail elderly and other adults with special needs within the project's service area.

(2) Assess in collaboration with other community organizations or utilize existing assessment of the needs of the client population in the community and develop strategies to respond to those needs using the resources of Senior Companions.

(3) Develop and manage a system of volunteer stations by:
(a) Ensuring that a volunteer station is a public or non-profit private organization, whether secular or faith-based, or an eligible proprietary health care agency, that has the capacity to serve as a volunteer station;

(b) Ensuring that the placement of Senior Companions is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (See Chapter 6, “Volunteer Stations,” for further information); and

(c) Reviewing volunteer placements regularly to ensure that clients are eligible to be served.

(4) Develop service opportunities that consider the skills and experiences of the Senior Companion.

(5) Consider the demographic make-up of the project service area in the enrollment of Senior Companions, taking special efforts to recruit eligible individuals from minority groups, persons with disabilities, and under-represented groups.

(6) Ensure that a criminal history check is conducted on every Senior Companion and covered staff (see Section 36.d for further details).

(7) Provide Senior Companions with:

(a) Assignments that show direct and demonstrable benefits to the adults and the community served, the Senior Companions, and the volunteer station;

(b) Required cost reimbursements specified in 45 CFR 2551.45; and

(c) Not less than 40 hours of orientation of which 20 hours must be pre-service, and an average of 4 hours of monthly in-service training.

(8) Encourage the most efficient and effective use of Senior Companions by coordinating project services and activities with related national, state and local programs, including other Corporation programs.

(9) Conduct an annual appraisal of volunteers' performance and annual review of their income eligibility.

(10) Develop, and annually update, a plan for promoting senior service within the project's service area. Suggested elements in the plan include:
Communicating the importance of the project to the sponsor’s Board, the Community Advisory Group, staff, and volunteers;

Ensuring that the project has adequate administrative and fiscal support, and resources to effectively fulfill its mission;

Playing an active role in promoting the project and its contributions to the community; and

Meeting regularly with the media, political leaders, funders, civic groups, and others to promote awareness of and support for the project.

11. Annually assess the accomplishments and impact of the project on the identified needs and problems of the client population in the community.

12. Establish written service policies for Senior Companions that include but are not limited to annual and sick leave, holidays, service schedules, termination, appeal procedures, meal and transportation reimbursements.

13. Secure community participation in local project operation by establishing an Advisory Council or a similar organizational structure, which in this Handbook is called a “Community Advisory Group.” (See Chapter 4, “Community Participation,” for additional information.)

14. Assume full responsibility for securing maximum and continuing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully. (See Section 10.c below.)

15. Provide levels of staffing and resources appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the project and carry out its project management responsibilities.

16. Employ a full-time project director (except as otherwise may be negotiated with CNCS) to accomplish program objectives and manage the functions and activities delegated to project staff. (See Chapter 5, “Project Staff,” for further information.)

17. Consider all project staff as sponsor employees subject to its personnel policies and procedures.

18. Compensate project staff at a level that is comparable with other similar staff positions in the sponsor organization and/or project service area.

19. Establish risk management policies and procedures covering project and Senior Companion activities. This includes background screening of staff and volunteers and provision of appropriate insurance coverage for Senior Companions, vehicles and other properties used in the project (See Section 43.d, Insurance.).
(20) Establish record keeping/reporting systems in compliance with Corporation requirements that ensure quality of program and fiscal operations, facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports, and cooperate with Corporation evaluation and data collection efforts.

(21) Comply with and ensure that all volunteer stations comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations, including providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities and access to persons with limited English proficiency. (See Appendix 18, Quick Primer on Discrimination.)

b. Other Responsibilities

In addition to the above requirements, sponsors should consider it as part of their responsibilities to:

(1) Locate the SCP office so that it is accessible to persons with disabilities.

(2) Make special efforts to recruit and place persons from minority groups, persons with disabilities, and hard-to-reach populations and groups in the community which are underrepresented. The sponsor should focus recruitment and enrollment efforts on persons not already volunteering.

(3) Provide for appropriate recognition of the Senior Companions and their activities.

(4) Provide or arrange cost reimbursements for the Senior Companions to be paid in a timely manner.

(5) Ensure provision by volunteer stations for volunteer safety.

(6) Comply with Corporation regulations, policies, and procedures.

(7) Ensure that appropriate liability insurance is maintained for owned, non-owned, or hired vehicles used in the project.

(8) Develop a realistic transportation plan for the project based on lowest cost transportation modes.

Keep eGrants Updated

Because it is part of the official grant record, sponsor staff should ensure that the sponsor and project information in eGrants is accurate, including:

- Legal name and address of the sponsor organization
- Project name and address;
- Sponsor’s authorized representative’s name, addresses, e-mail, phone numbers
- Project Director’s name, address, e-mail, phone number

Click here for instructions on updating eGrants account information.
c. Fund Raising

As listed above under sponsor responsibilities, the sponsor is responsible for securing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully. Certain government-wide requirements apply to fund raising under SCP grants.

Senior Corps sponsors must follow all applicable OMB Cost Principle circulars:

- OMB Circular A–21 for Educational Institutions
- OMB Circular A–87 for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments
- OMB Circular A–122 for Nonprofit Organizations

These OMB circulars apply to grant programs across the Federal Government and do not allow fund raising costs as direct charges under the grant. Specifically, the circulars do not allow the costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions. This means that SCP project staff whose salaries and benefits are 100 percent charged as direct costs to the Federal grant may not engage in fund raising to support the sponsor organization, project costs, or indirect costs. The OMB Circulars are codified in the Code of Federal Regulations at 2 CFR 220 (Circular A-21), 2 CFR 225 (Circular A-87), and 2 CFR 230 (Circular A-122).

Appendix 23 responds to frequently asked questions related to this topic. This FAQ and links to technical assistance resources to support sponsor fund raising activities are available at www.seniorcorps.gov/for_organizations/manage/fundraising.asp.

d. Subsequent Requirements

The sponsor must also abide by any subsequent laws, Executive Orders, or relevant regulatory directives, including special conditions which may be prescribed for the project. Sponsors may establish additional policies not covered by, and not contradictory to, Corporation policies.

11. SPECIAL LIMITATIONS

In the event of a question as to the applicability of these limitations, contact the appropriate Corporation State Office.

a. Political Activities [45 CFR 2551.121(a) and 45 CFR 1226]

   (l) No part of any grant may be used to finance, directly or indirectly, any activity to influence the outcome of any election to public office or any voter registration activity.
(2) No project may be conducted in a manner involving the use of funds; the provision of services, space, or facilities; or the employment or assignment of personnel in a manner that identifies the project with:

(a) Any partisan or non-partisan political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election; or

(b) Any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election; or

(c) Any voter registration activity except that voter registration applications and nonpartisan voter registration information may be made available to the public at the premises of the sponsor. But in making registration applications and nonpartisan voter registration information available, employees of the sponsor and volunteers may not express preferences or seek to influence decisions concerning any candidate, political party, election issue, or voting decision.

(3) No Senior Companion or employee of a sponsor or a volunteer station may take any action, when serving in such capacity, with respect to a partisan or non-partisan political activity that would result in the identification or apparent identification of the Senior Companion Program with such activity.

(4) The sponsor may not use grant funds in any activity that influences the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition, except as follows:

(a) In any case in which a legislative body, a committee of a legislative body, or a member of a legislative body requests a Senior Companion, a sponsor chief executive, his or her designee, or project staff to draft, review, or testify regarding measures or to make representation to such legislative body, committee, or member; or

(b) In connection with an authorization or appropriations measure directly affecting the operation of the Senior Companion Program.

(5) Prohibitions on Electoral and Lobbying Activities are fully set forth in 45 CFR 1226.


If the sponsor is a state or local government agency which received a grant from the Corporation, certain restrictions contained in Chapter 15 of Title 5 of the United States Code are applicable to persons who are principally employed in activities associated with the project. The restrictions are not applicable to employees of educational or research institutions. Employees subject to these restrictions may not:

(1) Use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office;
(2) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command or advise a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes; or

(3) Be a candidate for elective office, except in a non-partisan election. ("Non-partisan election" means an election at which none of the candidates are to be nominated or elected as representing a political party any of whose candidates for Presidential elector received votes in the last preceding election at which Presidential electors were selected.)

c. Religious Activities [45 CFR 2551.121(g)]

(1) Senior Companions and project staff funded by the Corporation may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization as part of their duties.

(2) A sponsor or volunteer station may retain its independence and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, development, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs, provided that it does not use Corporation funds to support any inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded. If an organization conducts such activities, the activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded under the Senior Companion Program.

d. Non-Discrimination [45 CFR 2551.121(f)]

For purposes of this section, any program, project, or activity to which Corporation-supported Senior Companions are assigned is deemed to be receiving Federal financial assistance.

(1) A sponsor or sponsor employee may not discriminate against a Senior Companion, or with respect to any activity or program, on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; religion; or political affiliation, or on the basis of disability, if the Senior Companion with a disability is qualified to serve. (See Appendix 18, Quick Primer on Discrimination.)

(2) Sponsors are required to take affirmative action to overcome the effects of prior discrimination. Even in the absence of prior discrimination, a sponsor may take affirmative action to overcome conditions which resulted in limited participation.

e. Labor and Anti-Labor Activity [45 CFR 2551.121(d)]

No grant funds may be directly or indirectly utilized to finance a labor or anti-labor organization or related activity.
f. **Non-Displacement of Employed Workers and Non-Impairment of Contracts for Service** [45 CFR 2551.121(b) and 45 CFR 1216]

A Senior Companion may not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers, or impair existing contracts for service. See 45 CFR 1216, included as Appendix 3, for the Corporation regulations on this subject. These regulations list certain exceptions.

g. **Non-Compensation for Services** [45 CFR 2551.121(c)]

Under no circumstances may a Senior Companion receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends. No person, organization, or agency may request or receive any compensation for services of Senior Companions.

h. **Nepotism** [45 CFR 2551.121(h)]

Persons selected for project staff positions may not be related by blood or marriage to other project staff, sponsor staff or officers, or members of the sponsor Board of Directors, unless there is written concurrence from the Community Advisory Group established by the sponsor and with notification to the Corporation.

i. **Volunteer Status** [45 CFR 2551.44]

Senior Companions are volunteers, and are not employees of the sponsor, the volunteer station, the Corporation, or the Federal Government.

j. **Fair Labor Standards** [45 CFR 2551.121(e)]

A sponsor that employs laborers and mechanics for construction, alteration, or repair of facilities must pay wages at prevailing rates as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 276a.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN PROJECT OPERATIONS
ENSURING THAT THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION TAKES A LEADERSHIP ROLE
(Comprehend the Effective Practices database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

Effective practices include:

A. The sponsor’s mission is consistent with the objectives of the program.

B. The sponsor values the project as an integral part of its organizational vision and operations by:
   1. Communicating the importance of the project to its Board, staff, and volunteers;
   2. Ensuring that the project has adequate administrative and fiscal support;
   3. Playing an active role in promoting the SCP project and its contributions to the community;
   4. Meeting regularly with media, political leaders, funders, civic groups, and others to promote awareness of and support for the project; and
   5. Maintaining communication with the Corporation for National and Community Service State Office and attending state and regional training events where feasible.

C. The sponsor has a strategic plan that guides the ongoing development and implementation of the project that:
   1. Reflects any priorities established for Corporation programs, including those included in the Corporation’s Strategic Plan;
   2. Incorporates the SCP project into its overall plan for the agency or organization;
   3. Describes a geographic service area for the project that is manageable with the available resources;
   4. Explains how the sponsor will meet its responsibilities for providing adequate administrative and financial support for the project; and
   5. Is annually reviewed and updated.

D. The sponsor provides strong project leadership by:
   1. Employing a project director who demonstrates strong leadership skills in working with project and sponsor staff, volunteers, volunteer stations, and the project’s Community Advisory Group;
   2. Establishing and, with the project director, maintaining strong working relationships with related community agencies, organizations, and leaders; and
   3. Managing and providing financial and administrative support to the project.
E. The sponsor creates and sustains a strong working relationship with the project by:

1. Ensuring that sponsor leadership and the project director establish and maintain a good working relationship based on clear communication and mutual support;

2. Designating a member of the staff who has clearly defined responsibilities for project oversight and support;

3. Developing and maintaining clear lines of reporting between project staff and the sponsor representative; and

4. Asking project staff to make periodic presentations on project operations to the sponsor’s Board members, other sponsor staff, and volunteers.
CHAPTER 3
PROGRAMMING FOR IMPACT AND
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

12. INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMMING FOR IMPACT

Volunteers age 60 and over have a tremendous amount of knowledge, skill, and experience to contribute to our communities through the enriching experience of service. The need to design and implement service projects that are fulfilling to the volunteers and beneficial to the communities served is more important now than ever before. In addition, foundations and other funders are demanding results for their financial investments. Federally-supported programs are expected to demonstrate that they are a wise investment of public funds. The Corporation for National and Community Service is required to report accomplishments to Congress under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

In 1996, the Senior Corps established Programming for Impact (PFI) as its programming framework. PFI is an approach that focuses on community needs, accomplishments, and impact in planning and development volunteer placements. It measures responsiveness to community needs and thereby raises the importance and visibility of older volunteers as valuable resources that justify investment from the public and private sectors.

The PFI is an example of a “logic model” – a type of tool that provides a concise visual representation of activities that are the core of your project. Using PFI, project directors identify the community need to be addressed, the service activity, the anticipated inputs, the anticipated accomplishments, and the anticipated impact or outcomes of services provided. The primary purpose of this process is to develop, track, report, and improve program services.

The chart below highlights the component similarities between PFI and other logic models.

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<th>Programming for Impact and Logic Model - Terminology</th>
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Programming for Impact is an important tool for Senior Corps programs for many reasons:

a. The Senior Corps Programs are “great products” with a story to tell.

(1) Sponsors, volunteers, volunteer stations, and communities should all know the full potential of senior volunteers to meet the needs of our communities.

(2) Project directors should know and document how senior volunteers expand services, save money, help channel resources to meet the needs of individuals.

(3) Programming for Impact enables all to take pride in accomplishments and quality.

b. It is important to attract diverse funding resources.

(1) Competition for public and private dollars is intense.

(2) Organizations that demonstrate impact, making programs tangible by describing expected and actual outcomes and tracking accomplishments, are attracting more funds.

(3) More and more influential and important funders are calling for documented impact in projects that they support.

(4) Congress (Senior Corps’ major funder) is requiring demonstration of accomplishments and impact through the GPRA.

c. Program expansion will increasingly rely on demonstrating impact.

d. Quality can be improved through Programming for Impact. The process:

(1) Provides information that can develop and improve programs;

(2) Benefits agencies and their long-range planning, providing information essential for decision-making; and

(3) Encourages accountability and cost-effectiveness, enabling sponsor staff, volunteer stations, volunteers, and the community to focus on programs that make a difference.

13. IMPACT-BASED WORK PLANS

Impact-based work plans are used by Senior Corps grantees to design their programs using the Programming for Impact approach. They are set up in a “logic model” format. The elements of the work plan are:

- Community Need. This is the priority community issue or problem that the Senior Corps volunteers’ service activities will address. The need should be measurable and include a reliable source to establish the compelling nature of the need.
- **Service Activity.** This is what the Senior Corps volunteers do to address the community need. In essence, it is the assignment description for the volunteers. It clearly defines who the direct recipients of the service are, as well as background information and the name of the program through which the volunteers provide service.

- **Inputs.** These are the resources a project applies to create or sustain service efforts. Inputs include, but are not limited to, the number of volunteers providing the service, the hours of service devoted to the activity, the financial resources (in terms of volunteer, administrative, and other costs) that will be expended on the activity, and any volunteer training.

- **Accomplishments (or outputs).** These are the immediate results or products of the services provided by the Senior Corps volunteers. Accomplishments tell what was done in some quantified fashion. They include the number of persons helped, the amount of something that was created, the number of times an activity was performed, and the extent to which a program or service was expanded.

- **Impacts (or outcomes).** These are the measurable changes in the community, persons served, or agency that occurred as a result of the service activity. Impacts or outcomes are measures of effectiveness of the program in the community or with those served, or they are measures of cost-effectiveness which show how much money or other resources the service activity saved in the community.

### Grant Application Requirement

The Senior Corps grant application requires that 90 percent of Senior Companions must be placed in outcome/impact based assignments.

### 14. THE CORPORATION'S PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT INITIATIVE

Since 2003, the Performance Measure Initiative has applied to all programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. In Senior Corps, the Corporation’s performance measurement initiative builds on the strengths and experience of Senior Corps’ PFI approach. Performance measurement does not replace the PFI approach; indeed, it enhances it.

All existing Senior Corps grantees as well as applicants for new funding identify performance measures in work plans in their grant applications. For the specific requirements, see the instructions for the Senior Corps Grant Application.

Projects are held accountable for their actual performance against specified targets. With respect to each performance measure, grantees will be expected to:

1. Report on progress achieved;
2. Specify how performance was measured;
3. Make the underlying documentation of performance available for review; and
4. Report on any operational changes and project improvements that resulted from information learned from the performance data.
15. IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMMING FOR IMPACT

To implement Programming for Impact, see the instructions for completing work plans and identifying performance measures found in the Senior Corps Grant Application. Additional guidance, examples of Senior Corps work plans with performance measures, measurement instruments, and other resources, including Senior Corps’ Performance Measurement Toolkit, are available at from the Corporation’s performance measurement technical assistance provider, Project Star. Click on here to go to the Senior Corps page at Project Star or contact a coach by calling (800) 548-3656. For questions, contact the Corporation State Office.

For the Senior Companion Program, optional standardized work plans and instruments are available that capture the majority of Senior Companion placements nationally, including Companionship/Outreach, Respite, and In-Home Care. Click here to download them.
CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

16. LOCAL OWNERSHIP

a. Senior Companion projects are community-based projects, usually with some Federal funding. There must be a real sense of local ownership and a spirit of partnership among the community, the sponsor, and the Corporation.

b. Community participation is generated by individuals, groups and organizations such as volunteer stations, local funding sources, civic and service clubs, the media, friends and family of volunteers and those with whom they work, other programs of the sponsor, schools, private non-profits, businesses, community leaders, and others who value the activities, accomplishments and impacts of the project and the volunteers.

17. COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

a. Program Requirement

The scope and extent of participation by the many entities that make up a community will vary considerably from project to project. But all projects can benefit from the involvement of a focused and sustained core group that provides perspectives and active assistance from the larger community. This is the structure the program regulations require the sponsor to organize to secure community participation in the project [45 CFR 2551.24]. For the sake of easy reference, this structure has been termed the Community Advisory Group in this Handbook.

b. Role

Subject to the requirements in the program regulations regarding the purpose and composition of this group, sponsors have complete flexibility concerning the structure and operation of this body. Depending on local community circumstances, the Community Advisory Group may be used by the sponsor to:

- Assist in assessing community needs;
- Assist in fund raising and resource development;
- Support the development of a service ethic in the community;
- Advise on volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition strategies;
- Suggest candidates for project staff positions;
- Link the project with other community service resources, including faith-based organizations;
- Advise on programming for impact and performance measurement;
- Assess project accomplishments and impact, including progress toward meeting performance measures;
- Assess satisfaction of volunteers and volunteer stations;
Suggest ways the project can gain increased visibility and recognition in the community; and/or
Advise on how trends in the community are affecting seniors.

c. Membership

The Community Advisory Group must have a membership that includes people:

- Knowledgeable of human and social needs of the community;
- Competent in the field of community service and volunteerism;
- Capable of helping the sponsor meet its administrative and program responsibilities including project assessment, fund-raising, publicity, and programming for impact;
- With interest in and knowledge of the capability of older adults; and
- Who reflect the demographics of the service area.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
(Check the Effective Practices database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

A. To secure community participation the sponsor:

1. Establishes recruitment and nominating processes that include criteria for selection of members of the community participation council or group. The criteria should address a) needed skills and expertise, b) the representation of various constituencies, and c) the need for members who have an interest in and knowledge of the capabilities of older persons as viable and valuable community resources;

2. Develops and establishes procedures for discussing and assessing project development, operations, accomplishments, and impact on the community;

3. Regularly attends meetings of the project’s community participation council or group;

4. Consistently communicates information between the sponsor’s Board and the project’s community participation council or group;

5. Helps to recruit qualified members to the council and fosters their professional development.

B. The members of the Community Advisory Group:

1. Regularly attend and actively participate in meetings;

2. Actively engage in an on-going effort to assess changing community needs and help the project meet the identified needs;

3. Assist with promotion of community awareness of the project and its impact on the community through speaking engagements, working with the news media, personal affiliations, etc.;

4. Help to draft an annual strategic plan, and set short- and long-range targets for resource development and mobilization, volunteer recruitment and recognition, and generating community awareness and support;

5. Attend community fund (e.g. United Way) allocation meetings and other funder meetings with sponsor and project staff, as applicable;

6. Support the sponsor and the project through involvement in resource development and mobilization; publicity; impact programming efforts; volunteer station development; volunteer recruitment; and issues analysis.
7. Solicit community impact and recommendations regarding project operations, accomplishments and impact, and communicates this information to project staff and to the sponsor;

8. Attend and assist with SCP events (i.e., recognition activities, national days of service, etc.);

9. Visit stations, volunteers, and those they serve, and meet with community supporters; and

10. Annually assess projects in terms of accomplishments and impact of the project and how they meet the identified needs and problems of the volunteer stations and the assigned clients, as well as in terms of volunteer satisfaction.
CHAPTER 5  
PROJECT STAFF

18. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The project director must be an employee of the sponsor subject to the sponsor's personnel policies and practices. Sponsors may also directly employ project staff to support the project director, as well as consultants and contractors, provided that the sponsor does not delegate or subcontract responsibility for fulfilling project management requirements [45 CFR 2551.22 and 45 CFR 2551.25].

Hiring of project personnel must be in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, other Federal civil rights statutes and regulations, applicable state laws, and local ordinances, and sponsor personnel and employment practices.

19. STRUCTURE

The program regulations require that the sponsor employ a project director and other staff appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the project. See 45 CFR 2551.25 (b) - (e) for details regarding staffing levels and compensation for staff. The number of project staff may range from a project director and secretary- bookkeeper in a small project to a project director, a number of coordinators, a secretary, a van driver, and a record keeper in a large project.

In structuring the staffing pattern the following should be considered:

a. Size of the service area
b. Number, kind, and location of volunteer stations
c. Number of Senior Companions
d. Geographic distribution of Senior Companion assignments
e. Types of Senior Companion placements and assignments (more project staff time is sometimes needed to monitor Senior Companions with in-home assignments)
f. Specific needs of the adults served
g. Availability of supplemental state or Federally subsidized full- or part-time staff and volunteer staff
h. Availability of funds
i. Programming for Impact/Performance Measurement requirements
Projects are also encouraged to consider their need for consultant or evaluation services and budget these accordingly.

20. PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR PROJECT STAFF

a. The program regulations require that project staff be covered by sponsor personnel policies [45 CFR 2551.25]. At a minimum, policies should address salaries and fringe benefits, probationary periods of service, suspensions, resignations, hours of service, annual and sick leave, holidays, terminations, and grievance procedures.

b. Compensation levels for project staff, including wages, salaries, and fringe benefits should be comparable to like or similar positions in the sponsor organization and/or in the project service area [45 CFR 2551.25(e)].

c. The sponsor should prepare a job description for each project staff position to promote the recruitment of qualified applicants and to specify each position's authority and responsibility. It is recommended that an annual performance evaluation be completed for all staff.

d. Criminal History Checks

The National Service Criminal History Check Requirement, discussed below in Section 36.d in connection with selection of Senior Companions, also applies to project staff who have contact on a recurring basis with children, individuals age 60 and older, and persons with disabilities. Click here to go to Section 36.d for the specific requirements.

Among the available technical assistance resources the Corporation has made available on this subject is the Staff Screening Tool Kit (Third Edition) developed by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, which is available for download at www.nationalservice.gov/screeningtoolkit.

21. PROJECT STAFF ROLES

a. Project Director

(1) The sponsor assigns responsibility of the project's daily management to a project director. A project director functions as a working project manager, actively involved with community organizations, Senior Companions, and volunteer stations. The project director serves as the representative of the sponsor in signing and approving official project documentation, including project reports, memoranda of understanding, and letters of agreement for in-home assignments. The sponsor may establish procedures for internal review and approval of project director actions, in accordance with its standard policies and procedures.

(2) The SCP project director serves full time, except as negotiated otherwise with the Corporation. A full-time project director may not serve concurrently in another
capacity, paid or unpaid, during established working hours. A sponsor may negotiate the employment of a part-time project director with the Corporation when it can be demonstrated that such an arrangement will not adversely affect the size, scope, and quality of project operations. The project director may participate in activities to coordinate program resources with those of related local agencies, boards, or organizations. [45 CFR 2551.25]

(3) In the case it becomes necessary to dismiss a project director for cause, sponsors should follow their established personnel policies and procedures. When such action is apparent, the sponsor must immediately notify the Corporation, stating the reason(s) for the action. When necessary, provisions for temporarily continuing operations without a project director should also be submitted to the Corporation in writing.

(4) Under direction of the sponsor's executive director/CEO, or designee, the project director's duties typically include, but are not limited to:

(a) Planning and developing all phases of project operations.

(b) Selecting, training, supervising, and evaluating project staff.

(c) Recruiting, selecting, orienting, and placing Senior Companions with volunteer stations.

(d) Providing coordinated pre-service orientation, in-service instruction, and overall supervision of Senior Companions with volunteer station professional staff.

(e) Maintaining appropriate fiscal and program records and reports.

(f) Developing and maintaining close coordination with volunteer stations, including development of volunteer assignment plans.

(g) Enhancing the total project effort through active involvement with community organizations, other national service programs, where appropriate, and programs for adults with exceptional needs.

(h) Implementing Programming for Impact and performance measurement principles and approaches in program development, volunteer placement, and project assessment.

(i) Keeping the Community Advisory Group informed, soliciting its advice on matters affecting project operation and providing staff assistance to the Community Advisory Group.
(j) Working in cooperation with sponsor staff, Community Advisory Group members, and volunteer station staff to obtain resources for the project (See, however, Section 10.c, concerning the restrictions established by the OMB Cost Principles Circulars on charging time spent on organized fundraising to grant funds).

(k) Providing support and information to Senior Companion.

(l) Appraising Senior Companion performance.

(m) Assessing appropriateness and performance of volunteer stations.

(n) Attending training conferences conducted or authorized by the Corporation.

(o) Preparing and submitting applications and requests for amendments in eGrants. (Note that preparation of an application for a new three-year Senior Corps grant is considered fund raising. While the project staff may work on preparing a new three-year grant application, time spent doing so must be charged to excess non-Federal funds or other sponsor resources.)

b. Coordinators

When funds allow and the project director is in need of professional assistance, additional staff may be hired to help coordinate project activities.

Coordinator responsibilities may include:

(1) Coordinating project activities including recruitment, in-service training, supervisory arrangement, and other activities in cooperation with the project director and appropriate volunteer station staff.

(2) Coordinating Senior Companion assignments including assisting volunteer station staff to develop volunteer assignment plans and volunteer activities for adults served and monitor progress toward achieving the expected outcomes and impact specified in assignment plans.

(3) Enhancing the total project effort through active involvement with community organizations, other national service programs, and other senior and volunteer programs.

(4) Providing information and support to Senior Companions.

(5) Assessing appropriateness and performance of volunteer stations.

(6) Attending training conferences conducted or authorized by the Corporation as funding allows.
22. VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION

a. Staff Responsibility

The project staff's general responsibility in supervision of Senior Companions is to:

(1) Ensure that volunteer stations designate a staff member to provide supervision of Senior Companions while on assignment and that supervision is effective.

(2) Concur with the volunteer station staff's assignment of each Senior Companion to each client.

(3) Ensure the maintenance of a person-to-person relationship between the Senior Companions and the adults to whom they are assigned.

(4) Provide orientation and regular in-service training to explain policies, enhance skills related to assignments, provide information concerning community services available to low-income older persons, and arrange for group discussion to share experiences and address issues.

b. Supervisory Practices

Specific supervisory practices vary from project to project and derive from project oversight obligations identified in the Memorandum of Understanding and in individual volunteer assignment plans. Examples are:

(1) Clarifying with volunteer stations the arrangements for days and hours of service and the agreed-upon activities defined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

(2) Making periodic visits to volunteer stations and in-home sites to monitor the satisfaction of the Senior Companions with their assignments and the progress of adult clients in reaching a greater degree of independence; determining whether or not the services of the Senior Companion are appropriate to the adult's needs or whether the volunteer should be reassigned.
**EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR BUILDING PROJECT STAFF**

(See the [Effective Practices](#) database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

Effective practices for creating and sustaining a strong working relationship among the sponsor’s executive and fiscal staff, the project director, and other project staff include:

A. Sponsor leadership and the project director establish and maintain a productive working relationship based on clear communication and mutual support;

B. The project director has clearly defined responsibilities for project operations and support;

C. The sponsor develops and maintains clear lines of reporting between project staff and the sponsor’s executive and fiscal staff;

D. The sponsor develops a written job description for each project staff position and annually reviews all job descriptions for any changes in roles or responsibilities;

E. The sponsor provides staff with high quality supervision and support to maximize job performance;

F. The sponsor provides project staff with an orientation to the Senior Corps, the Senior Companion program, and the project prior to their assuming project responsibilities;

G. The sponsor provides project staff with opportunities to enhance their understanding of and skills in meeting the needs of adults with disabilities and frail elderly in the community;

H. The sponsor encourages project staff to showcase their expertise as national and community service professionals by presenting at conferences, workshops, or community forums;

I. The sponsor includes project staff in professional development opportunities available to all other agency staff;

J. The sponsor ensures that each project staff member sets performance goals for his or her work on an annual basis and is evaluated annually on that basis;

K. The sponsor includes the project director as an integral member of the agency’s staff;

L. The sponsor recognizes the achievements of project staff through specific activities and/or events comparable to other agency staff;
M. The sponsor seeks ethnic, racial, cultural, and skills diversity in volunteer teams and/or working groups that address project planning, operations, and assessment;

N. The sponsor seeks the participation of individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and with a variety of skills in project management and decision-making.
CHAPTER 6
VOLUNTEER STATIONS

23. INTRODUCTION

a. Characteristics of Volunteer Stations

An SCP volunteer station is a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of Senior Companions. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Informal groups do not qualify as volunteer stations. [45 CFR 2551.12(w)]

(1) Individual private homes may not be volunteer stations. In-home assignments are made only through a volunteer station.

(2) Senior Companions should not be assigned to nursing homes or other long-term care facilities as volunteer stations, but may continue to serve an existing client during periods of short-term care in these facilities.

(3) Volunteer stations should be operating within the project's service area as defined in the approved grant application.

(4) As noted above, licensed proprietary health-care organizations or facilities may be volunteer stations. All such placements must limit volunteer assignments to those which provide direct and traditional assistance to patients, such as visiting, counseling, etc. Placements must not displace paid employees and must avoid assignments which would accrue to the profitability of the proprietary health-care organization.

b. Types of Volunteer Stations

(1) Social Service Agencies

In most cases, social service agencies are multi-purpose organizations with a number of components related to specific community social services. Examples are:

- Public agencies
- Private non-profit social service agencies
- Multi-purpose centers (including senior centers)
- Religious groups
- Community and civic organizations
(2) Direct Health-Care Providers

Health-care providers are particularly adept at coordinating services to clients with diverse physical and mental health capabilities. Examples are:

- Acute care hospitals
- Home health-care agencies
- Private non-profit or proprietary health agencies (including clinics)
- Public and private non-profit mental health agencies and associations (non-residential)
- Public health departments (including clinics)
- Rehabilitation associations and centers
- Visiting Nurses Associations

c. Sponsor as Volunteer Station

A sponsor may serve as a volunteer station, provided this has been approved by the Corporation State Office as part of an application work plan submitted with a grantee’s application.

d. Volunteer Station Cash or In-Kind Support of Volunteers

In accordance with the 45 CFR 2551.121(c), a Senior Companion volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the Senior Companion Program. However, this support may not be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain Senior Companion service. If a volunteer station agrees to provide funds to support additional Senior Companions or pay for other Senior Companion support costs, the agreement must be stated in the Memorandum of Understanding with the station. The sponsor must withdraw services if the station's inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the project under the Memorandum of Understanding diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligations.

e. Volunteer Station Roster

A current roster of volunteer stations must be included with each grant renewal or continuation application. Applications are submitted following the instructions and using the forms included in the Senior Corps Grant Application. A format for this roster is provided by the Corporation. The roster includes the name of the station and city where located, the name of the volunteer station supervisor and contact information, the number of volunteers placed at the station, and the types of activities, using standardized service categories.

24. VOLUNTEER STATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Volunteer Assignment Plans
The Senior Companion regulations in 45 CFR 2551.72 require individual volunteer assignment plans for all Senior Companions (see Appendix 9 for sample Volunteer Assignment Plan). These plans resemble a “job description.” Assignment Plans must be approved by the project director on behalf of the sponsor and accepted by the volunteer.

(1) Development of Volunteer Assignment Plans

The following steps are recommended to develop volunteer assignment plans:

(a) Identify prospective clients.

(b) Document the specific need(s) of the clients.

(c) Describe the activities the Senior Companion will perform, the schedule for their performance, and the supervisory relationship between the volunteer and the volunteer station.

(d) Describe the expected results of the Senior Companion's activities.

(e) Describe the expected impact on the client of attaining the expected results.

(f) Document the Assignment Plan in a format such as the sample plan in Appendix 9, showing by their respective signatures the acceptance of the plan by the Senior Companion and approval by project staff.

(2) Management of Assignment Plans

(a) Volunteer assignment plans should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain current and appropriate for the Senior Companions and their clients.

(b) Annually, a review of each Senior Companion's impact should be performed, which examines:

(1) Client needs.

(2) The service activities performed, adjustments made, and potential areas for improvement.

(3) Adherence to planned schedule and adjustments made.

(4) Results or accomplishments achieved.

(5) Impact on the client.
b. Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments

(1) According to 45 CFR 2551.62, volunteer stations managing in-home placements must develop a Letter of Agreement authorizing and describing the Senior Companion's activities in each home. (See Appendix 7 for a sample Letter of Agreement.) The requirement for Letters of Agreement is incorporated in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station. This agreement constitutes an individual volunteer assignment plan and contains a statement authorizing a Senior Companion assignment in the client's home and designating the activities to be performed. The statement also defines arrangements for days and hours of service and specifies the plan for supervision of the Senior Companion. The client or his/her legal representative(s), the sponsor, the Senior Companion, and the volunteer station staff sign the statement.

(2) Projects working with organizations, such as hospices, which have obtained Letters of Agreement, or equivalent written agreements with their individual home-based clients, may sign general letters of agreement covering all of the organization’s clients, rather than obtaining individual agreements for each person. The Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer stations must reference any such agreements.

c. Volunteer Station Participation in Training Events

(1) During the initial orientation of volunteers, project staff are encouraged to involve volunteer station staff in the program overview and explanation of services and volunteer activities. This may be accomplished through group presentations in formal classroom exercises and station site visits.

(2) Project staff are also encouraged to utilize volunteer station staff and other community resource professionals to cooperatively plan and implement monthly in-service training events.

(3) Senior Companion assignments at some volunteer stations will necessitate training over and above the 40-hour orientation and average four hours of monthly in-service training.

d. Volunteer Station Supervision of Senior Companions

Volunteer stations are responsible for the supervision of Senior Companions on assignment. The quality of supervision or support is the most critical factor, after the assignment itself, in contributing to the success of the volunteer experience. Supervision should be on-going and constructive. Supervision includes:

(1) Developing individual volunteer assignment plans.

(2) Providing regular supervision of Senior Companion performance on assignments.
(3) Monitoring volunteer activities regularly to assure that Senior Companions and clients are satisfied with the assignment and to determine the continued appropriateness of the assignment.

(4) Helping Senior Companions arrange for services that benefit clients.

(5) Annually completing written volunteer performance appraisals.

(6) Referring Senior Companions to project staff for possible reassignment, transfer, or termination.

(7) Carrying out other responsibilities identified in the Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Agreement, and individual plans.

e. Volunteer Station Responsibilities Concerning Transportation

(1) Volunteer stations are responsible for arranging Senior Companion travel between different assignments with the same station and for associated costs, unless otherwise provided in the Memorandum of Understanding.

(2) Volunteer stations pay all transportation and associated costs for any Senior Companion activities with clients, such as doctor visits or shopping trips, unless otherwise provided in the Memorandum of Understanding.

f. Other Volunteer Station Responsibilities

(1) Assisting in provision of appropriate recognition activities.

(2) Providing for volunteer safety.

(3) Monitoring the volunteers' well-being and providing support during stressful assignments.

(4) Keeping records and preparing reports required by the sponsor, including:

   (a) Volunteer timesheets.

   (b) Updates and accomplishments related to the volunteer assignment plans.

   (c) Data and information to document and report accomplishments and impacts for the clients served.

   (d) Volunteer performance reports.

   (e) Testimonials and examples of how Senior Companions meet the needs and improve the lives of clients served as well as of impact on the capabilities of the volunteer
station and its staff to carry out the station’s mission and/or achieve its goals, objectives, responsibilities to clients, etc.

25. PREPARATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

a. Purpose

The Memorandum of Understanding, which must be negotiated prior to placing volunteers, describes program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities of the station and the sponsor. It includes general conditions applicable to all projects and volunteer stations and special conditions applicable to the local volunteer station. The basic requirements for the Memorandum of Understanding are found in 45 CFR 2551.23(c)(2). (See Appendix 5 for a sample Memorandum of Understanding.)

b. Renegotiation and Updating

The Memorandum of Understanding is to be reviewed and renegotiated at least every three years. The Memorandum may be amended at any time by mutual agreement. Projects are encouraged to require volunteer stations to notify them as soon as any circumstances arise which could affect or require changing the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, such as the volunteer station’s ability to meet commitments for providing specified contributions toward project costs, changes in the sites where volunteers serve, or other conditions which have a bearing on Senior Companion assignments.

c. Content

The Memorandum of Understanding should include:

(1) Type, name, street and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of the volunteer station.

(2) A brief description of Senior Companion assignments.

(3) The number of adults to be assisted by Senior Companions.

(4) The volunteer station’s agreement to provide specific volunteer assignment plans for each adult to be served, prior to assignment.

(5) The name of primary volunteer station professional staff member responsible for day-to-day supervision of Senior Companions and a description of supervisory arrangements.

(6) Volunteer station and sponsor contributions to Senior Companion cost reimbursements (stipends, meals, insurance, transportation, recognition, physicals, and uniforms) and/or other project costs.
(7) The volunteer station’s agreement to periodically review each adult’s continued need for a Senior Companion and to recommend phase-out or reassignment of a Senior Companion as necessary.

(8) Provisions for ensuring that the National Service Criminal History check is completed for all Senior Companions prior to beginning their service to adults.

(9) The volunteer station agreement to submit required information and reports.

(10) Provisions for the safety of the Senior Companions while on assignment.

(11) Special local conditions which have a bearing on Senior Companion assignments.

(12) A listing of all geographic locations/sites, other than private homes, where Senior Companions will serve through the volunteer station and the number of volunteers placed at each site.

(13) Provisions for Letters of Agreement for in-home assignments. (See Appendix 7 for sample Letter of Agreement.)

(14) The volunteer station’s responsibilities in relation to implementing Programming for Impact and performance measurement.

(15) Assurance that the station will not discriminate against SCP volunteers, or in the operation of its program, on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.

(16) Assurance that the station provides reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities (including those with mobility, hearing, vision, mental and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) to participate in programs and activities. (See Appendix 18, Quick Primer on Discrimination).

26. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEER STATIONS

a. Senior Companions may be placed with more than one volunteer station, depending on the need for service and individual Senior Companions' capabilities.

b. It is strongly recommended that each volunteer station have a minimum of three Senior Companions. This facilitates plan development, training, supervision, and other management activities.

c. The sponsor should appraise all volunteer stations regularly to determine continued viability. Assessments should include types of clients served, supervision and training provided to Senior Companions, and other support.
**EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING STRONG VOLUNTEER STATIONS**

(Check the [Effective Practices] database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

I. Effective Practices for Developing Appropriate Volunteer Stations

The sponsor develops a system of volunteer stations that:

A. Addresses significant needs of the clients as validated by community-accepted studies and reports prepared by government or community groups;

B. Provides a sufficient number of stations that are accessible to individuals with disabilities;

C. Is manageable in terms of size and complexity to ensure that ongoing interaction, communication, and monitoring of stations are realistic.

D. Incorporates the abilities, experience, and needs of senior volunteers in their programs and operations.

II. Effective Practices for Communicating between the Project and Volunteer Station

The sponsor establishes clear and effective systems of communication between the project and volunteer stations by:

A. Conducting an orientation to the Senior Corps, the Senior Companion Program, and the project prior to the placement of volunteers;

B. Communicating to the volunteer stations its policies on the terms and conditions of Senior Companion Program volunteer service, volunteer service termination, and procedures for volunteers to appeal adverse decisions related to volunteer stations;

C. Providing volunteer stations with ongoing information and/or training about the project, its programming for impact and performance measurement goals, and the role of the volunteer station in meeting those goals;

D. Developing a checklist, guidance, and/or criteria that identifies factors in selecting volunteer stations; and

E. Developing criteria for the optimal number of volunteers serving at each station.
III. Effective Practices for Working with Volunteer Stations to Achieve Accomplishments and Impact for Clients Served by Senior Companions

A. The sponsor and project staff make informed decisions about the clients to be served and the volunteer stations that provide placement opportunities for Senior Companions. The project:

1. Identifies the needs and priorities that the project will address and the agencies that serve them;

2. Uses data to document the nature and scope of the needs and why they have been selected, and works with volunteer stations on data collection methods;

3. Consults staff, Senior Companions, the volunteer stations, and the Community Advisory Group in determining priority community needs on which the project will focus;

4. Identifies volunteer stations based on well-defined criteria that ensure the project focuses on most important community needs;

5. Works with each volunteer station to determine the service efforts to which Senior Companions will be assigned; and

6. Identifies and communicates its anticipated accomplishment and impact goals for the clients to the volunteer station supervisors.

B. The project works with volunteer stations to collect data that measures progress in achieving the anticipated accomplishments and impacts on the clients. The project and volunteer stations:

1. Work together to determine the types of data needed to measure progress in achieving its accomplishments and impact goals;

2. Use the written volunteer assignment plans as an important source of data on service provision to each client assigned to a Senior Companion and the impact of the assignment on the client’s achievement and maintenance of independence;

3. Determine, prior to initiating service efforts, the benchmarks it will use as the standards for measuring progress;

4. Collaborate to develop and implement an information system that utilizes existing data whenever possible, produces the information needed to demonstrate project accomplishments and impact; and allows information to be easily retrieved;
5. Consistently and accurately provide the needed data;

6. Use the assessment to adjust Senior Companion service assignments and the project’s portfolio of volunteer stations;

7. Work together to use the information related to accomplishments and impact to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project’s programming; and

8. Work together to modify volunteer assignments to more effectively meet the identified needs.
CHAPTER 7
SENIOR COMPANION ASSIGNMENTS

27. CRITERIA FOR SENIOR COMPANION ASSIGNMENTS

Volunteer station professional staff select the adults to be served and prepare an assignment plan for the Senior Companions to use as a guide in serving their assigned clients. Project staff, on behalf of the sponsor, the Senior Companion, the client (where possible), and/or family caregiver (as appropriate) must concur with each assignment. All assignments must meet the following criteria:

a. Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person relationships with the individuals served.

b. Assignments may not include administrative support services to the volunteer station.

c. Individuals served by Senior Companions will be adults, primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and are in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their dignity and highest level of independent living.

d. A Senior Companion must serve from 15 to 40 hours per week. See Section 40, “Terms of Service,” for greater detail.

e. It is strongly recommended that each volunteer station have a minimum of three Senior Companions. This facilitates supervision, training and other management activities, and supports team building among volunteers. Having at least three volunteers also provides the volunteer station with a level of support that justifies the station’s investment in the volunteers.

f. Assignments and activities should serve the dual purpose of providing a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers and meet critical community needs, providing specific outcomes for the clients served.

28. SELECTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

a. Assignments and terms of service, including the service schedule, should reflect individual Senior Companion preferences and abilities to the greatest extent possible. Project and volunteer station staff should assure that a range of service opportunities are available to provide a choice of assignments. A limited number of service opportunities may be developed in group care volunteer stations, such as adult day care centers, and group homes.

b. Because Senior Companions are a limited resource, assignments should give priority to older adults who have the greatest potential to achieve and maintain independent living.

c. To the greatest extent possible, preference should be given to assignments where activities are performed with the client’s active involvement.
29. ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES

In order of priority, assignments should be selected which:

a. Assist in preventing or delaying institutionalization of homebound adults, primarily older adults, with mental, emotional, and/or physical impairments who need outside assistance to achieve and maintain their fullest potential to manage their lives;

b. Assist in the discharge of adults from residential health-care facilities, especially acute care hospitals, who, by means of the support of Senior Companions, can resume a greater degree of independent living.

c. Provide care to households in which the burden of care for aged persons rests with household members who find it difficult to provide the level of support needed to prevent institutionalization;

d. Assist terminally ill persons.

Person-to-person personal support must be maintained in all assignments. The placement of one Senior Companion with many clients does not provide the degree of support needed to foster meaningful relationships. Inappropriate Companion/client ratios are weekly assignments with six or more homebound clients.

30. APPROPRIATE SENIOR COMPANION ACTIVITIES

Some examples of appropriate activities include:

a. Personal Care

(1) Feeding, dressing, grooming.
(2) Assisting client with walking, getting out of bed, getting to bathroom.
(3) Assisting with medical or physical therapy and/or monitoring medication.
(4) Accompanying a person to a doctor or nurse for treatment.
(5) Providing grief support.
(6) Assisting in reality orientation/awareness.
(7) Encouraging exercise, taking walks with client, providing information on exercise or recreation.

b. Nutrition

(1) Preparing food, planning meals, doing light grocery shopping, labeling, and organizing food.
(2) Providing health or nutrition information.
(3) Accompanying client to a nutrition site.
c. Social/Recreation

(1) Providing companionship, talking, listening, cheering up, and playing games or cards.
(2) Providing peer support.
(3) Fostering client contact with family and friends.
(4) Accompanying client to a recreational or social event.

d. Home Management

(1) Light shopping, doing errands.
(2) Writing letters, reading, and filling out forms.
(3) Doing light housekeeping.
(4) Doing light gardening.
(5) Assisting with money management, helping budget funds.
(6) Making non-strenuous home repairs/weatherization improvements.

e. Information and Advocacy

(1) Providing information about community services, eligibility for services.
(2) Helping clients receive a needed service (food stamps, visiting nurse, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.).
(3) Bringing unmet needs to the attention of community leaders, volunteer station staff, and other care providers.

f. Respite Care

Assisting homebound clients served by caregivers who are in need of respite care to prevent a breakdown in household capability.

31. INAPPROPRIATE SENIOR COMPANION ACTIVITIES

Some examples of inappropriate activities include:

a. Activities usually performed by doctors, nurses, or other professionals.
b. Brief, casual contact with a large number of clients.
c. Custodial services normally provided by paid staff.
d. Advance funds to clients.
e. Deposit cash in banks.
f. Major household repair.
g. Window washing.
h. Snow shoveling, lawn mowing.
i. Large furniture moving.
j. Heavy lifting (e.g. heavy boxes).
k. Major house cleaning.
l. Extensive shopping.
m. Food preparation for persons other than adult served.
n. Clean up after guests.
o. Leading group recreational or social activities.

32. SENIOR COMPANION LEADERS

a. Role of Leaders

The legislation permits Senior Companion projects to use Senior Companion volunteer leaders, who on the basis of experience as volunteers, special skills, and demonstrated leadership abilities, may spend time in the program (in addition to their regular assignment) to assist newer Senior Companion volunteers in performing their assignments and in coordinating the activities of such volunteers.

Unlike traditional Senior Companions, Senior Companion leaders can engage in indirect service activities designed to strengthen the project and to support the direct service Senior Companions.

b. Examples of Senior Companion Leader Activities

Leaders may be assigned to:

- Assist with recruitment of direct service volunteers.
- Facilitate reflection sessions or other team building activities.
- Support project planning, volunteer training, or relationships with individual volunteer stations.
- Develop and prepare project materials.
- Conduct outreach to the community.

c. Assignment Plans for Senior Companion Leaders

Senior Companions serving as volunteer leaders receive an assignment plan developed by the volunteer station. The leader’s assignment plan:

(1) is approved by the sponsor and accepted by the volunteer;
(2) identifies the leader’s role and activities and expected outcomes;
(3) addresses the time period of service; and
(4) is used to review the status and impact of the services identified in the plan.

d. Monetary Incentive

Senior Companion leaders who are income eligible may receive a monetary incentive. Contact your Corporation State Office for information on current policies.
33. TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

a. Project staff and volunteer stations should be alert to changes or problems which may lead to assignment termination, such as the following:

(1) The client develops acute functional difficulties.

(2) The client's condition improves to the point where Senior Companion services are no longer needed.

(3) A helping network of family and friends revitalizes, assuming the Senior Companion's care-giving role.

(4) The relationship is no longer meaningful or satisfying to the Senior Companion or the client.

(5) When the Senior Companion’s physical or mental condition is detrimental to himself or herself or to the client served.

b. Regardless of the cause of termination of an assignment, the decision must be made jointly by project and volunteer station staff, with input of the Senior Companion, if appropriate.

c. Sponsors are asked to keep the Corporation State Office fully informed in cases of terminations, voluntary or otherwise, that have potential legal implications for SCP staff or the project.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN SENIOR COMPANION ASSIGNMENTS
(Check the Effective Practices database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

I. Effective Practices for Drawing on the Unique Qualities of Volunteers to Meet the Needs of the Community and the Clients Served

The project:

A. Ensures variety among volunteer stations such that volunteer assignments appeal to a diverse group of volunteers and accommodate varying volunteer skills and interests;

B. Works with volunteer stations to involve volunteers in developing volunteer assignments;

C. Routinely notifies volunteers of new volunteer assignments that are developed or become available; and

D. Ensures that volunteer stations provide volunteer assignments that challenge volunteers to be advocates on behalf of the older adults, adults with special needs and/or the community.

II. Effective Practices for Ensuring the Safety of Senior Companions

The project:

A. Addresses all relevant safety issues, including working conditions at volunteer stations, and ensures that Senior Companions are familiar with their volunteer stations’ safety policies and procedures prior to permitting volunteers to begin their assignments;

B. Works closely with volunteer stations to ensure that Senior Companions are provided with pre-service and ongoing training on safety issues;

C. Works jointly with volunteer stations to assess, on a regular basis, safety issues related to Senior Companion service; and

D. Promptly and effectively responds to Senior Companion emergencies and complaints and designates a staff person to respond to such concerns.

III. Effective Practices for Communicating with Senior Companions

A. The project clearly communicates with Senior Companions about their roles and responsibilities by:
1. Developing with the Senior Companion and volunteer station a written volunteer assignment plan that specifies the needs of the client and the role and activities of the Senior Companion in delivering the needed services (See Appendix 9 for sample Assignment Plans for Senior Companions. The Senior Corps Performance Measurement Toolkit also contains useful materials for developing assignment plans and reviewing/measuring results and impact);

2. Providing volunteers with a written description of the conditions and terms of volunteer service, including annual and sick leave, holidays, service schedules, and cost reimbursements;

3. Ensuring that Senior Companions know their key contacts and sources of assistance or help during their service, and how to contact them; and

4. Routinely addressing roles and responsibilities of Senior Companions during in-service training.

B. The project conducts annual performance appraisals with each Senior Companion that provides feedback and guidance in key areas such as: reliability, actual progress and outcomes for the adults served, initiative, and leadership.
CHAPTER 8
SENIOR COMPANIONS

34. ELIGIBILITY TO BE ENROLLED

a. Age and Physical Examination Requirements

Senior Companions must be 60 years of age or older and determined by a physical examination to be capable of serving the frail elderly or adults with special needs without physical detriment to either themselves or the adult served, and willing to abide by the program requirements. [45 CFR 2551.41(a)]

b. Non-Discrimination

Eligibility to be a Senior Companion may not be restricted on the basis of formal education; experience; race; religion; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; handicap; or political affiliation. [45 CFR 2551.41(b)]

c. Income Eligibility Requirement

To be enrolled and receive a stipend, a Senior Companion cannot have an annual income, from all sources, exceeding the income eligibility guideline for the state in which he or she resides. [45 CFR 2551.42] Current income eligibility levels – including high cost areas – are posted at the Senior Corps Web site, www.seniorcorps.gov, or contact the Corporation State Office).

d. Non-Stipended Senior Companions

Persons aged 60 or older with incomes that exceed eligibility guidelines may be enrolled in SCP projects as "non-stipended Senior Companions" under certain conditions. 45 CFR 2551.101 provides that over-income persons may be enrolled in an SCP project as non-stipended Senior Companion volunteers in communities where there is no RSVP project, or where agreement is reached with the RSVP project that allows for the enrollment of non-stipended volunteers in the SCP project.

Non-stipended Senior Companions should be encouraged to serve between 15 and 40 hours a week and, to the extent possible, to serve a minimum of two adults on a regular basis. The volunteers are entitled to all Senior Companion benefits except for the stipend. According to 45 CFR 2551.104, Corporation grant funds may not be used to pay any costs associated with implementing the program regulations concerning non-stipended Senior Companions, including volunteer expenses and administrative costs. (See 45 CFR 2551.102, for other conditions which pertain to non-stipended Senior Companions.)
35. RECRUITMENT OF SENIOR COMPANIONS

a. Preparation

(1) Before Senior Companions are recruited, a sponsor must have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with one or more volunteer stations and should have developed, in conjunction with the volunteer stations, position descriptions listing the essential functions of each available Senior Companion position for sharing with prospective applicants. (See Appendix 20 for examples of Senior Companion position descriptions.)

(2) Recruitment of eligible Senior Companions is a project responsibility. Community Advisory Groups, volunteer stations, or current Senior Companions may assist in recruitment.

(3) A comprehensive recruitment plan should be developed that includes year-round recruitment and utilizes a variety of recruitment methods. This plan should identify specific needs of the program such as recruiting male volunteers, speakers of needed languages, or volunteers from an identified area. Planning for Senior Companion recruitment should include consideration of the following information:

   (a) Location and numbers of older persons who are low income, socially isolated, disabled or who belong to particular minority groups.

   (b) Location of “active adult” or retirement communities, senior citizen housing, clubs, senior centers, and other settings where older people gather or receive services.

   (c) Local employers of income and age eligible, or soon to be eligible, Baby Boomers in both the private and public sectors, as well as independent businesses and tradespeople.

   (d) Distance (in miles and time) between the homes of potential Senior Companions and places of assignment.

   (e) Modes and estimated costs of available public or private transportation.

(4) Special efforts should be made to recruit and assign minority, disabled, and hard-to-reach individuals and groups which are under-represented in the project. Traditionally more women than men have been involved in the program. Projects are encouraged to be creative in finding ways to attract men to become Senior Companions.

(5) SCP stresses the recruitment and enrollment of eligible persons not already volunteering.

(6) Recruitment and selection of Senior Companions may not be based on any requirement of employment experience or formal education. [45 CFR 2551.41]
b. Choice of Methods

A variety of recruitment methods may be used to reach either broad audiences or specific populations. The most feasible choice will depend on:

1. The availability of recruitment resources (the project’s website, ethnic newspapers, access to radio and television, public service time, outreach workers, etc.).

2. Community acceptance of volunteer and Federal programs.

3. The degree to which communication links exist with low-income older persons, particularly members of minority, handicapped, and hard-to-reach groups.

c. Suggested Recruitment Methods

1. Contacting agencies and organizations frequented by older persons such as senior citizens centers and nutrition projects.

2. Asking presently enrolled Companions for referrals.

3. Contacting religious organizations, citizens groups and other community agencies, including volunteer stations.

4. Making presentations or providing materials for distribution at retirement preparation programs of local employers.

5. Contacting other Corporation-supported programs.

6. Recruiting persons on waiting lists for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V, Older Americans Act).

7. Advertising through websites, web-based volunteer recruitment systems including Volunteer Match (see 35.e, below) the sponsoring agency’s newsletter, newspaper articles, public service radio or television interviews, or "spot" public announcements.

8. Contacting older persons individually.

d. Targeting Recruitment

Targeting recruitment where there is the best possibility of obtaining the most publicity and results, may result in organizations or locations being included where older persons are presently serving as volunteers. Projects should, however, avoid recruiting volunteers away from organizations where they are already volunteering and thus negatively impacting the project’s reputation in the community.
e. Web-Based Recruitment and Volunteer Match

(1) Project Websites

Increasing numbers of SCP projects have developed appealing websites designed to provide basic information about volunteer opportunities and how to express interest in volunteering. Technical assistance for creating project websites is available from Senior Corps Tech Center and links to many websites of Senior Corps projects are available as examples at www.servicesites.org/.

(2) Matching Services

In addition, projects can take advantage of several matching services. Information about the Get Involved Campaign, sponsored by the Corporation and powered by VolunteerMatch is available in Section 4.e of this handbook. Other web-based recruitment resources can be found at www.seniortechcenter.org/web/recruiting_online.php.

(3) “VolunteerMatch Community Leader” Subscriptions

Through a contract between the Corporation and VolunteerMatch, all Senior Corps grantees have “VolunteerMatch Community Leader” subscriptions that allow users to manage many dimensions of volunteer recruitment and service through a full suite of recruiting tools, including:

- Enhanced listings type and a special identifying icon.
- Ability to keep listings at the top of the search results pages by reposting easily and more frequently.
- Advanced tools to:
  - Add photos, logos or graphics to listings.
  - Ask volunteers for important information before they contact you.
  - Give volunteers a personal welcome when they sign up for your opportunity.
  - Attach up to three documents to accompany referral confirmation.
  - Duplicate and modify your opportunity listings
  - Download your opportunity and referral data and manage it with your own spreadsheet software.

(4) Benefits of using VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch is the largest active network of volunteer recruiters – with more than 125,000 visitors to its site each week. Thousands of volunteers self-refer to organizations through VolunteerMatch every day. VolunteerMatch offers the ability to reach out and
communicate with volunteers who may not know about an organization. The more visible your project is on VolunteerMatch, the more volunteers you can recruit.

f. Internet-Based Social Networking/Virtual Communities

The internet is a place to find information and interact with others. The internet is a new community resource for users. It allows you to network in new ways - within your community, with Senior Corps peers, and more. Social Networking tools can be used to build new types of networks, to more efficiently communicate and manage, and to take the message of your project and volunteers to new audiences.

Some of the emerging “mainstream” social networking tools include:

- **Blog**
  - A website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video, used to communicate information and receive feedback.

- **Online Collaborative and Discussion Groups**
  - A discussion group format to connect with people, access information, and communicate effectively over email and on the web.
  - You control the members of the discussion group.
  - No hardware or software to buy, install or maintain.
  - Access from anywhere, even from mobile devices.

- **Social Networking Site**
  - Any Web site that enables users to create public profiles within that Web site and form relationships with other users of the same Web site who access their profile.
  - Social networking sites can be used to describe community-based Web sites, online discussions forums, chatrooms and other social spaces online.
  - Some examples are Eon, Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube.

- **Online Volunteer Recruitment Sites**
  - Online network that connects volunteers with nonprofit organizations.
  - Resource for volunteers to search for volunteer opportunities in their neighborhood, community, city and nationally.
  - When volunteers see your listing, they simply click on it to directly connect with your organization and get involved.

- **E-Mail Discussion List**
  - An automatic mailing list server developed by Eric Thomas.
  - E-mail is addressed to a LISTSERV mailing list and is automatically broadcast to everyone on the list.
  - Similar to a newsgroup or forum, except that the messages are transmitted as e-mail and are therefore available only to individuals on the list.
Chat Room
- A virtual room where a chat session takes place.
- You can control who is invited to use the chat room.
- Used to brainstorm ideas, discuss plans, and create virtual communities.
- An example is Second Life

Webinar
- A specific type of web conference.
- Typically one-way, from the speaker to the audience with limited audience interaction, such as in a webcast.
- A webinar can be very collaborative and include polling and question & answer sessions to allow full participation between the audience and the presenter.
- In some cases, the presenter may speak over a standard telephone line, pointing out information being presented on screen and the audience can respond over their own telephones, preferably a speaker phone.
- Used for educational, training and information distribution purposes.

36. SELECTION OF SENIOR COMPANIONS

a. Interviewing potential Senior Companions

(1) After expressing interest in the project, potential Senior Companions should be scheduled for interviews with project staff as soon as possible. The initial interview should be private and confidential, allowing adequate time for discussion.

(2) Interview techniques should relate to project goals and the applicants' backgrounds, hobbies, and special interests.

(3) Suggested interview topics include:

(a) Roles, assignments, and types of activities

(b) Volunteer cost reimbursements and obligations/responsibilities

(c) Income eligibility requirements

(d) Description of each volunteer station and specific types of assignments available at each

(e) Special needs of persons to be served

(f) Interests of the applicant and motivation to serve

(g) Background information on the potential volunteer including work and volunteer history
(h) Professional supervision available

(i) Transportation arrangements available

(j) Whether the applicant is confident that he or she is able to perform the duties and functions of a Senior Companion with, or without, reasonable accommodations

b. Determining Income Eligibility

(1) During or after the interview the prospective Senior Companion's income is reviewed for the purpose of establishing eligibility. (See Appendix 6 for sample volunteer application form.) In this review, the project director must ascertain the applicant's "income from all sources." According to 45 CFR 2551.43, this term refers to total cash receipts before taxes from all sources, including:

(a) Money, wages and salaries before any deduction, but not including food or rent in lieu of wages;

(b) Receipts from self-employment or from a farm or business after deductions for business or farm expenses;

(c) Regular payments for public assistance, Social Security, Unemployment or Workers Compensation, strike benefits, training stipends, alimony, child support, and military family allotments, or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;

(d) Government employee pensions, private pensions, and regular insurance or annuity payments; and

(e) Income from dividends, interest, net rents, royalties, or income from estates and trusts.

(2) For eligibility purposes, income does not refer to the following money receipts:

(a) Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, sale of property, house or car, tax refunds, gifts, one-time insurance payments, or compensation for injury.

(b) Non-cash income, such as the bonus value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms and the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied farm or non-farm housing.

(c) Food stamps.

(3) Income Eligibility Guideline:

(a) The income eligibility guideline for each state is the higher amount of either:
1. 125 percent of the poverty line; or

2. 135 percent of the poverty line in certain areas identified by the Corporation as being higher in the cost of living. [See 45 CFR 2551.42(a).]

(b) For applicants to become stipended Senior Companions, annual income is projected for the following 12 months, based on income at the time of application.

(c) For serving Senior Companions annual income is counted for the past 12 months and includes the applicant or enrollee’s income and that of his or her spouse, if the spouse lives in the same residence. Sponsors must count the value of shelter, food, and clothing, if provided at no cost to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse.

(d) Allowable medical expenses are to be deducted from annual income in determining income eligibility. “Allowable medical expenses” are annual out-of-pocket medical expenses for health insurance premiums, health care services, and medications (prescription or over-the-counter) provided to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse which were not and will not be paid by Medicare, Medicaid, other insurance, or other third party, and which do not exceed 50 percent of the applicable income guideline. Long term care insurance premiums are considered to be an allowable medical expense.

(e) When volunteers are recruited from more than one state to serve in a common project, the income eligibility level of the state in which each Senior Companion resides applies.

(f) Once enrolled, a Senior Companion remains eligible to serve and to receive a stipend so long as his or her income does not exceed the prescribed income eligibility guideline by 20 percent. The sponsor must review income eligibility annually. (See Appendix 16 for sample income review form.)

(g) When more than one eligible member of a household serves as a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion, both members are entitled to receive a stipend.

(4) See 45 CFR 2551.42-43, for further details (Appendix 2).

c. Selection Criteria

(1) Ownership or access to a private automobile should not be a project-wide requirement but may influence selection in sparsely populated areas or for particular assignments.

(2) A full complement of Senior Companions will have a variety of personal skills and strengths. Since the project will be expected to plan a variety of assignments at volunteer stations, emphasis will be on matching a potential Senior Companion with an already planned, suitable, and available assignment.
(3) Selection criteria should give priority to eligible older persons who are highly motivated and have the greatest need to serve. Other criteria to consider when selecting Senior Companions should include:

(a) Interest in and ability to develop a supportive person-to-person relationship with adults with disabilities, particularly older adults, on a regular basis;

(b) Ability to serve 15 to 40 hours a week;

(c) Willingness to accept professional supervision;

(d) Flexibility in accepting assignments, including those in private homes, wherever most needed; and

(e) Potential to be an effective advocate for clients with multiple health needs and household management problems.

d. Criminal History Checks

(1) The National Service Criminal History Check Requirement

(a) New Applicants

As of November 23, 2007, grantees must perform criminal history checks for all candidates to become Senior Companions and or to be employed as grant-funded staff who will have contact on a recurring basis with children, individuals age 60 and older, and persons with disabilities. For these individuals grantees must conduct State criminal registry checks and National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR) checks.

(b) Serving Senior Companions and Staff

For Senior Companions and covered grantee staff who began serving before November 23, 2007, only the NSOPR check is required. However, the grantee may choose to conduct criminal history checks on other non-covered individuals as an effective risk management tool, and may include this as a program operating cost (volunteer support expense) in their grant budget proposal. In addition, if a Senior Companion who was serving on November 23, 2007, leaves a program and begins service with another program, the new program must conduct both a state criminal registry and NSOPR check on the individual.

(2) Ineligible Individuals

An individual who is registered, or required to be registered, on a State sex offender registry, is ineligible to serve. Grantees may adopt other disqualifying offenses. An
individual who refuses to consent to a criminal registry check is also ineligible to serve. Individuals for whom the State criminal registry results are pending may be enrolled, but may not have unsupervised access to vulnerable populations until the results are complete.

(3) Documentation

Grantees must document in writing that (1) the applicant’s identity was verified by examining the applicant’s government-issued photo identification card and (2) that the required criminal history checks were conducted. Grantees must maintain the results of the criminal history check in a secure location and document in writing that the grantee considered the results in selecting the applicant.

(4) Alternative Search Procedures

The Corporation is prepared to approve requests for alternative search procedures where a duly authorized State or local body has established substantially equivalent requirements that are designed to protect one or more vulnerable populations that are covered by the criminal history check requirement. Requests for approval of alternative search procedures must be submitted to the Corporation’s Office of Grants Management. Contact the Program Officer in the Corporation State Office for instructions on how to submit such requests.

Additional information on National Service Criminal History Checks, including the Final Rule, an FAQ document, and links to technical assistance resources, is posted at www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/manage/history_checks.asp. Among the available technical assistance resources is the **Staff Screening Tool Kit (Third Edition)** developed by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, which is available for download at www.nationalservice.gov/screeningtoolkit.

37. ENROLLMENT OF SENIOR COMPANIONS

a. Enrollment Records

Once the selection process is completed, the Senior Companion is formally enrolled in the program. Concurrently, the applicant or staff should complete an enrollment form. (See Appendix 8 for a sample Senior Companion enrollment form.) The Senior Companion must sign the form, which should include designation of beneficiaries for insurance purposes and indication of personal automobile liability coverage, if applicable. Volunteer records should be updated as necessary and at least annually to ensure information is current. (See Appendix 21 for a sample Volunteer Update Form.)

b. Physical Examination

Senior Companions must have a physical examination prior to assignment and annually thereafter. If enrollees are found to be physically unable to serve or service would be a
detriment to themselves or their clients, enrollment must be ended. See Section 43.e for further details on volunteer physical examinations.

c. Reserve Senior Companions

(1) Eligible older persons not selected to serve as Senior Companions should be counseled and referred to other community agencies which provide opportunities for older persons, including the Senior Community Service Employment Program, other Corporation programs, and other volunteer organizations.

(2) Projects may orient a limited number of reserve Companions to serve as substitutes or replacements for enrolled Companions who leave the program and for those who are ill or on extended leave.

(3) Although the use of short-term substitutes may be required occasionally, caution is advised in this practice. Frequent shifting of individual Senior Companions and clients detracts from the close person-to-person relationship that is the core of the program.

(4) Attrition rates in Senior Companion projects are usually quite low. The rate of short-term Senior Companion absences will vary. New sponsors may want to plan for 5 to 10 percent over the budgeted volunteer service years. Local experience will provide a sponsor with a more accurate basis for determining reserves.

38. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF SENIOR COMPANIONS

a. Basic Requirement

The sponsor provides not less than 40 hours of orientation and training to Senior Companions – of which 20 hours must be pre-service orientation – and an average of four hours monthly of in-service training.

b. Purpose

Pre-service orientation and in-service training are an integral part of project operation. They should be designed to build on and enhance existing skills and to provide the Senior Companions with new information relative to their assignments and personal welfare.

c. Planning Considerations

The project staff should develop orientation programs with help from sponsor and volunteer station staff and staff of other health and social service agencies. Daily group training over a one to two week period provides efficient use of community resources and promotes team building among volunteers. Projects have found that a combination of formal orientation and hands-on experience with volunteer stations works well. This gives greater meaning to the orientation and enhances adjustment to assignments. Transportation should be arranged for
Senior Companions between their homes and places where orientation is held. Stipends and other benefits are provided. Meals are provided within budget and logistical restrictions.

d. Pre-Service Orientation

(1) The goals of pre-service orientation are to:

   (a) Introduce the Senior Companions to the Corporation, the Corporation’s Strategic Plan, the Corporation’s programs in general, the Senior Companion Program in particular, the sponsor, and the local SCP project.

   (b) Provide information on project policies, appeal procedures, timesheets, insurance, and other administrative details.

   (c) Acquaint Senior Companions with project sponsor staff, station staff, and with other Senior Companions.

   (d) Give Senior Companions the opportunity for on-site visits to volunteer stations prior to assignment. This enables them to make an informed choice about the types of volunteer stations and assignments for which they are best suited.

   (e) Familiarize Senior Companions with the physical health and psycho-social problems of impaired adults and the objectives of their assignment.

   (f) Promote discussion of the roles and activities involved in being a Senior Companion.

   (g) Provide new Senior Companions with information about available community services which will enable them to be better advocates for their clients and help with their personal needs.

   (h) Provide a general understanding of the economic, social, psychological, and physiological aspects of aging.

(2) Classroom Topics and Training Techniques

The following is a suggested list of subjects intended to clarify program objectives and enhance Senior Companions' skills:

   (a) Policies and Procedures

       Senior Companion Program guidelines, assignment plans, sponsor's service policies, and appeal procedures, timesheets, reimbursement for meals and transportation, insurance.

   (b) Team Building Exercises and Leadership Skill Building
Open class discussion on how Senior Companions view their roles; role playing (Senior Companion and client); elementary counseling techniques; questions and answers with experienced Senior Companions; assertiveness training, active listening; team building/accepting supervision; communication skill-building exercises.

(c) Psychological, Physiological, and Social Aspects of Aging

General lecture, discussion of aging, stress counseling, emotional needs of the elderly, sexuality and aging, grief counseling/death and dying.

(d) Community Resources and Services

Social Security and SSI benefits, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, public housing, community legal services, congregate feeding programs and Meals-on-Wheels, homemaker/home health aides, multi-purpose senior centers, other Corporation programs, personal safety/crime and the elderly, consumer fraud and the elderly.

(e) Advocacy/Household Management

Escort services; consumer counseling; reporting status of a client's physical and mental health to supervisors; mobilizing community resources; revitalizing/developing links between client and the client's family.

(f) Health and Personal Care Assistance

Reality orientation/awareness, physical fitness for older persons, health emergencies, confidentiality, substance abuse, nutrition, meal planning/preparation, physical therapy, personal hygiene, basic medication information.

(f. Evaluation and Graduation of Senior Companions

1. At the conclusion of orientation, project staff is encouraged to have Senior Companions complete a pre-service orientation evaluation questionnaire.

2. Many Senior Companion projects conduct a graduation ceremony, which may include a pot-luck luncheon and presentation of an award certifying completion of pre-service orientation.

39. SERVICE-LEARNING

a. What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning, in the context of Senior Companion programs, is a learning method that allows volunteers to reflect on their volunteer experiences and apply their insights.
Volunteers are active participants in reflection processes as facilitators and discussion leaders.

Service-learning grew out of the field of experiential education, and is based on the following principles:

- People can learn most effectively when their learning grows out of and connects to their experiences.
- People can learn most effectively when they are actively involved with whatever they are learning (through doing, talking, reading, interacting with others, exploring, writing, making things).
- Learning is enhanced when people have the time to regularly reflect on their experiences.

One of the basic premises of service-learning is that service is, and should be, of benefit to both the one being served and to the one serving, and that both service and learning must be emphasized if thoughtful learning is to happen.

Another basic premise is that learning does not only happen in the classroom and is not only for the young. People of all ages continue to learn, and continue to improve, refine, and expand understanding of self, relationships, and social issues. Service-learning is a vehicle to ensure that lifelong learning is available to Senior Companions.

b. What Service-Learning Can Do for Projects

By making service-learning part of the Senior Companion project, the project director will help to ensure that volunteers will learn from what they do, in a thoughtful and reflective manner. By incorporating service-learning, project directors can help volunteers apply what they learn back to what they do, increasing the strengths and impacts of the project.

Service-learning can help Senior Companion projects make a difference in the lives of their volunteers, by helping them to stay mentally and physically active; use or learn skills they might not otherwise; present challenges to build on; and apply wisdom and knowledge they have acquired – thereby validating such wisdom.

Service learning also helps projects to make a difference in their communities. Volunteers who regularly reflect on their service, and who regularly ask themselves, “What difference did we make?” are more likely to care about the overall success of the project. They are more likely to perceive community needs, and more likely to come up with new possibilities for action, as well as creative solutions to stumbling blocks. They are more likely to increase the accomplishments and impacts of the project.

c. Reflection: The Core of Service-Learning Opportunities
One of the essentials for service-learning to happen is that volunteers have regular time for reflecting on their volunteer experiences. Reflection can take several forms:

- Writing, including journal entries, letters, or group summaries
- Videotaping or audiotaping, then playing back for discussion and comment
- Creative outlets such as drawing, making scrapbooks or commemorative albums
- Group projects and discussions

d. Effective Practices for Incorporating Service-Learning into the Project’s Ongoing Operations

Following are some suggestions to incorporate service learning into ongoing project operations:

1. Understand the value of service-learning and use it as an approach to raise the quality of service provided by the volunteers.

2. Work with volunteer stations to integrate service-learning techniques, as appropriate, into training sessions and events that Senior Companions attend.

3. Regularly provide opportunities for Senior Companions to reflect on their volunteer experiences and apply insights to their service, client advocacy roles, social issues and their own lives.

4. Employ a variety of reflection methods to facilitate learning and exchange that take many forms, and may include journal writing, drawing, role-playing, role exchange or reversal, or group discussion.

5. Tap service-learning experts, leaders and resources in the community to ensure excellence and adherence to quality principles.

6. Employ service-learning to challenge volunteers to be creative in finding solutions, possibilities for action, intervention ideas, and new ways to make a difference.

7. Develop and/or utilize tools that elicit the suggestions and preferences of the volunteers into the reflection designs and activities.

8. Create opportunities for volunteers to be active participants in reflection processes as facilitators or discussion leaders.

9. Apply reflection information to actively learn from the volunteers about their needs, requests or concerns.
(10) Apply reflection as a method to keep volunteers connected to one another and form a peer network that can be tapped for support, expertise, and ideas.

(11) Encourage volunteers to apply service-learning to their interactions with clients as appropriate and as their grounding in service-learning grows.

(12) Employ service-learning principles to promote life long learning, and encourage volunteers to build on life experiences and wisdom, and validate their roles as change agents and community resources.

(13) Share knowledge gained, successes and lessons learned with other Senior Corps projects and colleagues to advance the state-of-the-art in service-learning with older adult volunteers.

For further information on service-learning, visit the National Service Learning Clearinghouse.

40. TERMS OF SERVICE

a. Weekly Hours Requirement

Senior Companions serve a minimum of 15 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week. A Senior Companion may not serve more than 2088 hours per year. Within these limitations a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs. [45 CFR 2551.51]

Sponsors should develop a variety of volunteer stations that afford a variety of placement and weekly schedule options.

b. Travel Time, Meal Time, Training, Official Meetings, Recognition

Travel time between the volunteer's home and place of assignment may not be considered part of the service schedule and is not stipended. Travel time between individual assignments is part of the service schedule. Meal time may be part of the service schedule if meals are part of the volunteer assignment plan, are taken with the clients served, and are deemed by the sponsor and the volunteer station to be beneficial to the assigned clients. Additionally, attendance at pre-service orientation, in-service training, Community Advisory Group meetings, and recognition events is also considered as part of the service schedule. (See Appendix 13 for a sample service schedule.)

c. Sponsor Service Policies

Service policies must be provided in writing to Senior Companions. These policies should include, but are not limited to, probationary periods, resignations, annual and sick leave, holidays, service schedules, prohibited activity, meal and travel reimbursements, and appeal procedures. The policies should also cover the volunteer's annual performance appraisal, annual income review, and the requirement for an annual physical examination.
The program regulations on terms of service are found in 45 CFR 2551.51 through 2551.53.

41. VOLUNTEER SEPARATION

A sponsor may separate a volunteer for cause, including but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments or having income in excess of the eligibility level. Separation should not occur until the Senior Companion is given opportunity to file a grievance and/or appeal the action in accordance with the sponsor's service policy.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN MANAGING SENIOR COMPANIONS
(Check the Effective Practices database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

I. Effective Practices to Ensure Satisfaction among Senior Companions in Their Service to the Community

The project builds a spirit of commitment among the volunteers by:

A. Ensuring that Senior Companions have opportunities to express their concerns, interests, and observations about the project to the SCP staff and the volunteer station;

B. Involving Senior Companions in the operation and appraisal of assignments and project operations;

C. Soliciting comments and/or recommendations from the Senior Companions related to their experiences in serving clients, and incorporating relevant information into the project as applicable;

D. Adopting specific strategies to retain a diverse group of Senior Companions; and

E. Identifying and promptly addressing any issues or problems that impact the retention of Senior Companions from a broad range of backgrounds.

II. Effective Practices to Help Senior Companions Develop Their Capacity to be Community Leaders and Spokespersons

The project:

A. Encourages the volunteers to recognize and take pride in the value of their service to the community;

B. Provides Senior Companions opportunities to serve in leadership roles and develop leadership skills that enhance their personal lives and the project, such as serving as volunteer leaders or on the Community Advisory Group;

C. Provides opportunities for Senior Companions to facilitate training with other Senior Companions using a standard training format with learning objectives as ways to measure progress;

D. Involves Senior Companions in promoting the project to the community, such as through media appearances;

E. Acknowledges and values the strengths and skills of Senior Companions through insuring that assignments are challenging and match the Senior Companions' interests and abilities.
III. Effective Practices for Acknowledging the Contributions of Senior Companions

The sponsor and project director:

A. Plan and implement individual and group recognition activities;

B. Ensure that volunteer stations regularly recognize Senior Companions as contributors to the stations’ ability to deliver services;

C. Provide at least one annual recognition event for Senior Companions which has significant community support and involvement;

D. Recognize, document, and publicize outstanding Senior Companion achievement;

E. Consider collaborating with other area Senior Corps programs on recognition efforts; and

F. Consider non-traditional forms of recognition, especially for culturally diverse and Boomer volunteers.
CHAPTER 9
SENIOR COMPANION COST REIMBURSEMENTS

Senior Companions are provided with cost reimbursements and other benefits. Within the limits of a project’s approved budget, and in accordance with 45 CFR 2551.46, and written Senior Corps policy guidance to projects, volunteers are provided stipends, transportation, meals, accident and liability insurance, annual physical examination, uniforms when appropriate, and recognition activities. Cost reimbursements are budgeted as “Volunteer Expenses,” and the two terms may be used interchangeably.

42. ADMINISTRATION OF COST REIMBURSEMENTS

Sponsors should establish written cost reimbursement policies and procedures and provide these to each volunteer.

a. Assignment-Related Expenses

Project funds may be used to reimburse volunteers for expenses, including transportation costs, incurred while performing their volunteer assignments, provided that these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and there are sufficient funds available to cover these expenses and meet all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award. [45 CFR 2551.45(g)] Otherwise, such expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer station.

b. Volunteer Expenses Ratio

The total of cost reimbursements for Senior Companions, including stipends, insurance, transportation, meals, physical examinations, uniforms if appropriate, and recognition must be equal to at least 80 percent of the Corporation’s Federal share of the grant. Federal and non-Federal resources, including excess non-Corporation resources, can be used to make up this sum. [45 CFR 2551.92(e)]

c. “Income Disregard”

Cost reimbursements are not subject to any tax or charge. Cost reimbursements may not be treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment insurance, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, workers compensation, or similar benefit payments or minimum wage laws. [45 CFR 2551.46]
d. Non-Reimbursed Volunteer Purchases

Volunteer Expense items, including transportation to and from their assignments, meals taken during assignments, recognition activities, and recognition items, which are purchased at the volunteers' own expense and not reimbursed by the project to the volunteer, are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget. [45 CFR 2551.93(d)]

e. Non-Corporation Funded Senior Companions

Senior Companions whose stipends are funded with non-Corporation resources are entitled to all cost reimbursements to which Corporation-funded Senior Companions are entitled.

43. VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS DETAILED

a. Stipend

Senior Companions serve 15 to 40 hours a week, usually five days a week. They receive a stipend payable in regular installments. For the current rate per hour contact the Corporation State Office.

The Corporation establishes the stipend amount consistent with the availability of program funds and at a level that will permit and encourage eligible low-income older persons to serve as volunteers without cost to themselves. The stipend is paid for the hourly service schedule that Senior Companions spend with their clients, for earned leave, if applicable, and for attendance at official project events, e.g., orientation, in-service training, SCP Community Advisory Group meetings (as members or official observers), recognition events, and travel time between individual assignments. Travel time between the volunteer's home and place of assignment may not be considered part of the service schedule and is not stipended. Travel time between individual assignments is a part of the service schedule. Meal time may be part of the service schedule only if meals are part of the volunteer assignment plan, are taken with the individual served, and if the sponsor and the volunteer station deem the taking of meals together to be beneficial to the client. [See 45 CFR 2551.45(a) and 2551.52.]

b. Transportation

(1) General Principles and Practices

(a) Senior Companions are provided transportation or receive assistance with the cost of transportation to and from volunteer assignments and official project activities, including orientation, training, Community Advisory Group meetings, and recognition events.

(b) Transportation considerations weigh heavily in deciding how many clients can be assisted and where volunteers are assigned. Convenient and less costly
transportation is promoted when assignments are developed in areas where Senior Companions live.

(c) It is important to consider both costs and convenience, as well as volunteer service schedules, in developing a cost-effective travel solution.

(d) Project vehicle costs, vehicle driver's salary and fringe benefits, and vehicle insurance are budgeted as travel costs under volunteer expenses in the SCP grant application.

(e) Contracted transportation, if it is the most flexible and economical, may be budgeted for volunteers.

(f) The purchase cost, operation, and maintenance of vans or mini-buses may be budgeted only if they provide the most flexible and economical transportation available.

(g) The cost of transporting SCP volunteers between their homes and places of assignment and to official SCP functions may be budgeted. Transportation costs for volunteers having to park at a volunteer station or at an official SCP function may be budgeted. Parking costs are allowable as an in-kind contribution only if they are normally charged.

(2) Reimbursement of Volunteers for Transportation

(a) Volunteer Drivers

Reimbursement of Senior Companions who drive their own cars is based on a cost-per-mile rate set for Senior Companions by the sponsoring organization. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring they are not paid more than their actual travel expenses up to the sponsor-established limits. Volunteers may not be reimbursed on a per-capita basis for transporting other volunteers. (See Appendix 19 for a sample form volunteers can use for requesting mileage reimbursement.)

(b) Public Transportation Users

Sponsors should establish procedures, such as a voucher system, for reimbursing volunteers for public transportation expenses, including subways, buses, and other public conveyances. Reimbursements must be based on documentation by the volunteer of actual costs incurred for project-related transportation expenses.

(c) Car Pool Drivers

Drivers of car pools receive reimbursement for actual mileage, based on a cost-per-mile rate. Passengers do not receive reimbursement.
(d) Use of Project Funds for Assignment-Related Transportation

Project funds may be used to reimburse volunteers for expenses, including transportation costs, incurred while performing their volunteer assignments, provided that these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and there are sufficient funds available to cover these expenses and meet all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award. [45 CFR 2552.45(f)]. Otherwise, such expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer station.

(e) Certification and Documentation

Senior Companions and volunteer station staff are required to sign a statement certifying that transportation costs to be reimbursed to the volunteer were in conjunction with volunteer service and to provide details of the reimbursement. Vouchers are subject to Corporation audit.

Note: Volunteers who do not incur travel expenses (e.g., those who walk to their assignments, ride on free public transportation, or are passengers in car pools) are not eligible for reimbursement.

c. Meals

Within the limits of available local resources and project policy, Senior Companions receive assistance with the cost of meals taken during their service schedule. Project staff arrange for or assist with the cost of one meal per day for Senior Companions during orientation and training, and, as feasible, on days when volunteer service is provided. Project directors should make special efforts to reach agreements for volunteer stations to provide meals as a local contribution to project budgets.

(1) Congregate Meals

Local congregate nutrition programs funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act operate in schools and through religious and other public and private non-profit organizations. Grantees may not utilize Title III funds or non-Federal funds used to match Title III funds to meet the required Corporation non-Federal cost share. However, grantees may count, as a local contribution, any meals provided to volunteers paid for by funds other than Title III Federal or matching funds.

(2) Non-Congregate Meals

Meal arrangements become more difficult for Senior Companions assigned to homebound clients. Volunteers who plan to eat between assignments may be far removed from nutrition centers and volunteer stations which have meal facilities. Options are for Senior Companions to share a meal with a client, bring their own "brown bag" lunch, or eat at a restaurant and be reimbursed for the cost of their meal.
Because of the need to maintain accurate accounting records, volunteers cannot be given an advanced cash meals allowance. Meals provided by or to clients are not an allowable budget cost.

(3) Reimbursement Amount for Meals

The amount of reimbursement for meals is normally based on actual expenses, consistent with costing procedures developed by the sponsor, rather than a flat daily rate. However, reimbursement of "brown bag" lunches prepared by Senior Companions may be based on a flat rate established by the sponsor. The basis for the rate should be included in the grant application budget narrative. Any changes made during the period of the grant award will require prior approval of the Corporation. Senior Companions and volunteer station staff are required to sign a statement certifying that meals for which reimbursement is to be paid to the volunteer were taken in conjunction with volunteer service. Vouchers are subject to Corporation audit. (See Appendix 19 for a sample form for volunteers to use for requesting meal reimbursement.)

d. Insurance

Senior Companions must be provided with accident, personal liability, and, when appropriate, excess automobile liability insurance. [45 CFR 2551.43] The minimum levels of this insurance are specified by the Corporation, and may be subject to change from time to time. The Corporation State Office can provide up-to-date information. The insurance coverage must be in excess of and noncontributing with any other valid and collectible insurance the volunteers have. In other words, the accident and excess automobile liability coverage are intended to provide higher levels of insurance for volunteers, starting where other insurance coverage for them stops. They are excess, not primary, insurance. This is true, too, for personal liability; but volunteers are often not covered by personal liability insurance, in which case the Corporation-specified personal liability insurance becomes primary insurance with no deductible.

(1) Accident Insurance

(a) Accident insurance must cover Senior Companions for personal injury during travel between their homes and places of assignment, during their volunteer service, during meal periods while serving as a volunteer, and while attending project-sponsored activities, such as recognition activities and Community Advisory Group meetings.

Protection must be provided against claims in excess of any benefits or services for medical care or treatment available to the volunteer from other sources, including:

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**Senior Companions and Workers Compensation**

Senior Companions are not employees and are not covered by Federal or state workers compensation insurance. [45 CFR 2551.47]
1. Health insurance coverage;

2. Other hospital or medical service plans;

3. Any coverage under labor-management trustee plans, union-welfare plans, employer organization plans, or employee-benefit organization plans;

4. Coverage under any governmental program or provided by any statute.

(b) When benefits are approved in the form of services rather than cash payments, the reasonable cash value of each service rendered must be considered in determining the applicability of this provision. The benefits payable must include the benefits that would have been payable had a claim been duly made. The benefits payable must be reduced to the extent necessary so that the sum of such reduced benefits and all the benefits provided for by any other plan must not exceed the volunteer's total expenses.

(c) The sponsor must provide Senior Companions with the following accident insurance coverage:

1. $25,000 or more for accidental medical expenses.

2. $50 for repair or replacement of damaged eyeglass frames and $50 for replacement of broken prescription eyeglass lenses or contact lenses.

3. $500 for repair of dentures; $500 per tooth for treatment of injury to natural teeth, limited to a total of $900.

4. $2,500 for accidental death or dismemberment.

(2) Personal Liability Insurance

Protection must be provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. The sponsor must provide third-party protection for volunteers against injury or property damage claims arising out of their volunteer service activities. For each sponsoring organization, the amount of protection must be $1,000,000 for each occurrence of personal injury or property damage and must be in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance, and $3,000,000 annual aggregate.

(3) Excess Automobile Liability Insurance

(a) To avoid a gap in coverage between that provided by the Senior Companion’s personal vehicle insurance and liability claims in excess of that coverage, the sponsor must provide Excess Automobile Liability Insurance coverage of not less than $500,000 each accident for bodily injury and/or property damage.
(b) The sponsor will provide protection against claims in excess of the greater of either:

1. The liability insurance volunteers carry on their own automobiles; or

2. The limits of the applicable state Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law; or

3. In the absence of a state financial responsibility law, $50,000.

(4) Liability Insurance on Personal Vehicles of Senior Companions

(a) This insurance is a Senior Companion's personal expense and is not reimbursable to the volunteer by the project. Senior Companions who use their personal vehicles to drive from home to their place of assignment or in connection with project-related activities must keep their automobile liability insurance in effect for their own protection.

(b) The volunteer's personal vehicle liability insurance must equal or exceed:

1. The limits of the state Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law; or

2. In the absence of a state financial responsibility law, $50,000 for each accident.

e. Annual Physical

(1) To be a Senior Companion an individual must be determined by a physical examination to be capable, with or without reasonable accommodation, of serving adults with special needs without detriment either to himself/herself or to the adults served [45 CFR 2551.41(a)(2)].

(2) The project staff are responsible for describing Senior Companion activities to the medical professional. Based on the examination, the examining medical professional will provide a certification that the individual examined is fit to serve, free of any condition or disability that would be detrimental either to himself/herself or to the adults served, or be a significant hindrance in performance of the activities described. Projects should retain this certification in the volunteer’s file to document fulfillment of this eligibility requirement.

(3) Project staff are encouraged to negotiate with volunteer stations, local health units, public health departments, or private physicians to provide physical examinations to
Senior Companions as non-Federal, in-kind project support whenever possible. It should be explained that the Corporation requires such annual examinations as a benefit to the Senior Companions. Community Advisory Group members, or sponsor staff, may be in a position to persuade individuals or groups in the community, including volunteer stations, to provide examinations or funds to cover the cost.

(4) Costs of supplemental tests or medications are the Senior Companion's personal responsibility.

f. Uniforms or Smocks

When volunteer stations require Senior Companions to wear special uniforms, or smocks, these may be provided at project expense if these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station, sufficient funds are available to cover these expenses, and all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award are met. Otherwise, volunteer stations are responsible for such costs.

g. Recognition

Appropriate recognition will be provided for Senior Companions. [45 CFR 2551.46]

(1) At least annually, the sponsor plans and arranges for formal public recognition of Senior Companions' service to the community. Sponsors are also authorized to recognize local individuals and agencies or organizations for significant activities that support Senior Companion project goals.

(2) Informal recognition should be on-going. This includes listening to and acting upon recommendations by Senior Companions, offering honest praise, and providing assignments that are increasingly satisfying.

(3) Recognition events may consist of special ceremonies, teas, breakfasts, luncheons, and recreational outings at which pins and certificates for stipulated terms of service are awarded.

(4) The Community Advisory Group and volunteer stations are encouraged to participate in recognition activities. Community contributions in support of recognition activities can enhance the quality of the events. Contributions need not be monetary; donated space, food, decorations, and transportation should be encouraged.

(5) To emphasize the importance of the occasion, Corporation Field and Headquarters staff, as well as city and county officials and officers of local organizations, may be invited to recognition events.

44. LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Counsel may be employed and counsel fees, court costs, bail, and other expenses incidental to a Senior Companion's defense may be paid in a criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding when
such a proceeding arises directly out of the performance of the Companion's activities. 45 CFR 1220 establishes the circumstances under which the Corporation may pay such expenses. Consult the Corporation State Office for guidance.
CHAPTER 10
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

45. INTRODUCTION TO GRANT MANAGEMENT

a. Basic Requirement

Sponsors must manage grants awarded to them in accordance with Senior Companion regulations (45 CFR 2551) and their Notice of Grant Award (NGA). Contact the Corporation State Office for additional technical assistance on fiscal management of an SCP grant.

In accordance with 45 CFR Part 2541.200 for State Local and Tribal Governments and 45 CFR Part 2543.21 for Non-profit Organizations that identify standards for financial management system requirements, sponsors should develop an efficient accounting system that must be capable of:

1. Distinguishing grant versus non-grant related expenditures
2. Identifying costs by budget period
3. Identifying costs by budget category
4. Differentiating between direct and indirect costs (administrative costs)
5. Maintaining Federal and required non-Federal share separately
6. Recording in-kind contributions as both revenues and expenses

b. Cost Control and Budget Monitoring

Project support provided under a Corporation grant must be furnished at the lowest possible cost consistent with the project's effective operation. [45 CFR 2551.93] Project Directors should work with the sponsor’s fiscal staff and periodically compare budget to actual costs.

c. Budgeting Costs

Project costs for which grant funds are budgeted must be reasonable and justified as being essential to project operation. “Grant funds” refers to both the Corporation share and the required grantee share of the grant.

(1) Specific costs are either allowable or unallowable. Only allowable costs may be included in the Corporation share or the grantee share of the budget. Only amounts approved by the Corporation may be expended.

Financial Management Training

The on-line course, “Key Concepts of Financial Management,” which can be accessed at The Resource Center: Online Courses, provides a basic introduction to grants management considerations applicable to all Corporation grantees.

Terminology Note

In eGrants, “grantee share” and “applicant share” are used to refer to the required non-Federal share of the grant.

“Local share,” as used in the program regulations, also refers to the required non-Federal share.
(3) Notices of Grant Award as well as the program regulations at 45 CFR 2551.93 incorporate the OMB Cost Principles Circulars, which distinguish between costs that are allowable and costs that are not allowable for all Federal grants. Grantees should review the appropriate Circulars: A-21 for Educational Institutions; A-87 for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments; and A-122 for Non-Profit Organizations. Grantees are responsible for obtaining copies of these circulars, either by calling the Office of Management and Budget's Information Line at 202-395-3080, or by downloading them from the OMB web site: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_circulars.html. The OMB Cost Principles Circulars do not apply to funds that are not included in the grant as part of the Corporation share or the required non-Federal share. Thus the Circulars do not apply to funds budgeted as Excess non-Federal or to other sponsor resources outside the grant.

Additional requirements in the program regulations also determine cost allowability. Below are listed several cost items about which questions commonly are raised. Questions regarding costs not included in the listing below should be referred to the Corporation State Offices.

(a) Equipment or supplies for volunteers on assignment are not allowable, unless these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and there are sufficient funds available to cover these expenses and meet all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award. [45 CFR 2551.45 (g)]

(b) The following insurance costs are not allowable:

1. Public liability insurance for sponsors (except for space that the SCP project occupies that is separate from the main sponsor offices).

2. Primary insurance for volunteers' or project staff's personal vehicles.

3. Health insurance for volunteers.

(c) Costs for recruitment of personnel and volunteers required for the performance by the organization under the award are allowable, including costs of recruiting hard-to-reach volunteers, such as those belonging to ethnic groups that may not be reachable by standard methods of recruitment. Corporation funds should not be budgeted for newspaper, radio, or TV advertising normally donated as a public service.

(d) Only compensation paid to staff who are engaged in activities that directly support the performance of the award is allowable. Sponsors should familiarize themselves with proper documentation requirements in accordance with OMB Cost Principles (A-122 for Non-profit organizations, A-87 for State, Local and Tribal Governments and A-21 for Universities). See Section 53 for more information.
(e) When project staff are employed in the operation of two or more Senior Corps projects, the staff members’ salaries and fringe benefits must be budgeted on a prorated basis in each project's budget, based on the projected allocation of time to each project. Grantees must document actual time spent on each grant, and only actual time should be reported. There is more information on documenting time in Section 53.

(f) The costs of criminal history checks on volunteers or prospective volunteers are allowable. However, wherever possible, these costs should be paid by volunteer stations. When paid by the project, such costs should be budgeted as Volunteer Support Expenses because these costs are program operating expenses.

### Summary of Relevant OMB Circulars

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Educational Institutions</th>
<th>Non-Profit Organizations</th>
<th>State and Local Governments</th>
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### d. Direct and Indirect Costs

1. **Definitions**

   Direct costs are costs that are readily associated with a particular budget line item while indirect costs are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and are not readily associated with a particular budget line item. Federally approved indirect cost rates are generally expressed as a percentage of the direct costs.

2. **Cognizant Federal Agency**

   A “cognizant Federal agency” is an agency appointed by the Office of Management and Budget that is responsible for negotiating and approving the indirect cost rates of a grantee on behalf of all Federal agencies. Typically the “cognizant” agency is the Federal agency from which a grantee receives the majority of its Federal support. When an organization that has no cognizant Federal agency proposes indirect costs in a grant application, the Corporation may assume the role of providing oversight.
(3) Process for Establishing an Indirect Cost Rate

When a grantee has no cognizant Federal agency:

(a) The grantee submits to the Grant Officer, through the Corporation State Office, an indirect cost proposal in accordance with the applicable OMB cost principle circular; and

(b) The Grant Officer reviews the proposal against the applicable OMB guidance and makes a determination of the applicable rate.

(4) Limitation on Indirect Costs

In accordance with the Senior Corps Grant Application, the base for indirect costs in Senior Corps programs is limited to Volunteer Support Expenses. Volunteer Expenses are not included in the base for indirect cost rates.

46. ROLE OF THE CORPORATION GRANT OFFICER

The acceptance of an assistance award from the Corporation creates a legal duty on the part of the grantee to use the available funds or resources in accordance with the terms and conditions of the assistance agreement. An obligation exists on behalf of the Corporation to fund the grantee in accordance with the assistance award.

The Grant Officer for a given grant is a member of the Corporation’s Grants Management Staff based in the Field Financial Management Center (FFMC). The Grant Officer is the representative of the Corporation in financial, budgetary, and administrative matters of Senior Corps. The Grant Officer maintains the official Corporation file for each grant awarded and/or administered by his/her grants unit. The Grant Officer has overall responsibility for the receipt, approval, and monitoring of all required financial documents from Corporation grant programs. Only the Grant Officer, acting as the agent of the Federal Government, has the authority to take the following actions:

- Award a grant.
- Modify the terms of a grant.
- Issue written instructions to the grantee to start or stop work.
- Execute any action which will result in increasing or decreasing the cost to the government.
- Extend or curtail the budget or project period cited in the applicable Notice of Grant Award (NGA).
- In conjunction with the FFMC Director, or his/her designee, propose Management Decisions upon completion of an audit.
- Close-out a grant.
The Grant Officer is ultimately responsible for determining the allowability and reasonableness of grant costs proposed or incurred, except in certain circumstances related to the resolution of audit findings. The Grant Officer appoints the individual designated by State Program Director to be the Project Manager for the Grant. The Project Manager named in the NGA is the representative of the Grant Officer for the purpose of monitoring the programmatic performance of the grant and advises the Grant Officer of all activities that may adversely affect performance. Grantees should first consult with the Project Manager prior to seeking approvals where the Grant Officer has the ultimate approval authority.

47. BUDGET MANAGEMENT

a. Budget Categories

(1) Costs are separated according to whether the proposed source of project support is Federal or non-Federal. In context of the budget, “Federal” means “Corporation,” and “non-Federal” means “sources other than the Corporation” including certain other Federal agencies, as authorized by law or by the source of funds.

   (a) "Required non-Federal.” This is the part of the total non-Federal budget used to meet the 10 percent non-Federal share requirement. Any additional amount that the grantee wants to include as part of the required non-Federal share of the total project cost should also be under this category. Costs included under this category must meet all the cost requirements established by the Corporation.

   (b) "Excess non-Federal.” This is the part of the total non-Federal budget that is in excess of the 10 percent non-Federal share requirement. Inclusion of excess non-Federal costs is not required. If excess non-Federal funds are budgeted, they must support the purpose of the project, consistent with the Domestic Volunteer Service Act. It is generally recommended that as long as costs are allowable, sponsors should budget those costs as part of the required non-Federal share so they can be easily reported on the project’s Financial Status Report.

(2) Allowable costs separated by source are further differentiated by purpose, that is, whether the funds are to cover costs of Volunteer Expenses or Volunteer Support.

   (a) "Volunteer Expenses" is a limited category which includes only the following volunteer costs:

   1. Stipends
   2. Transportation
   3. Meals
   4. Insurance
   5. Physical examinations

Terminology Note
In the context of Senior Corps project budgeting, the term “Volunteer Expenses” is synonymous with the term, “cost reimbursements,” and these terms may be used interchangeably. “Volunteer Benefits” is also sometimes used to describe these cost items.
6. Recognition Items and Activities
7. Uniforms or smocks

(b) “Volunteer Support” includes all allowable costs other than those included above in Volunteer Expenses, including volunteer training costs.

b. Budget Criteria

(1) In accordance with 45 CFR 2551.92, the total of Volunteer Expenses (cost reimbursements) for Senior Companions, including stipends, insurance, transportation, meals, physical examinations, recognition, and uniforms or smocks (as appropriate) must be equal to at least 80 percent of the Corporation share of the grant. Federal and non-Federal resources may be used to make up this sum.

(2) A Corporation grant may be awarded for up to 90 percent of the cost of development and operation of a Senior Companion project. The sponsor is required to contribute at least the amount of non-Corporation support budgeted in the NGA, which must total at least 10 percent of the total project cost.

(a) Project support from non-Corporation sources may be in cash or in-kind contributions.

(b) Corporation approved in-kind contributions may constitute part or all of the non-Federal share requirement. Requirements for in-kind contributions are found in 45 CFR 2541.240 for local and state governments and 45 CFR 2543.23 for institutions of higher education, hospitals and non-profit organizations.

(c) The Corporation may allow exceptions to the non-Federal share requirement requirement (10 percent of the total cost) in cases of demonstrated need such as:

1. Initial difficulties in the development of non-Federal funding sources during the first three years of operations; or

2. An economic downturn, the occurrence of a natural disaster, or similar events in the service area that severely restrict or reduce sources of non-Federal support; or

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Non-Compensation for Services

The authorizing statute for the Senior Companion Program – the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) – prohibits charging Senior Companion beneficiaries for volunteer services. This prohibition is restated in the “Compensation for Services” provision in the Senior Companion Program regulations at 45 CFR 2551.121(c) and applies not only to the client but also to the client’s legal guardian, family members, or friends.

This provision prohibits soliciting donations from beneficiaries of the services of Senior Companions or any other actions by the project that could create the impression that volunteers’ services are linked in any way to financial support from a beneficiary.
3. The unexpected discontinuation of non-Federal support from one or more sources that a project has relied on for a period of years.

(d) A sponsor proposing to contribute less than the required non-Federal share must provide the Corporation with an acceptable written justification for the lower level of support. The justification is submitted for consideration through the Corporation State Program Director.

(e) All non-Corporation funding expended for allowable costs will be counted as local support and as a contribution to the sponsor's local support with the following exceptions:

1. Non-Federal support already committed to meet non-Federal support requirements of any other Federally assisted program or project may not be budgeted as part of the non-Federal support of the Senior Companion project. [45 CFR 2541.240 and 2543.23 (a) (2)]

2. Funds from Federal agencies other than the Corporation, including Federally funded in-kind resources, may not be budgeted as part of the sponsor's local support contribution, except those funds specifically authorized by law. The burden is on the sponsor to document for the Corporation that any funds or in-kind resources from another Federal agency are authorized to be used to make up the non-Federal share of a grant from the Corporation.

3. Direct benefit items, including transportation, meals, physical examinations, uniforms, and recognition items purchased at the volunteer's own expense and not reimbursed, are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget. Federal and/or non-Federal funds may be used to reimburse these costs.

(3) Corporation grant awards are made for a specified dollar amount, and if the sponsor obligates or expends Corporation funds for costs that exceed the amount of the Corporation award, the costs are not allowable.

(4) For non-stipended Senior Companions, the volunteer station or the SCP project must use funds other than Federal or required non-Federal to pay for the cost of volunteer expenses and volunteer support costs. [See 45 CFR 2551.104] These expenses could include insurance, transportation, physicals, meals, and recognition costs, and other volunteer expenses as specified in a Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station.

(5) The number of individuals serving as Senior Companions may vary from time to time to accomplish the number of budgeted volunteer service years.
c. Budget Non-Compliance

(1) Required Non-Federal Share

If a sponsor has failed over the multi-year project period to meet the required statutory 10 percent non-Federal share requirement, the sponsor must take one of the two following actions:

(a) Reimburse the Corporation the full amount of the deficiency, *but only if so directed by the Grant Officer*, or

(b) Submit a written request for a waiver to the Corporation's State Program Director. This written request must be submitted with the final Financial Status Report (FSR) and must include:

1. Why the requirement was not met.
2. What specific attempts were made to achieve the required non-Federal percentage.
3. A plan to provide the required non-Federal share in the current grant budget period assuming the sponsor has received a new multi-year award.

(2) Excess Resources

The sponsor may include in the Excess Resources category all contributions (cash and in-kind) generated by the sponsor in support of the grant in excess of the required non-Federal share. This category can include contributions which cannot be budgeted as required non-Federal share.

Sponsors are not penalized for failure to achieve the budgeted amount of excess support unless it affects the volunteer direct benefits ratio or volunteer service years. Failure to meet the total budget, including the excess, will be examined in light of the overall effect on the project's accomplishment of its goals and objectives. [45 CFR 1235]

(3) Volunteer Expenses Ratio

When, over the multi-year project period, a grantee is unable to meet the requirement that the total of cost reimbursements for Senior Companions must be equal to at least 80 percent of the Corporation Federal share of the grant, the grantee must:

(a) Notify their assigned State Program Specialist and Grants Management Specialist

(b) Make arrangements to return funds to the Corporation

(c) Revise the Financial Status Report to decrease the amount of Federal funds reported expended
(d) Submit a Federal Transaction Cash Report decreasing the amount of Federal funds reported disbursed

(e) Develop a plan to ensure the requirement is met in the next multi-year project period

d. Management of Volunteer Service Years (VSYs)

The possibility of a volunteer serving between 15 to 40 hours per week gives project directors considerable flexibility in establishing service schedules that meet volunteer and volunteer station needs. At the same time, it highlights the importance of carefully managing volunteers to meet the project’s budgeted VSYs.

(1) Counting Senior Companions

There are three distinct ways of grouping volunteers for purposes of counting them:

(a) Enrolled Volunteers

This is the combined total of Senior Companions on both active and inactive volunteer status. The total includes all the Federally funded volunteers and non-Federally funded volunteers needed to meet the budgeted VSYs. The enrolled total is the figure best used to estimate the number of physical examinations and recognitions that must be budgeted annually.

(b) Active Volunteers

This is the total of Senior Companions actually serving or who served within the pay period when the count is made. It includes volunteers normally on active service but temporarily on paid leave. The annual average active total, less the average number of persons on leave, is the figure used to estimate the number of volunteer meals, transportation costs, and insurance costs to be budgeted annually.

(c) Stipended Volunteers

This is the total of active volunteers who will receive a stipend for services rendered during the pay period when the count is made. Volunteers who are normally active and stipended but who are temporarily on leave are counted as stipended. An annual average stipended total is used to estimate the amount of stipend funds to be budgeted annually.

(2) Volunteer Service Year (VSY)

(a) Corporation budget procedures use the following standards to express one full volunteer service year or VSY:

1. 1,044 hours annually
2. 261 days annually (at 4 hours per day)
3. 52.2 weeks annually (at 20 hours per week)

(b) The standardized stipend cost per VSY is calculated by multiplying the number of hours served by the current cost per hour for the stipend (1,044 hours x $2.65 per hour). Each VSY uses $2,766.60 ($2,767) in stipend funds each year.

(c) One VSY does not equal one volunteer unless each volunteer serves 1,044 hour per year. You will need to adjust the number of volunteers required to equal a VSY, depending on the number of hours, between the minimum of 15 and maximum of 40, served weekly.

(d) Volunteer hours should be reported on a cumulative basis over the Budget year (the one year period) not the project period (the three year period). For example, Year 1 may yield 21,028 volunteer hours during the first FSR period, from January until June. From July until December, the second FSR period, 18,972 volunteer hours may be the total. The beginning balances for Years 2 and 3 should be zero.

(e) All of an individual's service time plus all stipended leave (as provided for in the sponsor's policies governing earned leave) cannot exceed, in the aggregate, 2088 hours annually. An individual Senior Companion may serve up to 2088 hours, or 2 VSYs, in 12 months.

e. Management of Stipend Funds

Sponsors should not rely on the Corporation to cover an over-expenditure of stipend funds. At the same time, full expenditure of stipend funds available should be a management aim. During the first year of project operation, start-up time and delays that influence the project's ability to start recruiting volunteers can prevent full utilization of the stipend monies available.

(1) Factors Influencing Expenditure of Stipend Funds

Sponsors should attempt to avoid large fluctuations in the number of Senior Companions on board during the budget period. However, the following factors may make it difficult to maintain a consistent number of Senior Companions active at all times:

(a) Volunteer attrition rates

(b) Extended leaves-of-absence

(c) Delays in orientation scheduling due to weather and resulting in placement delays

(d) Difficulties in recruiting eligible volunteers
(2) Suggestions for Management of Stipend Funds through Management of Stipended Hours

Successful management of stipended hours and funds requires that quarterly or monthly projections be developed taking into account non year-round sites, unstipended leave, and attrition rates.

(a) Estimate Stipended and Unstipended Absences

Sponsors should estimate the effect volunteer absences will have on the actual total of hours stipended.

1. Stipended Absences

   The sponsor's Senior Companion project policies relating to volunteer leave will be a guide for accurately estimating stipended absences. Reviewing volunteer service schedules and interviewing individual volunteers will support accurate estimates as to when volunteers will take stipended leave.

2. Unstipended Absences

   Unpaid absences may occur for individual Senior Companions when Senior Companions use leave time beyond the scheduled allowance provided for in the sponsor's leave policy. Some may be possible to schedule, such as an extended vacation period. Unscheduled unstipended absences may result, for example, from a volunteer's exceptionally lengthy illness or personal matters relating to a volunteer's family which require emergency attention.

(b) Compare Planned Hours with Actual Hours

Stipend expenditures may be managed through careful monitoring of hours of service as follows:

Step #1: Determine the total number of hours of Senior Companion service planned and budgeted:

For a 60-VSY project the stipend funds must be at most 60 multiplied by the annual amount of the stipend, or $165,996.

Find the number of hours funded by either multiplying 60 VSYs times 1,044 (hours) or by dividing the total amount of stipend funds by the cost per hour. The result from either method is 62,640 hours.
Step #2: Determine the number of hours budgeted per pay period:

Divide the total hours by the number of stipend pay periods annually. The total pay periods will be either 26 or 52.2 annually.

If there are 52.2 pay periods, then the total hours (62,640 in this example) divided by 52.2 equals 1,200 hours for which funding is provided each week.

Step #3: Monitor the actual running total of service time plus stipended leave:

Whenever the weekly total of service time plus stipended leave is below the 1,200 weekly allotment of hours, the sponsor has an excess in hours available for paying stipends. Whenever the running total is above the weekly allotment, the sponsor creates a deficit in hours. Reviews conducted each pay period will enable projections to be made as to the rate of expenditure, and cumulative expenditures, in terms of hours.

(c) Estimate Annual Reserve of Stipendable Hours

With estimates in hand for hours of stipended and unstipended leave, the sponsor will be able to estimate from the beginning of the budget year whether there will be a net excess in hours funded over actual hours to be stipended. A net excess may be considered a reserve, which the sponsor should plan to draw upon immediately. Adjustments in enrollment to fully utilize the estimated reserve should be made as early as possible in the budget period because these adjustments become increasingly impractical as the budget period progresses.

It is possible, it is allowable, and the Corporation encourages projects to have more persons actually serving and stipended at a given time than there are VSYs budgeted, so long as there is an estimated reserve of volunteer service hours available within budget.

f. Options When a Grantee Cannot Sustain its Level of Budgeted VSYs

1. Voluntary Relinquishment

A grantee’s approved budget includes the level of volunteer activity it agrees to generate with Corporation funding, and the total Federal amount is referenced in the NGA. However, sometimes a grantee finds itself unable to deliver the budgeted level of Federally funded VSYs. Whatever the cause of the shortfall, this means that funds appropriated by Congress for volunteer services will not be used for their intended purpose.
A grantee in this situation has two possible options to help maximize the utilization of programmed funds. Grantees should contact their Corporation State Office as soon as possible if they are considering either option.

(a) Voluntary Temporary Relinquishment of VSYs

Temporary relinquishment is appropriate when, due to temporary circumstances, a grantee anticipates falling short of its budgeted VSY level for the current budget period. Temporary relinquishment is the process of temporarily reducing the grant budget for stipends and other volunteer expenses associated with the anticipated Federal VSY shortfall. The budget is reduced for the current 12 month budget period, after which, assuming the cause of the shortfall is remedied, the budget reverts to the grantee’s base VSY level.

(b) Voluntary Permanent Relinquishment of VSYs

Permanent relinquishment should be considered when the grantee determines that changing circumstances have made it impossible to sustain the budgeted Federal VSY level. In the case of permanent relinquishment, the grant is reduced by an amount corresponding to the total grant budget, divided by the budgeted number of VSYs, multiplied by the number of VSYs being relinquished. For example, if there are 50 VSYs, and the Federal share of the award is $225,000, the Federal cost per VSY is $4,500. If the grantee is relinquishing 3 VSYs, the grant budget would be reduced by $13,500 (3 times $4,500).

By choosing to relinquish VSYs it is unable to use, a grantee helps ensure that as many eligible volunteers can serve as possible.

2. Corporation-Initiated Reduction of VSYs

When a grantee’s Financial Status Report indicates that it has been unable to meet a minimum VSY achievement threshold based on its budgeted level of VSYs, the Corporation State Office will send an “initial notice” letter advising that grant funding is subject to being reduced if the next FSR reflects a continuing shortfall. The minimum achievement threshold for grants with 67 or more budgeted VSYs, is 97 percent of the budgeted VSYs. For grants with fewer than 67 budgeted VSYs, the minimum achievement threshold is within 2 VSYs of the budgeted VSYs. When the next FSR indicates that the grantee has still not met the minimum achievement threshold, the Corporation State Office is required by Corporation policy to initiate reduction in funding by the amount of the shortfall. As in the case of permanent relinquishment of VSYs, reduction in funding is based on the total grant budgeted, divided by the budgeted number of VSYs, multiplied by the number of VSYs being reduced.

For further information on relinquishing VSYs or the Corporation’s policies on maintaining the budgeted level of VSYs, please contact the Corporation State Office.
48. GRANT AMENDMENTS AND REBUDGETING

During implementation of a grant, a grantee may decide to make adjustments to the approved application. Grantees have considerable flexibility, but the following changes require prior Corporation approval and amendment of the NGA:

- A change in the scope of service or a substantial change in goals and objectives.
- A reduction in the budgeted volunteer service years or the approved stipend line item.
- Creation of a new budget line item where there will be a need for additional funds.
- A change of the geographic service area.
- Transfer of funds budgeted for direct costs to indirect costs.
- Extension or reduction of the budget or project period.

In addition, for grantees receiving more than $100,000 of Corporation funds per year, prior approval is required if cumulative changes exceed 10% of the total budget. For grantees receiving $100,000 or less, the percentage change is not a factor in determining requirements for submission of a formal rebudgeting amendment.

49. ACCESSING GRANT FUNDS

All Senior Corps grantees are paid through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System, abbreviated as PMS. Senior Corps grantees must establish an account with the HHS/PMS that allows them to draw down funds. When a grant is awarded in eGrants, the grant is recorded in the Corporation’s accounting system and transmitted to PMS which maintains an account for each grant. Grantees draw funds from that account. Information on using the PMS is found on-line at www.dpm.psc.gov/grant_recipient/shortcuts/shortcuts.aspx?explorer.event=true

a. Steps in Setting up a PMS account

1. For grantees without a PMS account, the Grants Officer sends the grantee a letter informing the grantee that it needs to fill out an 1199A Direct Deposit Form, which records the agreement of the grantee and its bank designating the bank that will receive funds for the grantee. Also enclosed in the original letter is a contact information sheet.

2. The Corporation forwards the completed 1199A Form to HHS, at which point HHS will assign the grantee a suffix and PIN.

3. HHS notifies the Corporation of the grantee's assigned suffix and PIN through e-mail, and simultaneously, sends a certified letter to the grantee with the same information.
b. How grantees request funds through PMS SMARTLINK

Grantees use SMARTLINK to access funds. SMARTLINK is an automated “next day” direct deposit system for the Federal government. Recipients assigned to SMARTLINK use a PC to access the PMS SMARTLINK Request For Funds application, enter their account and drawdown information (e.g. account number and amount requested), and receive a status message detailing their transaction. The transaction is completed online, and funds are direct-deposited into the recipient's account on the next business day.

Funds should only be drawn down for immediate cash needs or on a reimbursement basis. Grantees should develop written policies and procedures for draw downs so that they are done on a consistent basis and a clear audit trail exists.

At any time, Corporation grants officers can log on to the PMS directly or view authorized, disbursed, and advanced amounts in eGrants.

Grantees may

- Draw down funds on a reimbursement basis;
- Draw down funds that they will be using in the immediate future, usually considered to be within three days of receipt; or
- Maintain Federal funds to be used beyond the three-day period in an interest bearing account. (See “Interest Earned on Advances” below.)

Help and training for grantees using the PMS is available at:

www.dpm.psc.gov/grant_recipient/shortcuts/shortcuts.aspx?explorer.event=true


Grantees report on funds by submitting quarterly Federal Cash Transaction Reports (PSC 272) directly to PMS. The PSC 272 report is an overview of the cash status of the account. It contains data provided by PMS to the recipient and the net disbursement amount as calculated by the recipient. The Federal Cash Transaction Report is similar to a checking reconciliation. At the end of the grant the PSC 272 report MUST reconcile with the SF 269 Financial Status Report and the amount drawn down. If these three numbers are not identical, the grant cannot be closed. A hard copy version of the Federal Cash Transaction Report is included as Appendix 22.

Help on completing the PSC 272 is available at:

www.dpm.psc.gov/grant_recipient/psc_272_reports/272_general.aspx?

d. Interest Earned on Advances

Grantees are required to maintain advances of Federal funds not used within 3 days in an interest bearing account. The project will be allowed to retain the first $250.00 per year to cover administrative expenses. Interest earned above this amount must be remitted annually.
in a check made payable to the U.S. Treasury, to the Department of Health and Human Services, Payment Management System, P.O. Box 6021, Rockville, MD 20852.

The Cash Management Improvement Act and regulations that established this requirement have some exceptions. The major ones that can impact a Senior Corps grantee are as follows:

- State government grantees do not have to follow this requirement unless required to do so by the Department of Treasury Financial Management Service.
- Indian Tribal Governments are also exempt from this requirement.
- The recipient receives less than $120,000.00 per year from all Federal sources.
- The best reasonable available interest bearing account would not have been expected to earn in excess of $250.00 per year on the Federal balance.

50. SUSPENSION, TERMINATION, AND DENIAL OF REFUNDING

The rules on grant suspension, termination, and denial of refunding procedures are contained in 45 CFR 2551.31.

51. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

a. A-133 Audit

Recipients of Federal grant awards are required to have audits performed in accordance with the Single Audit Act, as amended. OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations, provides guidance on audit requirements pursuant to Public Law 104-156 (the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, enacted July 5, 1996). Effective January 1, 2004, Circular A-133 established that grant recipients that expend $500,000 or more of Federal funds in a year must have an independent auditor perform a single or program-specific audit for that year that meets the requirements of OMB Circular A-133. Thus these audits do not apply to organizations expending less than $500,000 in total Federal funds in a given year.

When applicable, an A-133 audit requires the sponsor to have an audit of its entire organization conducted by an independent auditor that essentially determines:

- If the organization's financial statements present its and the programs financial position fairly;
- If the institution has the internal control

Audits performed under A-133 are to be sent to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse at the following address:

Federal Audit Clearinghouse
Bureau of the Census
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47132
structure to ensure that the program is managing the award in accordance with the applicable Federal laws and regulations; and

- That the program has complied with the applicable laws and regulations that may have a direct and material effect on the program's financial statement.

b. Other Audits

In the case of sponsors whose total Federal funding falls below the $500,000 threshold established by the requirements of OMB Circular A-133, the sponsor’s policies apply. A sponsor whose total annual agency Federal expenditures are less than the A-133 threshold may charge a pro-rata share of the cost of an annual audit to the grant. Sponsors must provide copies of any audit report partially or wholly charged to the grant to the Corporation State Office and the Grant Officer. Grantees need to follow applicable Federal, state and local requirements for financial reporting and audits for their type of organization.

In conclusion, familiarize all staff with grant regulations, OMB Circulars and Grant Guidelines to ensure compliance. Keep good documentation that demonstrates that costs are reasonable, necessary, allocable, allowable, and adhere to grant guidelines. Ensure that there is a clear audit trail for all financial reports from accounting system to data submitted. If you have a question, contact the Corporation State Office.
10 Steps to Help Avoid Common Audit Findings

Audit findings frequently result from missing, incomplete, or insufficient documentation that grant requirements have been met. Following are 10 steps you can take to help avoid the more common audit findings:

1. Make sure current Memorandums of Understanding are on file for all volunteer stations where volunteers are serving.
2. Maintain documentation on file, updated annually, that shows that all enrolled volunteers are age and income eligible.
3. Ensure there are assignment plans on file for all volunteers.
4. Document the eligibility of beneficiaries of volunteer services, preferably in the assignment plan and maintain these in the volunteer files.
5. Retain supporting source documentation for all volunteer local travel reimbursements.
6. Ensure all grant funded staff complete time sheets that are kept on file. Time sheets should clearly show that any time spent on non-grant or unallowable activities, such as fund raising or working on other sponsor projects, has been appropriately allocated to other sponsor accounts.
7. Have all stipended volunteers complete signed time sheets that justify payment of volunteer stipends. Keep these on file.
8. Document receipt and valuation of all in-kind contributions counted toward the required non-Federal share of the grant.
9. Submit all required reports, such as Financial Status Reports, Project Progress Reports, on time.
10. Document your organization’s policies and procedures, including internal financial controls, in a manual or handbook.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR SECURING NON-CORPORATION
FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

(Play the Effective Practices database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

The sponsor:

A. Secures, in cash or in-kind contributions, amounts that regularly exceed the required non-Corporation support for the project;

B. Develops and maintains a diversified non-Federal funding base from the private sector, the non-profit community, and state and local government;

C. Has a commitment to secure non-Corporation support for the project which is incorporated into the sponsor’s resource development plan;

D. Includes the project as a designated department in annual giving campaigns such as United Way;

E. Demonstrates the project’s role as an extension of its core services by directing opportunities, such as grants, specifically to the project;

F. Has an established long range resource development and mobilization program that includes the project as a key program to be supported;

G. Designates a sponsor staff member to help generate the needed support;

H. Actively engages its Board in developing non-Federal resources for the project;

I. Works collaboratively with the project’s entity for community participation as dual leaders in mobilizing resources for the project;

J. Keeps project staff informed of the financial status of the project;

K. Makes consistent progress toward expansion of the Senior Companion Program project with other than Federal funds;

L. Learns from other sponsor’s models for building successful partnerships and ways of addressing Senior Corps-specific resource development and mobilization challenges;

M. Shares strategies and tactics with their Corporation State Office and with colleagues in other programs via the NSSCTALK listserv; and

N. Submits examples of effective practices to the Corporation’s Effective Practices Collection at www.nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/topics/
CHAPTER 11
REPORTS AND RECORDKEEPING

Reporting and recordkeeping are essential functions of project management to ensure proper stewardship of public funds and provide information needed to report to the Congress and Executive Branch of the Federal Government on expenditures, project progress, and accomplishments. General reporting and recordkeeping requirements are discussed in this chapter, but projects should always consult their specific Notice of Grant Award (NGA) terms and conditions for the specific requirements of their grant.

52. REPORTS

Every recipient of a Federal grant is expected to submit reports on the expenditure of all funds identified within the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA contains standard Terms and Conditions that apply to all grantees, as well as special Conditions, as applicable, for a specific grantee. (See Appendix 15 for standard Terms and Conditions). For reporting related to Federal grant funds drawn down by the grantee, see Section 49.

Financial reports provide information to Corporation Grant Officers and Project Managers about the total dollars expended. For Senior Corps grants, scope of performance information is also reported, as line items on the reports provide a breakdown of how funds are disbursed among different project activities, such as administration and direct support of volunteer activities.

a. Financial Reports

(1) Financial Status Report, Standard Form (SF) 269A

The Financial Status Report (FSR) is typically due on a semi-annual basis for each grant as specified in the NGA. (See Appendix 12 for a sample FSR.) Senior Corps grantees submit FSRs in eGrants. The FSR is used to report the following transactions: previous period, current period, and total outlays; funds expended for volunteer support and Federal versus non-Federal expenses; unliquidated obligations; and several types of volunteer data.

New Federal Financial Report

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has published its intent to implement a government-wide “Federal Financial Report (FFR), which will replace the FSR currently used. Updated information will be provided when details are final.

Typically, all NGAs issued by the Corporation for National and Community Service for Senior Corps contain the following Conditions regarding Financial Status Reports:

- Grantees report expenditures semi-annually from the start date of the grant on SF 269A "Financial Status Report" by submitting in eGrants an electronically signed
form within 30 days of the end of each reporting period, as specified in the Terms and Conditions of the NGA.

- FSRs describe expenses on a cumulative basis over the performance period of the grant.

- Projects completing the final year of their grant must submit a final FSR that is cumulative over the entire grant period. This FSR is due 90 days after the close of the grant.

- Late submission of the FSR may result in the Corporation placing a temporary hold on grant funds if the report is not submitted within 45 calendar days after the established due date. (Note: An established due date includes an extended due date, when applicable.)

(2) Requests for Advance or Reimbursement using HHS/PMS

The Corporation contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which oversee the Payment Management System (PMS) used to pay grantees. Organizations that have a grant directly from the Corporation have an account with the Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System that allows them to draw down funds. Funds should only be drawn down for immediate cash needs or on a reimbursement basis. Grantees should develop written policies and procedures for draw downs so that they are done on a consistent basis and a clear audit trail exists. Click here for Frequently Asked Questions concerning the Payment Management System.

(3) Federal Cash Transaction Report, Standard Form (SF) 272

The PMS requires organizations to prepare a quarterly Federal Cash Transaction Report (SF 272). The SF 272 report is an overview of the cash status of the account. It contains data provided by PMS to the recipient and the net disbursement amount as calculated by the recipient. The Federal Cash Transaction Report is similar to a checking reconciliation. At the end of the grant the SF 272 report MUST reconcile with the SF 269 Financial Status Report and the amount drawn down. If these three numbers are not identical, the grant can not be closed.

References and Reminders:

- Corporation State Offices are the primary contact and resource for questions about financial reporting. The Corporation State Office is supported by the Grants Management Office in the FFMC.

- Keep the Corporation State Office Project Manager apprised of any questions, concerns, issues, or developments related to the grant.

- Use these two source documents to review specific requirements and procedures for financial reporting:
Notice of Grant Award (NGA) Terms and Conditions, including any Special Conditions

Senior Companion Program Regulations [45 CFR 2551.93]

- Funds returned to the Corporation at the closeout of the grant relationship with the Corporation or for disallowance of grant costs are to be the forwarded to the Corporation Collection Officer in the FFMC, but only as directed by the Grant Officer.
- Delays in submitting FSRs may cause advance or reimbursement requests to be delayed until the overdue FSR is received.

b. Project Progress Report (PPR) - OMB Control Number 3045-0033

See Appendix 10 for the PPR form.

1. Part 1: Project Progress Report

The Project Progress Report (PPR), Part 1, is prepared by the project director and submitted in eGrants semi-annually, unless noted otherwise on the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The purpose of the PPR is to allow the project to report on key activities and progress in implementing work plans and performance measures. The due date is no later than 30 days after the end of the reporting period.

2. Part 2: Data Supplement/Project Profile of Volunteer Activity (PPVA) Survey

This survey and report is submitted annually and covers the 12 month period from July 1 to June 30. The sponsor completes the survey in eGrants, providing a statistical profile of the Senior Companions serving during the period, including volunteer demographics and project activities.

Note: Late submission of either part of the Project Progress Report may result in the Corporation placing a temporary hold on grant funds if the report is not submitted within 45 calendar days after the established due date. (Note: An established due date includes an extended due date, when applicable.)

c. National Accomplishment Survey - OMB Control No. 3045-0049

The purpose of the survey and its reports is to capture specific accomplishment data using standard indicators. A random and representative sample is used. The data is reported as part of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements, as well as disseminated to projects for their own use. This survey does not follow a standard schedule. Corporation State Offices inform RSVP grantees at the start of each fiscal year if the survey is to be deployed in the upcoming year.
53. RECORDKEEPING

As required by 45 CFR 2551.25(g), the sponsor must develop recordkeeping/reporting systems in compliance with the Corporation requirements that ensure quality of program and fiscal operations and facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports. The sponsor’s records also document compliance with regulatory, programmatic, and fiscal requirements and must be available to the Corporation staff to review on compliance monitoring site visits (see Section 54) or in case of audit. [See also 45 CFR Part 2541.200 for State Local and Tribal Governments and 45 CFR Part 2543.21 for Non-profit Organizations for documentation requirements.]

In the event of a sponsor change, the previous sponsor will receive instructions from the Corporation State Office on making available selected project data to the new sponsor.

Records may be kept in electronic or hard copy form.

a. Sponsor Records on Volunteer Stations

The project should maintain a file on each volunteer station containing the following.

(1) A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding.

(2) Letters of Agreement where there are in-home assignments through the volunteer station.

(3) A listing by name of the Senior Companions placed with the volunteer station.

b. Sponsor Records on Individual Senior Companions

(1) The project should maintain records on each Senior Companion containing the following.

   (a) A signed enrollment form including name, address, telephone number, and date of birth.

   (b) A signed Designation of Beneficiary (for insurance purposes).

   (c) The name of the Senior Companion's volunteer station(s).

   (d) The Senior Companion's service schedule and verification of actual hours served.

   (e) A copy of the current written volunteer assignment plan.

   (f) A certification of fitness to serve, based on the most recent annual physical examination (must have been updated within past 12 months).
(g) The most recent annual income eligibility review (must have been updated within the past 12 months).

(h) The Senior Companion’s annual performance appraisal.

(2) Due to the personal nature of the information, the Corporation recommends that volunteer records be kept in locked files.

(3) Personal information about a volunteer, such as home addresses, should be disclosed only with the express prior written permission of the volunteer.

(4) Records may be subject to state law or local ordinance governing access to records.

c. Data Collection and Retention (Including Financial Data)

(1) Periodic Data Collection: Accuracy and timeliness of reports are facilitated by collecting and recording data needed on a monthly basis.

(2) Keep Records of How Data was Collected: Data reported has to be verifiable.

(3) Retain Records: Data collected, including financial records, must be retained for at least three years from the closeout of the last grant 3-year grant cycle or three years past the last audit, whichever is most recent. For exceptions, see 45 CFR 2541.420 or 45 CFR 2543.53.

(4) Volunteer Timesheets: Sponsors are required to ensure that timesheets are maintained that display the actual hours served by each volunteer. To ensure accountability, the timesheets or electronic time and attendance records should be signed by the individual volunteer, the responsible volunteer station supervisor, and the project director.

(5) Salary and Wage Documentation: Following is a summary of the requirements for documenting project staff time and attendance from the OMB Cost Principle circulars. 

2 CFR 230 (Circular A-122) for Non-Profit Organizations states that documentation for activity reporting for non-profits must:

(a) Reflect an after-the-fact distribution of the employee actual activity (non budgeted)

(b) Account for the total activity of each employee

(c) Be prepared at least monthly and must coincide with one or more pay periods

(d) Be signed by the employee or supervisor having first hand knowledge and certified by an authorized sponsor official.

2 CFR 225 (Circular A-87) for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments states that organizations must complete a semi-annual certification for staff who spend 100%
of their time on the grant. Employees who only spend a portion of their time on the
grant need to document the actual time spent on grant activities. Budget estimates do
not qualify as support for expenditure, except on an interim basis, provided that:

a) The estimates produce reasonable approximation of the actual activity performed;
b) Quarterly comparison to actual activity is performed; and

c) Budget estimates are revised at least quarterly to reflect changed circumstances.

2 CFR 220 (Circular A-21) for Educational Institutions states that salaries, wages, and
fringe benefits are allowable to the extent that the total compensation to individual
employees (a) conforms to the established policies of the institution and (b) those policies
are consistently applied. The charges for work performed directly on sponsored
agreements and for other work allocable as facilities and administrative (F&A) costs must
determined and supported as defined in the Circular.

(6) In-Kind Contributions: Documentation for in-kind contributions must record donation
and valuation of each item. The value of in-kind contributions should be entered into
the general ledger and the Financial Status Report submitted to the Corporation.

To value an in-kind contribution, use fair market value as your standard. Fair market
value (FMV) is the price that property would sell for on the open market. It is the price
that would be agreed on between a willing buyer and a willing seller, with neither being
required to act, and both having reasonable knowledge of the relevant facts. If a donor
puts a restriction on the use of donated property, the recipient of the donation must
honor that restriction. Finally, the donation letter from the donor or in-kind voucher
form signed by the donor should be reviewed to ensure the value is reasonable and
comparable with other estimates or bases for value.

The donation letter justifies the valuation of personal services, material equipment,
business, and other non-cash donations. The letter should include: the name and
signature of the donor, the date, the location of the donation, a description of the
item/service donated, and the estimated value of the donation. Grantees should
acknowledge the contribution with a receipt that includes the name of donor, date and
location of donation, a description of item/service, and the estimated value. A copy of
the receipt should be kept in the sponsor’s files.

(7) Reimbursement Claims: Documentation for all Volunteer Expenses related to
transportation, meals, and/or other costs claimed
during the period of volunteer service may be
included on individual timesheets. (See Appendix 19
for a form that incorporates hours of service, mileage,
and meal expenses.) If collected separately, these
costs must also be verified as related to the
volunteer’s service by signatures of the volunteer, the
volunteer station supervisor, and the project director.

Reminder

Travel to and from home to
the volunteer assignment and
meal times that are not part
of the assignment
description, cannot be
included in hours of service.
Expense documentation for audit purposes must:

(a) Contain the volunteer’s name, number or other identifying information used by the project.

(b) Specify the type of expense reimbursement such as mileage or meals.

(c) Specify the amount to be reimbursed.

(d) State the reason for reimbursement.

(e) Include documentation of the expense required by the sponsor.

(f) Specify the date the expense was incurred.

(g) Provide a way for the volunteer to certify that the expense was incurred during service hours.

54. HOW TO PREPARE FOR A PROJECT COMPLIANCE MONITORING SITE VISIT

Corporation State Offices are required to conduct a Compliance Monitoring visit to each project site at least once every six years. Monitoring planning assessments, operational issues, or training and technical assistance needs may warrant on-site compliance visits and/or training and technical assistance visits in the interim years. Site visits are conducted for the following purposes:

- Test compliance with Senior Corps legal, regulatory, and policy requirements
- Identify and minimize potential risks to the Corporation
- Identify specific technical assistance needs
- Document effective practices
- Recognize accomplishments
- Improve quality of programming
- Determine effectiveness of performance measurement
- Provide guidance
- Analyze recurring problems

The Corporation State Office will send a letter prior to the site visit confirming the visit and provide a copy of the “Senior Corps Guide for Compliance Monitoring and Quality Assurance Site Visits” (also called simply the “Compliance Monitoring Guide”) to the sponsor’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Executive Director (ED) and the project director. The CEO/ED and project director are encouraged to read this document in advance of the planned visit, as it provides details on the questions to be answered by the visit, the form in which information is reported and retained in the Corporation State Office’s project files, and suggests the types of documentation the project should have readily at hand during the visit.

The site visit begins with a meeting with the sponsor's CEO/ED to: 1) explain the purpose of the compliance review and 2) inquire of any sponsor concerns and issues to be included in the
review. The site visit is to conclude with an exit interview informing the ED/CEO of the
preliminary findings.

The Compliance Monitoring Guide contains five monitoring components.

The following Compliance Monitoring Components are mandatory:

A. Program Requirements/Compliance
B. Performance Measurement and Legal Verification
C. Fiscal Requirements/Compliance

The following Compliance Monitoring Components are optional:

D. Sponsor/Staff Responsibilities
E. Volunteer/Community Support

The Compliance Monitoring Guide contains all pertinent questions related to the site visit. It
contains a protocol to record the findings, issues, and follow up related to the site visit. Each
section contains primarily “Yes” or “No” questions, with space for the Corporation State Office
representative to describe any issues or record findings more thoroughly.

Following the visit, within 30 calendar days the Corporation State Office will send a follow-up
letter to the CEO/ED of the sponsoring organization with copies to the project director and
Community Advisory Group Chair and include, as applicable:

- Outcomes of the visit
- Areas of non-compliance or potential risk
- Corrective actions to be taken
- Effective practices found

Any fiscal findings or audit recommendations are provided to the Grant Officer in the FFMC. A
signed copy of the completed Project Compliance Monitoring protocol is retained in the
Corporation State Office’s project file.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN REPORTS AND RECORDKEEPING
(Check The Effective Practices Database At The Resource Center For Additional Ideas)

A. The project is familiar with the reports required to fulfill the grant terms and conditions, and regularly submits accurate reports by the required deadlines, including:

1. Project Progress Report (PPR) (Every 6 months);
2. PPR Data Supplemental/Project Profile and Volunteer Activity (PPVA) (Annually);
3. Financial Status Report (Every 6 months).

B. The project discusses reports and requirements with its Corporation project manager and Grant Officer if any information requested is unclear.

C. The project designates accounting professionals within the sponsoring organization to take the lead in financial reporting.

D. The project develops an overall information collection and reporting system plan.

1. The project uses the Project Work Plan and Performance Measures as a blueprint to guide systems that will capture information and data for reporting.
2. If possible, the project invests in a volunteer management software tool to streamline and automate its ongoing data collection and volunteer tracking. See Appendix 17 for a list of available software packages and vendor contact information.

E. For Programming for Impact and performance measurement data collection and reporting (accomplishments and if possible, impact), the project:

1. Works in conjunction with the volunteer stations hosting the volunteers. The project coordinates with volunteer station supervisors to link into the station’s data and reporting systems, rather than independently establishing its own unique systems. Volunteer stations exist to deliver specific services to the community and clients, and will likely have methods and resource persons available that can be utilized to track volunteer accomplishments without having to start from scratch.

2. Ensures that the volunteer station supervisors and personnel who will assist with data and information collection understand the needs related to the Senior Corps volunteers if the project’s request includes or anticipates new data elements or types of information.
3. Incorporates data and information collection into the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station.

F. The project computerizes recordkeeping and reporting systems to the extent possible. For example, the project may:

1. Use spreadsheet software in preparation of budgets or cost estimates, which can later be updated or changed and quickly recomputed with new amounts.

2. Use database software for critical contact information, such as volunteer address labels, and avoid storing identical or redundant information in more than one place (for example, there should be only one source of information for volunteer names, addresses, volunteer station roster and supervisors, etc. If there is more than one location that houses the same information, tracking and updating becomes less accurate and more time-consuming).

3. Create and maintain a set of “folders” on its computer that are categorized according to key dimensions of the work. Store documents and files in the appropriate folders for ease of reference and organization.

4. Take advantage of electronic communications such as e-mail to enhance efficiency. For example, if the project communicates regularly with certain groups of people, set up e-mail address book groups that will automatically distribute a document or file to the selected members (e-mail groups could include members of the Community Advisory Group, volunteers; volunteer station supervisors, community supporters).

G. The project uses the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Senior Corps’ information-sharing vehicles to keep up with the latest news and important developments:

1. The Corporation for National and Community Service website can be found at www.nationalservice.gov. The Senior Corps website is www.seniorcorps.gov

2. NSSCTALK – the Senior Corps e-mail discussion list, can be subscribed to at http://lists.etr.org/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=nssctalk.

H. The project communicates with other Senior Corps project directors to share ideas, receive recommendations, trade tips, and provide suggestions and support. The project sends good reporting and recordkeeping tips to others, including posting them in messages on NSSCTALK.
CHAPTER 12
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

55. COORDINATION WITH OTHER CORPORATION PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

a. The sponsor is responsible for coordinating activities with other Corporation programs, including AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs, as well as other project-related groups and individuals that have strategic objectives similar to those of the Corporation, such as those representing government, State Commissions on National and Community Service, industry, labor, volunteer organizations, programs for children, programs for the aging, and health-care organizations. The goal of such coordination is to facilitate cooperation with existing or planned community services and to develop community support.

b. Sponsors should use sound planning and preparation to generate local support. Development of cost sharing support can be facilitated by integrating the Senior Companion project into the community, rather than operating as a single-focus project. Suggested steps toward achieving coordination are:

(1) Prepare a brief summary of the project, its plans and accomplishments, its value to the community, and a statement of the types and amounts of support it needs.

(2) Meet with individuals or groups who can contribute to the project or who can influence others to contribute to it.

(3) Follow up the meeting with each person or group contacted.

(4) Strengthen the above activities by involving selected members of the SCP Community Advisory Group.

(5) Collaborate with other Senior Corps projects to generate statewide or multi-county support.

56. PUBLIC AWARENESS

a. A strong community relations program ensures public awareness of start-up activities and continuing project development.

b. The project sponsor is responsible for informing social service agencies; city, county, and state officials; community organizations, including senior citizens' organizations, and the media about the project's development, growth, and success.

c. Public awareness can be advanced through public speaking appearances before service clubs, fraternal organizations, religious groups, and meetings with local, county, and state
governmental units. Public relations materials about Corporation programs are available at the Corporation’s website, www.nationalservice.gov. To download media kit materials, click here.

d. Active support of a Senior Companion Community Advisory Group enhances community interest in project activities. Some Community Advisory Groups have formed community relations or publicity and marketing committees which assist the project in building awareness coordinating with other community groups and speaking about Senior Companions before organizations in which they are active.

e. The Senior Companion Program is included in the Corporation's national advertising program. Through the Corporation Public Affairs office, continuing efforts are made to place program information and human interest stories in national and local publications.

f. Public awareness of the nationwide program and of the local project should be promoted regularly through local media and a project website. Systematic contacts with newspapers, radio, and TV should be established and maintained. Announcements of local news value should be prepared and forwarded to the media.

Some examples of newsworthy announcements are:

(1) An agreement reached with a new volunteer station.
(2) The appointment of prominent local persons to the Community Advisory Group or the establishment of a newsworthy special committee of the Community Advisory Group.
(3) Statements of support made by officials and civic leaders.
(4) Achievement of a measurable impact on a critical community need.
(5) Any special Senior Companion project event, such as the presentation of awards to volunteers or to the project staff for significant achievements.

g. Particularly in smaller communities, the news media are usually interested in providing time or space for interviews with Senior Companions or project staff. They are especially receptive to human interest stories.
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY RELATIONS
(Check the Effective Practices database at The Resource Center for additional ideas)

I. Effective Practices for Increasing the Visibility of Service to the Community by Older Volunteers

The project:

A. Develops, implements, and periodically updates a plan to promote ongoing community awareness of and support for the project;

B. Makes presentations about the project to community organizations and interested parties;

C. Has a media awareness campaign to promote community awareness and support;

D. Develops active roles for all stakeholders, including sponsor staff, project director, sponsor Board, volunteers, Community Advisory Group, and volunteer station staff, in promoting the project in the community;

E. Can demonstrate that the community recognizes the project’s contributions to meeting community needs by acknowledging the project or individual volunteers;

F. Broadly disseminates information on project accomplishment and impact to the community, volunteer stations, volunteers, funding supporters, other community agencies, the general public, the Senior Corps, and other key stakeholders so that:

(1) The community perceives the project as a leader in effectively meeting critical community needs; and

(2) The community perceives Senior Companions as active older persons who meet critical community needs.

II. Effective Practices for Coordinating Senior Companion Services

The project and volunteer stations:

A. Collaborate with other Corporation-funded national service programs, including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps*State and National, and Learn and Serve America, to meet critical community needs; and

B. Build broad-based relationships in the community, including the business sector, to gain their support for older volunteers.
57. PROJECT SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

a. Purpose

The sponsor, project staff, and Community Advisory Group all contribute to the effectiveness of the project. The Project Self-Assessment Checklist (see Appendix 11) provides a means for the parties involved in project assessment to discuss and appraise how the sponsor is performing in terms of the following elements:

- Programming for Impact/Performance Measurement
- Reporting Accomplishments and Outcomes
- Volunteer Recruitment
- Volunteer Selection and Management
- Volunteer Support
- Communications/Planned and Informal
- Resource Development/Fundraising
- Project Management

The checklist can be used in the assessment of the sponsor’s performance throughout the range of project operations and is especially helpful in identifying areas that need improvement.

b. Optional Tool

Use of the self-assessment checklist is optional. Sponsors may find it useful as part of the required annual assessment of the accomplishments and impact of the project, as well as in reviews of project operations they may conduct as part of their internal quality control process.

c. Process

The checklist can be completed as a group or individual process. Working independently or as part of a group, participants in the assessment assign strength indicators to each of the project elements. A number of subsidiary factors are listed under each element, and, depending upon the thoroughness of the assessment, participants may apply the strength indicators first to the subsidiary factors before attempting to determine a rating for each area. Comments for clarification of any of the elements can be noted on the form or on an attached page.

d. Alternative Approaches

Sponsors who choose to design their own self-assessment approaches may also find that the Effective Practices sections of this Handbook provide useful benchmarks. See also Effective Practices at The Resource Center: www.nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/.