

*Corporation for*  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 

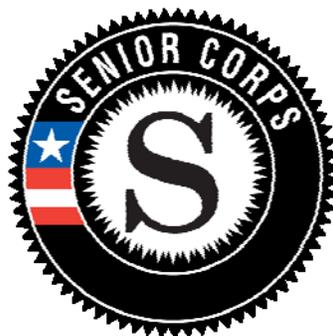
**RSVP**

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**Lead With Experience**

**Get Involved**

**Operations Handbook**



**June 2008**

## **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: RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), and the Senior Companion Program (SCP);*
- *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 RSVP 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 RSVP, 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, Part 2553](#), 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 and, if necessary, contact the appropriate Corporation State Office.*

### *Senior Corps*

*Corporation for National and Community Service  
1201 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20525  
202-606-5000  
TTY: (202) 606-3472  
[www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)*

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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.
- **Search for a Word or Phrase:** This document is available in PDF format, but certain of the Appendices are provided in Word. Depending on whether you have opened an MS Word (.doc) document or are using Adobe Acrobat Reader to view a portable document format (PDF) document, follow the instructions below to find references to a particular word or phrase:

► **In Adobe Acrobat Reader:**

1. Run searches to find content in a PDF by using the Search window or the Find toolbar. These can also be accessed from the Edit menu.
2. Type in the exact word or phrase you are looking for.

The Search window allows you to find all instances of a word or phrase, while the Find toolbar takes you to each instance as they occur in the document.

3. For more information, go to this topic on the Adobe website: [Searching PDFs](#).

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1. On the **Edit** menu, click **Find**.
2. In the **Find what** box, enter the text that you want to search for.
3. Select any other options that you want.

For example, to select all instances of a specific word or phrase at once, select the **Highlight all items found in** check box, and then select which portion of the document you want to search in by clicking in the **Highlight all items found in** list.

4. Click **Find Next** or **Find All**.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Act is the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (Public Law 93-113, Oct. 1, 1973, 87 Stat. 396, [42 U.S.C. 4950, et seq.](#))

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 2553.73](#), which incorporate the OMB Cost Principle Circulars. The OMB Cost Principle Circulars define for all Federal grants which costs are allowable and not allowable.

Assignment refers to the activities to be performed by volunteers identified in a written outline or description. Assignment refers also to an action designating or assigning the volunteer to 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 RSVP 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. 12501 et seq., which administers RSVP. 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. The State Office is a grantee's primary point of contact with the Corporation.

Cost Reimbursements are provided to volunteers to cover incidental costs, meals, transportation, volunteer insurance, and recognition to enable them to serve without cost to themselves.

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.

Director is the Director of the Senior Corps.

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

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.

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.

Handbook is this Handbook, which contains guidance on implementing the program regulations and advice on effective practices.

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.

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) that 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-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 the value of real property, equipment, goods, maintenance, and services that directly benefit the project. Requirements for in-kind contributions are found in [45 CFR 2541.420](#) and [45 CFR 2543.23](#)

Letter of Agreement is a written agreement among a volunteer station, the project sponsor, an RSVP volunteer, and a person(s) served or the person legally responsible for that person(s). It authorizes the assignment of an RSVP volunteer in the home of the person served, defines RSVP volunteer activities, and specifies supervision arrangements.

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 Federal agencies, as permitted by law. These funds are categorized in the project budget plan as non-Federal resources.

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

NCSA, or 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.

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 referral of an RSVP volunteer to a volunteer station for assignment in response to a request for a volunteer by the volunteer station.

Programming for Impact, abbreviated as PFI, is Senior Corps' 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.

Project is the locally planned and implemented RSVP activity or set of activities in a service area as agreed to by the Corporation and the sponsor.

Project Period is the three-year period of performance of an RSVP 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 RSVP volunteers 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. Volunteers are active participants in reflection processes as facilitators and discussion leaders.

Sponsor is a public agency or private non-profit organization, either secular or faith-based, that is responsible for the operation of an RSVP project.

Trust Act means the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (NCSTA) Pub. L. 103-82, Sept. 21, 1993, 107 Stat. 785.

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 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 RSVP volunteers 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 RSVP projects, including executive directors or their designees, RSVP 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 RSVP 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 RSVP program regulations [[45 CFR 2553](#)], 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 RSVP sponsors with ideas and suggestions for operating their RSVP projects. Many parts of the Handbook refer to specific sections of the regulations that govern RSVP in [45 CFR 2553](#), but the Handbook in no way replaces these regulations. Sponsors are required to follow the Federal regulations issued in the Federal Register March 24, 1999, as amended. These regulations, incorporating all amendments issued to date, are included as [Appendix 2](#) of this 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 8.b](#)]. 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 chapter headings 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. [RSVP Volunteer Assignments](#)
8. [RSVP Volunteers](#)
9. [RSVP Volunteer Cost Reimbursements](#)
10. [Project Management](#)
11. [Reports and Record Keeping](#)
12. [Community Partnerships and Collaboration](#)
13. [Project Self-Assessment](#)

This Handbook will be updated periodically. Suggestions for revisions may be directed to:

Operations Handbooks Coordinator  
Senior Corps  
Corporation for National and Community Service  
1201 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20525

Or send an e-mail to [SeniorFeedback@cns.gov](mailto:SeniorFeedback@cns.gov).

### **3. THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE — AN OVERVIEW**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (“the Corporation”) came into being with the signing of 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 in 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: RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. RSVP volunteers recruit and manage other volunteers, participate in environmental projects, mentor and tutor children, 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. Senior Companions help frail seniors and other adults maintain independence primarily in the clients' own homes. 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.

## **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 incentive 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 adult, 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 \$56.9million for Federal RSVP grants. Budgeted non-Federal contributions of \$59.7 million represented a local investment of \$1.05 for every Federal dollar invested in RSVP, demonstrating the broad support that exists for RSVP across the country.

### **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, and excess automobile insurance; 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 284,000 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 in the Foster Grandparent Program, demonstrating the broad support that exists for the Foster Grandparent Program around the country.

### **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, 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 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 the Corporation 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.

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](http://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**

**a. Office of the Inspector General (OIG)**

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.

<p><b>Contacting the OIG</b></p> <p>The OIG will accept confidential referrals of fraud, waste, and abuse in Senior Corps or other Corporation programs.</p> <p>Written notifications should be submitted to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Inspector General Corporation for National and Community Service 1201 New York Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20525</p> <p>By Phone: (202) 606-9390 or the OIG toll-free Hotline: (800) 452- 8210</p> <p>Via email: <a href="mailto:hotline@cncsoig.gov">hotline@cncsoig.gov</a></p>
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**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.

*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](http://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.

#### **Ordering Corporation Publications**

Senior Corps projects can obtain Public Affairs materials and publications by ordering on line at [www.nationalservicepubs.org/](http://www.nationalservicepubs.org/). A media kit is available at [www.seniorcorps.gov/about/media\\_kit/](http://www.seniorcorps.gov/about/media_kit/).

## **(2) Corporation Websites**

The Office of Public Affairs, with support from other departments, maintains a family of four websites – [NationalService.gov](http://NationalService.gov), [SeniorCorps.gov](http://SeniorCorps.gov), [AmeriCorps.gov](http://AmeriCorps.gov), and [LearnAndServe.gov](http://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 the Corporation’s Newsroom, and from all four Corporation 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 500,000<sup>th</sup> 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 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](http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources) is the Corporation's "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 Assistance 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 listservs; 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](mailto:srtech-help@etr.org). The Center's website is [www.seniortechcenter.org/](http://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](http://www.getinvolved.gov) to find volunteer and community service opportunities that best fit their needs and experience.

**Questions?**  
For further information about the "Get Involved" Campaign or VolunteerMatch, e-mail: [getinvolved\\_support@volunteermatch.org](mailto:getinvolved_support@volunteermatch.org) or call 415-241-6842

At [www.getinvolved.gov](http://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](http://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 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](http://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](mailto: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 RSVP**

### **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 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.

### **b. Goals**

RSVP promotes the engagement of older persons as community resources in planning for community improvement and in delivery of volunteer services. Achievement of RSVP's

purpose is facilitated by coordination of the resources of the Corporation, the RSVP sponsor, and the community to fulfill the goals of RSVP:

- (1) Develop a variety of opportunities for community service for older people willing to share their experience, abilities, and skills for the betterment of their community and themselves.
- (2) Ensure that volunteer assignments are made consistent with the interests and abilities of the volunteers and the needs of the community served.
- (3) Ensure that volunteers are provided needed orientation, in-service instruction, individual support and supervision, and recognition for their volunteer service.
- (4) Provide reasonable opportunity for community and volunteer involvement and support in development, operation, and appraisal of the RSVP project.
- (5) Develop local support to supplement available Federal sources and ensure that program expenditures are incurred at the lowest possible cost consistent with the effective operation of the project, as required by the Corporation's legislation.
- (6) Cooperate with agencies and organizations involved in the fields of aging and voluntarism.
- (7) Develop a sound, locally controlled senior volunteer program with continuing community support.

## **7. HISTORY OF RSVP**

RSVP is an outgrowth of efforts by private groups, gerontologists, and government agencies over the past decades to address the needs of retired persons in America. The White House Conference on Aging in 1961 called attention to the continuing need of older people for useful activity. One of the outcomes of the Conference was the passage of the Older Americans Act of 1965. In the same year the Community Service Society of New York launched a pilot project on Staten Island which involved a small group of older adults in volunteer service to their communities. It was named SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement by Volunteer Experience). The success of this program, which demonstrated beyond doubt the value of the services of older volunteers, led to an amendment to the Older Americans Act, creating RSVP in 1969.

RSVP was launched in the spring of 1971 with an appropriation of \$500,000 under the auspices of the Administration on Aging (AoA). In July of the same year, RSVP was transferred from AoA to the Federal agency, ACTION, which had oversight of Federal domestic volunteer programs. Eleven projects were started in the summer of 1971.

The initial success of RSVP caused Congress to increase the appropriation to \$15,000,000 in 1972. To expand RSVP nationally, a national conference of State Executives on Aging was sponsored by ACTION to solicit their ideas and assistance in developing RSVP projects within their states. Subsequently, the State Agencies on Aging received development grants from ACTION for a two-year period to assist communities to develop grant proposals for local RSVP

projects. Under these grants, the state agencies employed RSVP Resource Specialists to provide expertise in community and program development.

In the first half of calendar year 1973, ACTION was gradually decentralized. Program and fiscal responsibility for all RSVP projects was given to the ten ACTION regional offices. This process occurred concurrently with growth of the program to a total of 590 RSVP projects by June 30. It was accomplished with the cooperation and assistance of State Agencies on Aging whose RSVP Resource Specialists had worked closely with ACTION national, regional, and State Office staffs.

The period of greatest growth for RSVP occurred in the years 1972 through 1974. By June 30, 1974, there were 666 projects nationwide operating on a Federal appropriation of \$15,000,000. In 1988, RSVP had grown to 750 projects supported by Federal funding of almost \$30,000,000. In addition, there were six RSVP projects entirely supported by non-Corporation funds. Approximately 400,000 senior volunteers served in 1988. Non-Corporation support had grown to \$27,100,000 at the end of 1987--\$14,700,000 from state and local governments and \$12,400,000 from the private sector.

Initially, RSVP was authorized in 1969 under Title VI, Part A, of the Older Americans Act, as amended. Following the transfer of RSVP to ACTION, Public Law 93-113, the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, was enacted on October 1, 1973. RSVP operates under Title II, Part A, Section 201, of this Act, as amended.

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service came into being when the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was signed. This new Act lowered the age for participation in RSVP from 60 to 55 and eliminated a requirement that volunteers no longer be in the work force. 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 RSVP included 741 local projects with nearly 430,000 RSVP volunteers contributing over 78 million hours of service to their communities through a network of 61,500 local non-profit and community-based organizations. RSVP now serves in more than 1,400 counties nationally. RSVP volunteers continue to make a difference in the lives of those they serve and their communities, 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](http://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.

#### [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#) – the eCFR

The eCFR is a convenient way to access the latest version of the regulations incorporating all amendments. Regulations cited in this Handbook are linked to the eCFR.

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 2553.21](#)). 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 RSVP are in Chapter XXV, Part 2553, which is typically cited as "[45 CFR 2553](#)."

The online CFR or "eCFR" provides the public with enhanced access to Government information and is a convenient way to access the latest version of 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>.

## CHAPTER 2 PROJECT OPERATIONS

### 9. ELIGIBILITY, AWARDS, AND SPONSORSHIP

#### a. Sponsor Eligibility

The Corporation awards grants to public agencies, Indian tribes, and secular or faith-based private non-profit organizations in the United States that have authority to accept and the capacity to administer an RSVP project.

#### b. Solicitation of Proposals

The Corporation accepts applications for new federally funded local RSVP 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/](http://www.grants.gov/) and at the [New Grant Opportunities](#) page at the Corporation's website [www.nationalservice.gov](http://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](#) of this Handbook. Applications are submitted following the instructions and using the forms included in the [Senior Corps Grant Application](#). The application must be submitted by a representative of the sponsor authorized by its governing body to certify that all data in the application are true and correct, 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 21, 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 RSVP projects:

- (1) Any eligible agency or organization (see [Section 9.a.](#)) interested in applying to be a sponsor for an RSVP 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 RSVP 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 RSVP 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 RSVP Sponsor**

Characteristics of a potential RSVP sponsor include:

- (1) A dedicated interest in or involvement with efforts to resolve community problems.
- (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 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 in the community.

- (6) The capability to employ project staff with the experience and skill to assume direct responsibility for project management.
- (7) A governing body or agency board that understands and endorses the project's nature and purpose.
- (8) The capability to establish and manage the program in a way that ensures fiscal and programmatic quality controls, compliance with Corporation policies and procedures, and accomplishment of stated goals.
- (9) 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 RSVP regulations in [45 CFR 2553.23](#), [2553.24](#) and [2553.25](#), the sponsor has the responsibility to:

- (1) Focus RSVP resources to have a positive impact on critical human and social needs within the project service area.
- (2) Assess in collaboration with other community organizations or utilize existing assessments of the needs of the community or service area and develop strategies to respond to those needs using the resources of RSVP volunteers.
- (3) Develop and manage a system of volunteer stations to provide a wide range of placement opportunities that appeal to persons age 55 and over 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 the placement of RSVP volunteers is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (See [Section 24, "Preparation of the Memorandum of Understanding"](#), for further information); and
  - (c) Annually assessing the placement of RSVP volunteers to ensure the safety of volunteers and their impact on meeting the needs of the community.
- (4) Consider the demographic make-up of the project service area in the enrollment of RSVP volunteers, taking special efforts to recruit eligible individuals from minority groups, persons with disabilities and under represented groups.
- (5) Encourage the most efficient and effective involvement of RSVP volunteers by coordinating project services and activities with related national, state and local programs, including other Corporation programs.
- (6) Develop, and annually update, a plan for promoting service by older adults within the project service area. Suggested elements of such a 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;
- Playing an active role in promoting the project and its contributions to the community; and
- Meeting regularly with media, political leaders, funders, civic groups, and others to promote awareness of and support for the project.

**Corporation Strategic Initiatives**

The Corporation encourages sponsors to become familiar with its Strategic Plan and, when possible incorporate the Corporation’s Strategic Initiatives in programming volunteer activities. Click [here](#) to go the Strategic Plan website.

- (7) Conduct an annual assessment of the accomplishments and impact of the project and how they meet the identified needs and problems of the community.
- (8) Provide RSVP volunteers with cost reimbursements specified in [45 CFR 2553.43](#), including recognition of their service.
- (9) 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.)

- (10) Assume full responsibility for securing maximum and continuing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully.
- (11) Provide levels of staffing and resources appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the project and carry out its project management responsibilities.
- (12) Employ a full-time project director (except as otherwise may be negotiated with the Corporation) to accomplish program objectives and manage the functions and activities delegated to project staff for Senior Corps program(s) within its control. (See [Chapter 5](#), “Project Staff,” for further information)
- (13) Consider all project staff as sponsor employees subject to its personnel policies and procedures.
- (14) Compensate project staff at a level that is comparable with similar staff positions in the sponsor organization and/or project service area.
- (15) Establish risk management policies and procedures covering project and RSVP activities. This includes provision of appropriate insurance coverage for RSVP volunteers, vehicles, and other properties used in the project. (See [Section 39.c](#), “Insurance.”)
- (16) Establish record keeping and 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.
- (17) 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. (See [Appendix 15](#), Quick Primer on Discrimination.)

**b. Other Responsibilities**

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

- (1) Locate the RSVP office so that it is easily 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 in the project. The sponsor will stress the recruitment and enrollment of persons not already volunteering.
- (3) Orient volunteer station staff to RSVP and its activities.

- (4) Ensure volunteer stations understand their responsibilities for providing or arranging orientation and necessary in-service training of the volunteers.
- (5) Provide or arrange for volunteer cost reimbursements to be paid in a timely manner.
- (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 low cost modes of transportation.
- (9) Encourage the most efficient and effective involvement of RSVP volunteers by coordinating project services and activities with related national, state, and local programs, including other Corporation programs.
- (10) Ensure that the official sponsor and project information in eGrants is accurate, including the legal names of the sponsor organization and the project; the names of the sponsor's authorized representative and the project director; and their respective post office addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.

### Keep eGrants Updated

Because it is part of official grant records, 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 RSVP 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 RSVP 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 21 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](http://www.seniorcorps.gov/for_organizations/manage/fundraising.asp).

### c. Subsequent Requirements

The sponsor must also abide by any subsequent laws, Executive Orders, or relevant regulatory directives, including special conditions that may be prescribed for the project. The sponsor 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 application of these limitations, contact the appropriate Corporation State Office.

### a. Political Activities [[45 CFR 2553.91\(a\)](#) and [45 CFR 1226](#)]

- (1) 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 nonpartisan 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 RSVP volunteer or employee of a sponsor or volunteer station may take any action, when serving in such capacity, with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification or apparent identification of RSVP 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:
    - (a) In any case in which a legislative body, a committee of a legislative body, or a member of a legislative body requests an RSVP volunteer, 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 RSVP operations.
  - (5) Prohibitions on Electoral and Lobbying Activities are fully set forth in [45 CFR 1226](#).
- b. Restrictions on State or Local Government Employees** [[5 U.S.C. 1501, 1502 and 1503](#)]  
If the sponsor is a state or local government agency with 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; or
  - (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 nonpartisan election. (“Nonpartisan election” means an election in which none of the candidates is 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 2553.91\(g\)](#)]
- (1) RSVP volunteers 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 RSVP.

**d. Non-Discrimination** [[45 CFR 2553.91\(f\)](#)]

For purposes of this paragraph, any program, project, or activity to which Corporation-supported volunteers are assigned is deemed to be receiving Federal financial assistance. (See [Appendix 15](#), Quick Primer on Discrimination.)

- (1) A sponsor or sponsor employee may not discriminate against an RSVP volunteer, 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 volunteer with a disability is qualified to serve.
- (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 2553.91\(d\)](#)]

No grant funds may be directly or indirectly used to finance labor or anti-labor organization or related activity.

**f. Non-Displacement of Employed Workers and Non-Impairment of Contracts for Service** [[45 CFR 2553.91\(b\)](#) and [45 CFR 1216](#)]

An RSVP volunteer 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 2553.91\(c\)](#)]

Under no circumstances may an RSVP volunteer 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 RSVP volunteers.

**h. Nepotism** [[45 CFR 2553.91\(h\)](#)]

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 and with notification to the Corporation.

**i. Volunteer Status** [[45 CFR 2553.42](#)]

RSVP volunteers are not employees of the sponsor, the volunteer station, the Corporation, or the Federal Government.

**j. Fair Labor Standards** [[45 CFR 2553.91\(e\)](#)]

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**

(Check 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 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 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's 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

Older volunteers 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 of 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, sponsor staff identify the *community need* to be addressed, the *service activity*, the *anticipated inputs*, the *anticipated accomplishments*, and the *anticipated impact* 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.

<b>Programming for Impact and Logic Model - Terminology</b>					
<b>Programming for Impact</b>	<b>Community Need</b>	<b>Service Activity</b>	<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>Logic Model</b>	<b>Community Need</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcome</b>

Programming for Impact is an important tool for the 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 50 percent of RSVP volunteers must be placed in outcome/impact based assignments

## **14. THE CORPORATION 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 [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.

## CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### 16. LOCAL OWNERSHIP

- a. RSVP 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 that the program regulations require the sponsor to organize to secure community participation in the project. [\[45 CFR 2553.24\]](#) 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 Advisory 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 Advisory Group;
  4. Consistently communicates information between the sponsor's Board and the project's Community Advisory Group; and
  5. Helps to recruit qualified members to the Community Advisory Group 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 project director 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 RSVP 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 community, 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 sub-contract responsibility for fulfilling project management requirements. [[45 CFR 2553.22](#) and [45 CFR 2553.25](#)]

Hiring of project personnel must be in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 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 2553.25 \(b\) - \(e\)](#) for provisions 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 volunteers
- d. Geographic distribution of RSVP volunteer assignments
- e. Availability of supplemental state or Federally subsidized full- or part-time staff and volunteer staff

**Senior Community Service  
Employment Program  
(Title V, Older Americans Act)**

In a number of areas, [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#) enrollees are available and can be used to supplement grant-funded staff.

- (1) Volunteer staff, consistent with the nature and purpose of the Corporation's volunteer programs, are persons with management experience and others with experience in office operations, who may be deployed to strengthen and expand the operations of RSVP projects.

- (2) RSVP volunteers can perform non-budgeted staff functions under supervision of the RSVP staff. Non-RSVP volunteers can be budgeted as in-kind contributions for necessary project operational functions. Consult the Corporation State Office for additional guidance.

- f. Availability of funds
- g. 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 2553.25](#)]. At a minimum, policies should address salaries and fringe benefits, probationary periods of service, suspensions, resignations, hours of service, vacations, sick leave, holidays, terminations, and grievance procedures.
- b. Compensation levels for project staff, including wages, salaries, and fringe benefits must be comparable to like or similar positions in the sponsor organization and/or the project service area [[45 CFR 2553.25\(e\)](#)].
- 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**

It is strongly recommended that criminal history checks be conducted for project staff who have contact on a recurring basis with children, frail adults, persons with disabilities or other potentially vulnerable individuals.

Among the 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](http://www.nationalservice.gov/screeningtoolkit).

## **21. PROJECT STAFF ROLES**

### **a. Project Director**

- (1) The sponsor assigns responsibility for the project's daily management to the project director. A project director functions as a working project manager, actively involved

with community organizations, RSVP volunteers, 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 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 2553.25\(c\)](#)]
- (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 should 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) Assessing volunteer needs of the community and planning and developing all phases of the project operation.
  - (b) Selecting, training, supervising, and evaluating project staff.
  - (c) Recruiting, orienting, placing, and arranging for assignment of RSVP volunteers.
  - (d) Incorporating Programming for Impact and performance measurement principles and practices in program development, volunteer placement, and project assessment.
  - (e) Maintaining appropriate fiscal and program records and preparing reports.
  - (f) Developing and maintaining close coordination with volunteer stations.
  - (g) Enhancing the total project effort through active involvement with community organizations, other national service programs, and other senior and volunteer programs.

See [Appendix 4](#) for a sample position description for an RSVP Project Director

- (h) Keeping RSVP Community Advisory Group members informed and soliciting their advice on matters affecting project operation; providing staff assistance to the Community Advisory Group.
- (i) 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 fund raising to grant funds.)
- (j) Providing information and support to RSVP volunteers.
- (k) Assessing appropriateness and performance of volunteer stations.
- (l) Attending training conferences conducted or authorized by the Corporation.
- (n) 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, for example:

- (1) Coordinating and monitoring RSVP volunteer assignments, in-service training, supervisory arrangements, and other activities in cooperation with appropriate volunteer station staff.
- (2) Making periodic visits to volunteer stations to monitor the satisfaction of the RSVP volunteers with their assignments and progress toward achieving expected outcomes and impact of their assignments.
- (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 RSVP volunteers.
- (5) Assessing appropriateness and performance of volunteer stations.
- (6) Attending training conferences conducted or authorized by the Corporation as funding allows.

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR BUILDING PROJECT STAFF

(Check 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 ensures project staff receive an orientation to the Senior Corps, RSVP, 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 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; and
- 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

### 22. INTRODUCTION

#### a. Overview

RSVP volunteers are recruited and enrolled by the RSVP project and placed with or through volunteer stations. Volunteer stations are encouraged to support recruitment by referring prospective RSVP volunteers to the project.

#### b. Characteristics of Volunteer Stations

A 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 RSVP volunteers. 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 2553.12\(r\)](#)]

- (1) 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, teaching, counseling, entertaining, etc. Placements must not displace paid employees and must avoid other staff or clerical assignments which would accrue to the profitability of the proprietary health-care organization.

The Memorandum of Understanding with such volunteer stations must include detailed provisions to ensure compliance with program regulations regarding “Non-displacement of Employed Workers and Nonimpairment of Contracts for Service” [[45 CFR 1216](#), included as [Appendix 3](#)].

- (2) Individual private homes may not be volunteer stations. In-home assignments are made only through a volunteer station (see [Section 27](#), “In-Home Assignments”).
- (3) Volunteer stations are located within the project's service area as defined in the approved grant application.

#### c. Types of Volunteer Stations

RSVP volunteers may serve in many different types of volunteer station, including, but not limited to:

Adult Day Care Centers	Home Health Care Organizations
Animal Care Programs	Hospitals/Medical Centers
Before/After School Programs	Libraries
Chambers of Commerce	Long-Term Care Facilities/Mental Health Facilities (Non-Residential)
Child Day Care Centers	Multi-Purpose Centers
Community Development Non-Profits	Museums
Congregate Nutrition Center/Meals On Wheels	Native American Schools
Corrections Facilities	Nursing/Convalescent/Hospices
Courts	Parks/ Recreation Organizations
Developmental Disability/ Rehabilitation Centers	Police/Law Enforcement Agencies
Educational Pre-Schools	Post-Secondary Institutions
Elementary Schools	Public Housing
Environmental Programs	Secondary Schools
Food Banks/Gleaning Programs	Shelters (homeless, abused, etc)
Head Start Centers	Thrift/Co-ops/Craft Programs

**d. RSVP Project or Sponsor as Volunteer Station**

- (1) The RSVP project itself may function as a volunteer station or initiate special volunteer activities provided the Corporation agrees that these activities are in accord with program objectives and will not hinder overall project operations [[45 CFR 2553.61](#)].
- (2) Project operation can be strengthened by assignment of RSVP or non-RSVP volunteers to responsible roles under direction and control of the RSVP director. Projects cannot include the time of RSVP volunteers in the grant budget as part of the local support, as they can with other non-RSVP community volunteers who satisfy guidelines for project in-kind contributions.
- (3) The sponsor may function as a volunteer station, but no more than 5 percent of the total number of volunteers budgeted for the project may be assigned to the sponsor in administrative or support positions. This limitation does not apply to the assignment of volunteers to other service programs administered by the sponsor or to special volunteer activities of the project [[45 CFR 2553.61](#)].

**e. Volunteer Station Cash or In-Kind Support of Volunteers**

In accordance with [45 CFR 2553.91\(c\)](#) an RSVP volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the RSVP project. However, this support may not be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain RSVP volunteers. If a volunteer station agrees to provide funds to support additional volunteers or pay for other volunteer support costs, the agreement must be stated in the written 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.

**23. VOLUNTEER STATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES****a. Responsibilities of RSVP Volunteer Stations**

As defined in [45 CFR 2553.62](#), RSVP volunteer stations:

- (1) Develop volunteer assignments that impact critical human and social needs, and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness.
- (2) Assign staff member responsible for day to day oversight of the placement of RSVP volunteers within the volunteer station and for assessing the impact of volunteers in addressing community needs.
- (3) Obtain a Letter of Agreement for an RSVP volunteer assigned in-home. The Letter of Agreement must comply with all Federal, state and local regulations.
- (4) Keep records and prepare reports as required.
- (5) Comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations including reasonable accommodation for RSVP volunteers with disabilities.
- (6) Provide assigned RSVP volunteers the following support:
  - (a) Orientation to station and appropriate in-service training to enhance performance of assignments.
  - (b) Resources required for performance of assignments including reasonable accommodation.
  - (c) Supervision while on assignment.
  - (d) Appropriate recognition.
  - (e) Provide for the safety of RSVP volunteers assigned to it.

**b. Additional Responsibilities**

The program regulations also provide that volunteer stations undertake such other responsibilities as may be necessary to the successful performance of RSVP volunteers in their assignments or as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding [[45 CFR 2553.62\(g\)](#)]. Such other responsibilities typically include:

- (1) Assisting with or helping to arrange for volunteer transportation, volunteer recognition, and, when possible, meals. 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 2553.43\(e\)](#)]. Otherwise, such expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer station.
- (2) Maintaining volunteer service records.
- (3) Assisting projects with development of written assignment descriptions in accordance with Programming for Impact and performance measurement principles and practices.
- (4) Providing the project with updates and accomplishments related to the written volunteer assignment descriptions and to document and report project accomplishments and impacts.
- (5) Appraising volunteer performance, according to the station's practice.
- (6) Providing testimonials and examples of how RSVP volunteers meet important community needs 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.
- (7) Prior to placement of volunteers, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the sponsor establishing working relationships and mutual responsibilities and detailing the responsibilities outlined above as well as other responsibilities that may be agreed to. (See [Section 24](#)). The Memorandum of Understanding may be amended at any time by mutual agreement.

**c. Letters of Agreement for In-Home Assignments**

- (1) According to [45 CFR 2553.62\(c\)](#) volunteer stations managing assignments in private homes must develop a Letter of Agreement describing and authorizing the RSVP volunteer activities in each home (See [Appendix 6](#) for an example). The requirement for Letters of Agreement is incorporated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

- (2) Letters of Agreement contain a statement authorizing an RSVP volunteer assignment in a person's home and designating the activities to be performed. The Agreement also defines arrangements for days and hours of service and the specific plan for the RSVP volunteer's supervision. The person (or person legally responsible for the person) to be served, the volunteer station, and the sponsor sign the Agreement.
- (3) The Letter of Agreement provides a common understanding of what the senior volunteer will and will not do while on an in-home assignment. Such an agreement is not required for casual or friendly visiting that is not part of a regular, ongoing program of activities organized by a volunteer station. The delivery of meals to a home would normally not require a Letter of Agreement.
- (4) Projects working with organizations, such as hospices, which have obtained Letters of Agreement, or equivalent written agreements with their individual clients, may sign general letters of agreement covering all of the organization's home based clients, rather than obtaining individual letters for each person. The Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station must reference any such agreements.

## **24. 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. 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 the regulations at [45 CFR 2553.23\(c\) \(2\)](#). (See [Appendix 5](#) for a sample Memorandum of Understanding.)

### **b. Renegotiating and Updating**

The Memorandum of Understanding must 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 volunteer assignments.

### **c. Content**

The Memorandum of Understanding should include:

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

- (2) The number of volunteer assignments projected to be available with or through the volunteer station.
- (3) The name of the primary volunteer station staff member responsible for day-to-day supervision of RSVP volunteers and a description of supervisory arrangements.
- (4) Volunteer station and sponsor contributions to support RSVP volunteers (meals, insurance, transportation, and recognition) and/or other project costs.
- (5) The volunteer station's responsibilities in relation to implementing Programming for Impact and performance measurement, as applicable.
- (6) Volunteer station agreement to provide required reports.
- (7) Provision for the safety of the RSVP volunteers while on assignment.
- (8) Provision for a Letter of Agreement for in-home assignments. (See [Appendix 6](#) for a sample.)
- (9) A listing of geographic locations/sites, other than private homes, where RSVP volunteers will serve through the volunteer station and the number of volunteers placed at each site.
- (10) Assurance that the station will not discriminate against RSVP 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.
- (11) 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.
- (12) The average number of persons the volunteer station serves annually.

## **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 community as validated by community-accepted studies and reports prepared by government, community groups, or educational institutions;
- 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; and
- 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 Stations**

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

- A. Conducting an orientation to the Senior Corps, RSVP, and the project prior to the placement of volunteers;
- B. Communicating to the volunteer stations its policies on the terms and conditions of RSVP 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

- A. The sponsor and project staff make informed decisions about the community needs to be addressed and the volunteer stations that provide placement opportunities for RSVP volunteers. 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, RSVP volunteers, 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 the most important community needs;
  - (5) Works with each volunteer station to determine the service to which RSVP volunteers are assigned; and
  - (6) Identifies and communicates its anticipated accomplishment and impact goals 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. 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) Determine, prior to initiating service efforts, the benchmarks it will use as the standards for measuring progress;
  - (3) 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;
  - (4) Consistently and accurately provide the needed data;

- (5) Use the assessment to adjust service assignments and the project's portfolio of volunteer stations;
- (6) Work together to use the information related to accomplishments and impact to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project's programming and to develop specific steps to strengthen volunteer services provided in the community; and
- (7) Work together to modify volunteer assignments to more effectively meet the identified needs.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RSVP VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **25. CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS**

##### **a. General Criteria**

RSVP projects should develop a variety of assignments prior to the recruitment of RSVP volunteers. Assignments should serve the dual purpose of providing a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers and meeting critical community needs.

##### **b. Match Volunteer Interests and Abilities**

Assignments are matched to the interests, abilities, preferences, and availability of volunteers. Special consideration is to be given to developing assignments that allow for volunteers with limited physical strength and mobility or other disabilities.

Special efforts should be made to find the kind of activity sought by prospective volunteers. This applies also to presently enrolled volunteers seeking a change in type of assignment and/or more challenging responsibilities.

##### **c. Assignment Descriptions**

Volunteer stations provide a written outline of duties or description of individual assignments [[45 CFR 2553.12\(c\)](#) and [2553.62](#)]. These should be on file in the RSVP office or at the volunteer station and a copy should be given to each volunteer when assigned. Written assignments help to identify and clarify what the volunteer is expected to do and help to avoid misunderstanding. (See [Appendix 8](#) for a sample RSVP volunteer assignment description.)

##### **d. Referrals**

If, for any reason, a prospective volunteer cannot be placed through RSVP, the project director should refer that person to other volunteer service opportunities.

##### **e. Senior Centers and Similar Organizations**

RSVP volunteers assigned to senior centers and similar organizations should not duplicate normal volunteer responsibilities expected of center members or participants, such as serving meals and refreshments, set-up and take-down of tables and chairs, reading to other center participants, etc. Acceptable volunteer assignments affiliated with centers include serving as instructor in classes requiring special skills and serving in community service or outreach programs, such as telephone reassurance and tax or insurance counseling.

**f. Fund Raising by RSVP Volunteers**

RSVP volunteers may serve in a fund raising capacity for community organizations and for the RSVP project itself. Fund raising for the project should be limited so that it is not perceived by the community as the primary activity of the RSVP project or its volunteers.

**g. Service on Boards and Advisory Councils**

RSVP volunteers may serve on boards and advisory councils of private non-profit or public agencies. These hours of service may be counted, and these volunteers are eligible for volunteer benefits.

**h. Service on the RSVP Community Advisory Group**

RSVP volunteers serving as members of their RSVP Community Advisory Group are eligible to count their time as volunteer service and for volunteer benefits.

**i. Expanding Service in Areas of Need**

Projects are encouraged to expand the variety of significant community service choices for volunteers by identifying areas of special emphasis in response to local community needs and by recruiting to meet those needs. In selected areas, the Corporation provides technical assistance and training. These programming areas generally reflect far-reaching national needs, as described in the Corporation's [Strategic Plan](#).

**26. SELECTION OF ASSIGNMENTS****a. Range of Options**

Assignments and terms of service, including service hours, should reflect individual RSVP volunteer preferences. Project and volunteer station staff should ensure that a range of service opportunities are available to provide a choice.

**b. Complement and Supplement**

Volunteer assignments developed for RSVP volunteers should complement or supplement and not encroach upon, existing community volunteer activities.

**c. Public Safety and Disaster-Related Assignments**

RSVP volunteers serve in a wide variety of public safety and disaster-related roles. Many RSVP volunteers serve with police departments or fire departments, and wear police or fire department uniforms. Their projects or volunteer stations often identify them as "Volunteer Police Officers" or "Fire Department Volunteers." Regardless of their title, as RSVP

volunteers their role is to provide support to these departments, but not enforce the law or participate in controlling fires.

It is important that RSVP sponsors ensure that RSVP volunteers do not serve in roles that place the volunteer at risk of personal harm and that volunteer insurance coverage is not voided as a result of participation in certain public safety or disaster-related assignments.

Following is a representative list of appropriate and inappropriate disaster-related and public safety roles for RSVP volunteers:

**(1) Appropriate Assignments:**

- (a) *Safety*: Supporting fire departments and other local safety agencies by engaging in community outreach through dissemination of information, including coordinating public safety meetings and providing training and assistance with smoke detectors, in-home lighting, egress in case of fire, accident prevention at home, automobile safety, child and adult auto safety devices, etc.
- (b) *Public Safety Hotline*: Supporting police departments, fire departments and other local safety agencies by answering telephones and providing accurate information to callers.
- (c) *Disaster Preparedness and Response*: Organizing and participating in Citizen Corps Councils and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT); providing administrative support to Emergency Management Agencies; supporting community-based relief agencies by helping coordinate community inventories of vital medical, blood and food supplies; serving as outreach and community education links for relief agencies; serving in emergency kitchens and shelters; supporting reconstruction activities; etc.
- (d) *Public Health*: Supporting public health agencies by engaging in outreach and community education; supporting immunization for children and other targeted groups; etc.
- (e) *Crime Awareness/Avoidance*: Teaching safety at shopping malls, tourist safety, and safety precautions when out in public; providing scam alerts; identifying high crime areas; etc.
- (f) *Neighborhood Watch/Block Watch*: Organizing and providing training for establishing neighborhood, school, trail, block, or other types of watch programs; participating in watch activities; etc.
- (g) *Community policing/patrol*: Checking homes of people on vacation or away for the season; working with local police and community organizations to help ensure a safer community; etc.

- (h) *Household security*: Conducting household security assessment; distributing self-administered security checklists; installing safety window or door locks and outdoor lighting; conducting workshops on household safety; etc.
- (i) *Safety for Children*: Establishing safe schools, safe havens, safe play streets, and safe corridors for children, and providing training for youth and adults about these areas; serving on school safety patrol; serving in youth recreational and educational activities; fingerprinting and photo identification cards for children to provide a record of identity; etc.
- (j) *Child Abuse & Neglect*: Training in awareness, prevention, reporting and self-defense to children regarding sexual abuse; providing assistance and counsel to children who are abused or neglected; etc.
- (k) *Elder Abuse & Neglect*: Training in identifying, reporting, and preventing elder abuse; providing assistance, counsel and support to adults, particularly the frail elderly, who are abused or neglected; etc.
- (l) *Family Violence/Victim Assistance*: Providing aid, assistance, and counsel to victims of family violence; assisting with shelters; training in prevention and self-defense; etc.
- (m) *Records and Data Entry*: Recording and performing data entry of crime statistics, individuals with special needs in the case of a disaster, transporting police and court records; etc.

**(2) Inappropriate Assignments:**

RSVP volunteers should not be given any assignment that places the volunteer at risk of personal harm. Also, consistent with [45 CFR 2553.91](#), volunteers “*shall 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.*”

Inappropriate activities include the following:

- (a) Issuing citations for any violation.
- (b) Street traffic control.
- (c) Participating in “ride along” with on-duty police officers.
- (d) Riding on emergency equipment when on call.

- (e) Performing emergency duties assigned to fire or police employees.
- (f) Serving as paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMT) or other in other emergency medical service roles.

## **27. IN-HOME ASSIGNMENTS**

### **a. Careful Planning with Volunteer Stations**

Assignment of RSVP volunteers in the homes of persons served requires planning by the RSVP director and by volunteer station professional staff, in cooperation with the person to be served. In-home placements may be made through many types of volunteer stations. These include, but are not limited to: agencies serving unwed teenage parents; juvenile diversion programs; mental health centers; health organizations; hospitals; visiting nurse associations; hospice programs; and home-health agencies.

### **b. Volunteer Station Responsibilities**

Project staff must exercise good judgment in arranging in-home placements. It is recommended that projects secure the volunteer station's commitment to:

- (1) Provide necessary training for RSVP volunteers regarding their specific assignments.
- (2) Conduct regularly scheduled meetings with the RSVP volunteers to review activities, problems encountered, and progress made. Since traditional forms of supervision are difficult in home settings, ensuring volunteer station staff meet regularly with volunteers placed in homes is a critical part of the RSVP director's responsibility.
- (3) Visit the RSVP volunteer in-home with the assigned person on a regularly scheduled basis.
- (4) Address other specific conditions included in the Memorandum of Understanding, including obtaining a Letter of Agreement for an RSVP volunteer assigned in-home [[45 CFR 2553.12\(g\)](#) and [2553.62\(c\)](#)]. (See [Section 23.c.](#) for more on Letters of Agreement.)

## **28. ASSIGNMENTS TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP**

### **a. Skill Development and Capacity Building**

Developing and cultivating the leadership capacity of RSVP volunteers is one of the best ways to ensure a high quality volunteer experience, volunteer-driven program expansion, and sustainable services to the community. The flexibility of the RSVP program model allows local RSVP projects to develop assignments that strengthen the project and build volunteer station capacity, while strengthening the volunteers' leadership skills.

### **b. Examples of Leadership Roles**

As RSVP "leaders," volunteers can, for example:

- Recruit and coordinate volunteers of any age for a volunteer station.
- Assist the RSVP project director with recruitment and coordination of direct service RSVP 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.
- Assist volunteer stations with Programming for Impact and performance measurement, including data collection tools or methods.
- Conduct outreach to the community.
- Garner financial, in kind, and other forms of support for the RSVP project.

## **29. TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

- a. The project staff and volunteer stations should be alert to changes or problems that may lead to assignment terminations, such as when the relationship is no longer meaningful or satisfying to the RSVP volunteer.
- b. Regardless of the cause of termination of an assignment, the decision must be made jointly by project and volunteer station staff, with full consideration given to the volunteer, including placement with another volunteer station, as 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 RSVP staff or the project.

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN RSVP VOLUNTEER 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 those 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 community.

### II. Effective Practices for Ensuring the Safety of RSVP Volunteers

The project:

- A. Addresses all relevant safety issues, including service conditions at volunteer stations, prior to permitting RSVP volunteers to begin their assignments;
- B. Works closely with volunteer stations to ensure that RSVP volunteers 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 RSVP service; and
- D. Promptly and effectively responds to RSVP volunteers' emergencies and complaints and designates a staff person to respond to such concerns.

### III. Effective Practices for Communicating with RSVP Volunteers

- A. The project clearly communicates with RSVP volunteers about their roles and responsibilities by:
  - (1) Developing with the RSVP volunteers a written volunteer assignment description that specifies the needs of the community and the role and

activities of the RSVP volunteers in delivering the needed services (See [Appendix 8](#) for an example of an assignment description. The Senior Corps Performance Measurement Toolkit, available at [www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/online\\_pubs/perf\\_meas/sc\\_pmtoolkit.php](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/online_pubs/perf_meas/sc_pmtoolkit.php) also contains useful materials for developing assignment descriptions and reviewing/measuring results and impact);

- (2) Providing volunteers with a written description of the conditions and terms of volunteer service, including holidays, service schedules, and cost reimbursements; and
  - (3) Ensuring that RSVP volunteers know their key contacts and sources of assistance or help during their service, and how to contact them.
- B. The project encourages volunteer stations to set up a process for appraising and documenting volunteer performance that provides feedback and guidance to each volunteer in key areas such as: reliability, actual progress and outcomes, initiative, and leadership.

## CHAPTER 8 RSVP VOLUNTEERS

### 30. ELIGIBILITY TO BE ENROLLED

#### a. Requirements

RSVP volunteers must be 55 years of age or older, willing to serve on a regular basis without compensation, and reside in or nearby the community served by RSVP. [[45 CFR 2553.41\(a\)](#)] They must also be willing to accept instruction and supervision as required.

#### b. Non-Discrimination

Eligibility to be an RSVP volunteer may not be restricted 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 volunteer with a disability is qualified to serve. [[45 CFR 2553.41\(b\)](#)]

### 31. RECRUITMENT OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS

#### a. Preparation

- (1) Before RSVP volunteers are placed, the sponsor must have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and have developed, in conjunction with the volunteer station, written assignment descriptions.
- (2) Recruitment and enrollment of eligible RSVP volunteers are project responsibilities, not to be delegated to volunteer stations.
- (3) Recruitment assistance in the form of referrals may come from the RSVP Community Advisory Group, volunteer stations, and RSVP volunteers themselves.
- (4) A volunteer recruitment plan should take into account the following, among other considerations:
  - (a) Location of “active adult” or retirement communities, senior citizen housing, senior centers, clubs, and other settings where people over age 55 gather or receive services.
  - (b) Local employers of age eligible, or soon to be eligible, Baby Boomers in both the private and public sectors, as well as independent businesses and trades people.
  - (c) Distance (in both miles and time) between the potential RSVP volunteer and places of assignment.

- (d) Modes and estimated costs of available public or private transportation.
- (5) Special efforts should be made to recruit and assign members of minority groups, persons with disabilities, and hard-to-reach individuals and groups in the service area which are under-represented in the project.
- (6) Special management and capacity building needs of community organizations and governmental units for volunteers can often be responded to by recruiting retired professionals, managers, or administrators who would find such assignments challenging.
- (7) RSVP stresses recruitment and enrollment of eligible persons not already volunteering.
- (8) Projects should focus their recruitment efforts within their own service areas. When volunteers from adjacent areas where there is an RSVP project want to serve in within the service area of another project, the two project directors should consult to ensure that this is in the best interest of the volunteer and the program. Such cases may arise where transportation to a volunteer station in an adjacent area is more convenient or where a station in the adjacent area has need of a volunteer's special skills and no similar opportunity exists in the area where the volunteer resides.

#### **b. Choosing Recruitment Methods**

Although direct, face-to-face communication with prospective volunteers is most productive, a variety of recruitment methods may be used to reach either broad audiences or specific populations. The choice of the most feasible method will depend on:

- (1) Availability of recruitment resources (the project's website, newspapers, access to radio and television public service time, available staff, outreach volunteers, etc.).
- (2) Community acceptance of volunteer programs and Federally funded programs.
- (3) The degree to which communication links exist with seniors, including older members of minority groups, persons with disabilities, and hard-to-reach community members.

#### **c. Examples of Methods**

Recruitment can be done through:

- (1) Contacting potential recruits individually.
- (2) Presently enrolled RSVP volunteers.

- (3) Using an RSVP volunteer recruitment specialist for recruiting persons with special skills, such as technical, professional, or management skills.
- (4) Making presentations or providing materials for distribution at retirement preparation programs of local employers.
- (5) Contacting agencies and organizations frequented by older persons, such as senior centers, senior nutrition projects, and the AARP.
- (6) Contacting religious and civic groups and other community agencies.
- (7) Contacting other Corporation volunteer programs.
- (8) Advertising through websites, web-based volunteer recruitment systems including Volunteer Match (see 31.e, below), the sponsoring agency's newsletter, newspaper articles, public service radio or television interviews, or "spot" public announcements.
- (9) Contacting inactive volunteers.
  - (a) Use volunteers, if necessary, to find out from inactive volunteers why they have become inactive. These volunteers may be reactivated if circumstances causing their inactivity have been or can be changed.
  - (b) Include inactive volunteers on mailing lists and in recognition activities if there is potential for their reactivation.

**d. Targeting Currently Active Volunteers**

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 RSVP 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/](http://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](http://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.

## **32. SELECTION OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS**

### **a. Interviewing Potential RSVP Volunteers**

- (1) After expressing an interest in volunteering through RSVP, potential volunteers 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.
  - (a) The initial interview is the time to become acquainted with and establish a friendly, mutually supportive relationship with the prospective RSVP volunteer.
  - (b) Interview techniques should relate to project goals and to the background, hobbies, and special interests of applicants.
- (2) Suggested interview topics include:
  - (a) Interests of the applicant and motivation to serve.
  - (b) Background information on the potential volunteer including work and volunteer history.
  - (c) Roles, assignments, and types of activities.
  - (d) Description of volunteer stations and specific types of assignments currently available.
  - (e) Special needs of persons to be served by volunteers.
  - (f) Volunteer benefits and responsibilities.

- (g) Professional supervision available.
- (h) Transportation arrangements available.
- (i) Follow-up support, recognition activities, and newsletter offered by RSVP.
- (j) Whether the applicant is confident that he or she is able to perform available assignments with, or without, reasonable accommodations.

#### **b. Criminal History Checks**

It is strongly recommended that sponsors establish policies to ensure that criminal history checks are performed for RSVP volunteer candidates who will have contact on a recurring basis with children, frail adults, persons with disabilities or other potentially vulnerable individuals. Name checks of volunteers can be performed at the National Sex Offender Public Registry website, [www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov), maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice. A useful resource on conducting background checks for both volunteers and staff is the *Staff Screening Tool Kit (Third Edition)* developed by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, available for download at [www.nationalservice.gov/screeningtoolkit](http://www.nationalservice.gov/screeningtoolkit).

### **33. ENROLLMENT OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS**

Once the introductory process is completed, the project formally enrolls the RSVP applicant in the program through the completion of an enrollment form. (See [Appendix 7](#) for a sample RSVP volunteer enrollment form.) Volunteer stations do not enroll volunteers.

The new volunteer must sign the enrollment form, which should include designation of a beneficiary for insurance purposes.

Volunteers are responsible for updating their enrollment records whenever the pertinent information changes. (See [Appendix 18](#) for a sample Volunteer Update Form.) Periodically projects should provide opportunities for volunteers to review and update their record.

### **34. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS**

#### **a. Options for Orientation and Training**

Projects should work with volunteer stations, to the extent possible, on the development and delivery of pre-service orientation for RSVP volunteers. Many projects have found that a combination of a formal orientation program and hands-on experience with volunteer stations works well. This gives greater meaning to the orientation and enhances adjustment to assignments. Locally prepared volunteer handbooks have been found to be useful in providing information to volunteers concerning RSVP, the sponsor, the community advisory group, meal and travel reimbursements, appeal procedures, and other pertinent local project policies and procedures. Orientations may be enhanced by inviting representatives of other

community service agencies and volunteer station to speak about their programs and the importance of volunteers' contributions.

**b. Transportation Expenses for Training**

As needed and funds are available, transportation can be arranged or reimbursed for RSVP volunteers between their homes and places where formal orientation programs are held.

**35. SERVICE-LEARNING**

**a. What is Service-Learning?**

Service-learning, in the context of RSVP projects, 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.

**Pre-Service Orientation Goals**

Suggested goals of pre-service orientation include:

- Introduce the RSVP volunteers to RSVP, the sponsor, and CNCS.
- Provide information on project policies, time sheets, appeal procedures, insurance, and other administrative details.
- Acquaint volunteers with project, volunteer station, and sponsor staff, and other RSVP volunteers.
- Give RSVP volunteers the opportunity to visit and become acquainted with their volunteer stations.
- Provide new RSVP volunteers with information about available community services related to their assignments.

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 RSVP volunteers.

**b. What Service-Learning Can Do for Projects**

By making service-learning part of the RSVP 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 RSVP 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 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 RSVP volunteers attend.

- (3) Regularly provide opportunities for RSVP volunteers 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 lifelong learning, and encourage volunteers to build on life experiences and wisdom, validating 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](#).

### **36. PLACEMENT OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS**

#### **a. Local Placements**

Senior volunteers should be placed in their own community when feasible, and the need for transportation should be minimized as much as possible. (See [Appendix 19](#) for a sample form for referring volunteers to volunteer stations.)

#### **b. Volunteer Station Requirement**

Volunteer assignments must be placed with volunteer stations or the sponsor serving as the volunteer station, as outlined in [Chapter 6](#).

#### **c. Placement of Volunteers with Memberships in Voluntary Service Organization**

Potential or current RSVP volunteers with memberships in organizations providing voluntary services (e.g. religious organizations, senior centers, hospital auxiliaries, etc.) or providing services on their own should not be assigned to such activities as RSVP volunteers. Volunteers should not be placed with volunteer stations with which they are affiliated to perform activities that are ongoing responsibilities of membership. However, these volunteers may be assigned to activities that differ in nature from their current activities or those required for membership.

#### **e. Service to Relatives**

Assignments involving service to relatives are not precluded for RSVP volunteers. Projects should exercise good judgment, taking into account local customs and practices and avoiding the appearance of favoritism.

### **37. VOLUNTEER SEPARATION**

- a.** Volunteers who do not serve on a regular basis or intensively on short-term assignments, such as at special events or projects, become classified as inactive. Only active volunteers should be included in reporting of volunteer data to the Corporation.
- b.** Sponsors are encouraged to work with their Community Advisory Group in establishing policies covering volunteer separation and appeals. An RSVP sponsor may separate an RSVP volunteer for cause, including, but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, and inability to perform assignments or accept supervision, in accordance with the sponsor's policies. Appeals for adverse actions are also subject to the sponsor's policies. [[45 CFR 2553.52](#) ]

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN MANAGING RSVP VOLUNTEERS

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

### I. Effective Practices to Ensure Satisfaction among RSVP Volunteers in Their Service to the Community

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

- A. Ensuring that RSVP volunteers have opportunities to express their concerns, interests, and observations about the project to the staff of the project and the volunteer station;
- B. Involving RSVP volunteers in the operation and appraisal of assignments and project operations;
- C. Soliciting comments and/or recommendations from the RSVP volunteers related to their service activities, and incorporating relevant information into the project as applicable;
- D. Adopting specific strategies to retain a diverse group of RSVP volunteers; and
- E. Identifying and promptly addressing any issues or problems that impact the retention of RSVP volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds.

### II. Effective Practices to Help RSVP Volunteers 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 RSVP volunteers 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 RSVP volunteers to facilitate training with other RSVP volunteers using a standard training format with learning objectives as ways to measure progress;
- D. Involves RSVP volunteers in promoting the project to the community, such as through media appearances; and

- E. Acknowledges and values the strengths and skills of RSVP volunteers through ensuring that assignments are challenging and match the RSVP volunteers' interests and abilities.

### **III. Effective Practices for Acknowledging the Contributions of RSVP Volunteers**

The sponsor and project director:

- A. Plan and implement individual and group recognition activities;
- B. Ensure that volunteer stations regularly recognize RSVP volunteers as contributors to the stations' ability to deliver services;
- C. Provide at least one annual recognition event for RSVP volunteers which has significant community support and involvement;
- D. Recognize, document, and publicize outstanding RSVP volunteer 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 RSVP VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS**

RSVP volunteers are provided with cost reimbursements and other benefits. Within the limits of a project's approved budget, and in accordance with [45 CFR 2553.43](#) and written Senior Corps policy guidance to projects, volunteers are provided transportation, meals, accident and liability insurance, and recognition activities. Cost reimbursements are budgeted as "Volunteer Expenses," and the two terms may be used interchangeably.

### **38. 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 2553.43\(e\)\]](#) Otherwise, such expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer station.

#### **b. Reimbursement Policies**

The amount of reimbursement made to RSVP volunteers is determined by the availability of funds and project policy regarding reimbursement of Volunteer Expenses. The procedure and the limits for volunteers to request reimbursement should be identified in volunteer orientation sessions and project service policies.

#### **c. Non-Reimbursed Volunteer Purchases**

Volunteer expense items that are purchased at a volunteer's own expense and not reimbursed by the project to the volunteer are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget. These include transportation to and from their assignments, meals taken during assignments, recognition activities, and recognition items. [\[45 CFR 2553.73\(d\)\]](#)

### **39. VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS DETAILED**

#### **a. Transportation**

(1) General Principles and Practices

- (a) RSVP volunteers receive assistance with the cost of transportation to and from volunteer assignments and official project activities, including orientation, training, and recognition events. [[45 CFR 2553.43](#)]
- (b) Many volunteers do not own cars or may prefer not to drive and can only participate in the program when other arrangements and modes of transportation are developed.
- (c) Transportation considerations weigh heavily in deciding what assignments can be accepted and where volunteers are assigned. Convenient and less costly transportation is promoted when assignments are developed in areas close to where RSVP volunteers live.
- (d) It is important to consider both costs and convenience, as well as volunteer service schedules, in developing a cost-effective travel solution.
- (e) Project vehicle costs, vehicle driver's salary and fringe benefits, and vehicle insurance are budgeted as travel costs under volunteer expenses in the RSVP project grant application.
- (f) Contracted transportation, if it is the most flexible and economical mode, may be budgeted for volunteers.
- (g) The purchase cost, operation, and maintenance of vans, mini-buses, or station wagons may be budgeted only if they provide the most flexible and economical transportation available.
- (h) The cost of transporting RSVP volunteers between their homes and places of assignment and to official RSVP functions may be budgeted. Parking fees for volunteers having to park at a volunteer station or at an official RSVP function may be budgeted. Parking costs are allowable as an in-kind contribution only if they are normally charged.

## (2) Reimbursement for Volunteers' Transportation

### (a) Volunteer Drivers

Reimbursement of RSVP volunteers who drive their own cars is based on a cost-per-mile rate set by the sponsor. Volunteers are reimbursed for actual mileage within the limits of available funds and local project reimbursement policy. They cannot be reimbursed in excess of actual costs, or on a per capita basis, for transporting other volunteers. (See [Appendix 16](#) 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) Other Transportation Reimbursement Considerations

1. Transportation provided by volunteers that has not been reimbursed to the volunteer cannot be used as a local contribution to the project budget.
2. Mileage reimbursement directly to an RSVP volunteer from a volunteer station for transportation from the volunteer's home to the place of assignment and return is acceptable as local support of the RSVP project. Project files should include verification of this contribution for audit purposes.
3. RSVP volunteers 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.
4. Mileage reimbursement to RSVP volunteers from volunteer stations for providing transportation while on volunteer assignments cannot be used as local support of the RSVP project. RSVP cannot accept responsibility for the costs of community service provided by volunteer stations and, therefore, cannot be credited for the value of those costs to be used as local budget support.

NOTE: Volunteers who do not incur travel expenses (e.g., those who walk to assignments, ride on free public transportation, or are passengers in carpools) do not receive reimbursement.

- (3) It is suggested that the project work with its Community Advisory Group to prepare a transportation plan. Such a plan should be realistic and based on lowest-cost transportation modes and include scheduling, modes of transportation, criteria for reimbursement, mileage rates, and patterns of transportation.

**b. Meals**

Within the limits of the project's approved budget and project policy, RSVP volunteers receive assistance with the cost of meals while on assignment. [\[45 CFR 2553.43\]](#) Funds for this volunteer benefit may be limited, but it should be provided when possible.

**(1) Meal Arrangements**

Project directors should make special efforts to reach an understanding with volunteer stations to provide meals for RSVP volunteers. These meals may be used as local support in the budget, providing there is sufficient documentation. RSVP volunteers are also eligible for meals at congregate meal sites funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act. Grantees may not count Title III funds and non-Federal funds used to match Title III funds to meet the required Corporation non-Federal cost share. However, grantees may count meals provided to volunteers paid for by other than Title III, or Title III matching funds, as a local contribution. [\[45 CFR 2541.240 and 2543.23 \(a\) \(2\)\]](#)

**(2) Reimbursement to Volunteers**

The amount of reimbursement to volunteers 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 RSVP volunteers 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 budget period require prior approval of the Corporation. RSVP volunteers and volunteer station staff are required to sign a statement certifying that meals to be reimbursed to the volunteer were taken in conjunction with volunteer service and providing details of the reimbursement. Vouchers are subject to Corporation audit. (See [Appendix 16](#) for a sample form for volunteers to use to request reimbursement for meals.)

**c. Insurance**

The program regulations require RSVP volunteers to be provided with accident, personal liability, and, when appropriate, excess automobile liability insurance. [\[45 CFR 2553.43\]](#) 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.

(l) Accident Insurance

- (a) Accident insurance must cover RSVP volunteers 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, orientation, 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:

1. Health insurance coverage.
2. Other hospital or medical service plans.
3. Any coverage under labor-management trusted plans, union-welfare plans, employer organization plans, or employee-benefit organization plans.
4. Coverage under any governmental program or provided by any statute.

**RSVP Volunteers and  
Workers Compensation**

RSVP volunteers *are not* employees and *are not* covered by Federal or state workers compensation insurance. [45 CFR 2553.44](#)

- (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 RSVP volunteers 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.

**Personal Liability vs. Professional Malpractice Insurance**

Personal liability insurance does not include, nor is it a substitute for, malpractice insurance which some volunteer stations need for their professional staff and for some volunteers who assist professionals or serve in professional capacities.

(3) Excess Automobile Liability Insurance

- (a) To avoid a gap in coverage between that provided by the RSVP volunteer'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.

NOTE: Excess automobile liability insurance is required only for RSVP volunteers who drive their own cars to and from their place of assignment. It is recommended that projects verify that volunteer drivers have valid licenses and basic liability insurance.

**Excess Automobile Liability Insurance**

Excess automobile liability insurance is required only for RSVP volunteers who drive their own cars to and from their place of assignment. **Verify that volunteer drivers have valid licenses and basic liability insurance.**

(4) Liability Insurance on Personal Vehicles of Volunteers

- (a) This insurance is a volunteer's personal expense and is not reimbursable to the volunteer by the project. RSVP volunteers 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.

**d. Uniforms or Smocks**

When volunteer stations require RSVP volunteers to wear special uniforms or smocks, the cost of uniforms and laundering are an allowable project cost when 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.

**e. Recognition**

Appropriate recognition for service is to be provided for RSVP volunteers. [[45 CFR 2553.43](#)]

- (1) At least annually the RSVP sponsor plans and arranges for formal public recognition of RSVP volunteers for their service to the community. Sponsors are also authorized to recognize local individuals and agencies or organizations for significant activities that support project goals.
- (2) The Corporation does not supply volunteer recognition materials nor does it require specific recognition materials.
- (3) Informal recognition ought to be ongoing, such as listening to and acting upon recommendations by RSVP volunteers, offering honest praise, and providing assignments that are increasingly satisfying.
- (4) 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.
- (5) The RSVP Community Advisory Group and volunteer stations are expected 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.

- (6) 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.

#### **40. LEGAL REPRESENTATION**

Counsel may be employed and counsel fees, court costs, bail, and other expenses incidental to the defense of an RSVP volunteer may be paid in a criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding when such a proceeding arises directly out of performance of the RSVP volunteer'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

### 41. INTRODUCTION TO GRANTS MANAGEMENT

#### a. Basic Requirement

Sponsors must manage grants awarded to them in accordance with RSVP program regulations, [45 CFR 2553](#) (see Appendix 2) and their Notice of Grant Award (NGA). Contact the Corporation State Office for additional technical assistance on fiscal management of an RSVP grant.

#### Financial Management Training

An 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.

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 2553.73](#)]. Project Directors should work with the sponsor's fiscal staff and periodically compare the 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 non-federal share of the grant.

- (1) Specific costs are either allowable or unallowable. Only allowable costs

#### 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.

may be included in the Corporation share or the grantee share of the budget. Only amounts approved by the Corporation may be expended.

- (2) Notices of Grant Award, as well as the program regulations at [45 CFR 2553.73](#) 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 downloading them from the OMB web site: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants\\_circulars.html](http://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 Office.

- (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 2553.43 \(e\)](#)]
- (b) The following insurance costs are not allowable:
1. Public liability insurance for sponsors (except for space that RSVP 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 49](#) for more information.

- (e) When project staff are employed in the operation of two or more Senior Corps projects, in order to be allowable, their salaries and fringe benefits must be budgeted on a prorated basis in each project's budget, based on the 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 49.c](#).
- (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.

<b>Summary of Relevant OMB Circulars</b>				
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Educational Institutions</b>	<b>Non-Profit Organizations</b>	<b>State and Local Governments</b>
Uniform Administrative Requirements	Standards of consistency and uniformity of grants to various institutions	<a href="#">45 CFR 2543</a> and <a href="#">Circular No. A-110</a>	<a href="#">45 CFR 2543</a> and <a href="#">Circular No. A-110</a>	<a href="#">45 CFR 2541</a> and <a href="#">Circular No. A-87</a>
Cost Principles	Principles for determining the costs of grants and other agreements with non-profit organizations	<a href="#">Circular No. A-21</a>	<a href="#">Circular No. A-122</a>	<a href="#">Circular No. A-133</a>
Audits	Standards for obtaining consistency and uniformity among Federal agencies for the audits of states, local governments, and non-profit organizations expending Federal awards.	<a href="#">Circular No. A-133</a>	<a href="#">Circular No. A-133</a>	<a href="#">Circular No. A-133</a>

**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.
- (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. Reasonable payroll expenses may be budgeted as direct costs for the payment of volunteer cost reimbursements.

## 42. 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:

- 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 the Corporation State Office 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.

### **43. 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 “the 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 non-Federal share requirement (10 percent of the total cost in the first year, 20 percent in the second year, and 30 percent in the third and succeeding years). 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, 20, or 30 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) Costs separated by source are further differentiated by purpose, that is, whether the funds are to cover costs of Volunteer Expenses or Volunteer Support Expenses.

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

- 1. Transportation
- 2. Meals
- 3. Insurance
- 4. Recognition Items and Activities

- (b) “Volunteer Support Expenses” includes all costs other than those included above in “Volunteer Expenses.”

**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.

**b. Budget Criteria**

- (1) The RSVP sponsor is expected to supplement the Corporation grant with other budget support. The sponsor must raise the amount of non-Federal support budgeted in the Notice of Grant Award.

- (2) A Corporation grant may be awarded to fund up to 90 percent of the total project cost in the first year, 80 percent in the second year, and 70 percent in the third and succeeding years.

- (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 2541.420](#) 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 required (10 percent of the total cost in the first year, 20 percent in the second year and 30 percent in the third and succeeding years), in cases of demonstrated need such as:

**Non-Compensation for Services**

The authorizing statute for RSVP– the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) – prohibits charging RSVP beneficiaries for volunteer services. This prohibition is restated in the “Compensation for Services” provision in the RSVP program regulations at [45 CFR 2553.91\(c\)](#) 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 RSVP volunteers 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.

- (1) Initial difficulties in the development of non-Federal funding sources during the first three years of operations.
  - (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.
  - (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 will be submitted for consideration through the Corporation's State Program Director.
  - (e) Non-Federal support already committed to meet non-Federal support requirements of any other Federally-assisted project or program may not be budgeted as part of the non-Federal support for RSVP. [[45 CFR 2541.240](#) and [2543.23 \(a\) \(2\)](#)]
  - (f) Funds from Federal agencies other than the Corporation, including federally funded in-kind resources, may not be budgeted as part of the sponsor's required non-Federal share, 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.
- (2) 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.
  - (3) The sponsor may budget expenditures of Federal or non-Federal funds in any amount for any line item in either Volunteer Support or Volunteer Expenses, as approved by the Corporation.
  - (4) Project costs for which the required non-Federal funds are budgeted will be acceptable if costs are allowable, are reasonable in comparison to other costs, benefit the project's operational effectiveness, and contribute to achievement of program goals and objectives.
  - (5) Direct benefit items, such as transportation, meals, and recognition items which are purchased at the volunteer's own expense and not reimbursed, are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget.

**c. Budget Non-Compliance**

(1) Required Non-Federal Share

If a sponsor has failed over the multi-year project period to meet the 10, 20, or 30 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*.
- (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 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. 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](#)]

#### 44. 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 or objectives.
- A change in the geographic service area.
- Creation of a new budget line item where there will be a need for additional funds.
- Transfer of funds budgeted for direct costs to indirect costs.
- Extension or reduction of the budget or performance budget 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.

#### **45. ACCESSING GRANT FUNDS AND MANAGING ADVANCES**

All Senior Corps grantees are paid through the Department of 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](http://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](http://www.dpm.psc.gov/grant_recipient/shortcuts/shortcuts.aspx?explorer.event=true)

#### **c. Federal Cash Transactions Report – PSC 272**

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 sample of the hard copy version of the Federal Cash Transaction Report is included as [Appendix 20](#).

Help on completing the PSC 272 is available at:

[www.dpm.psc.gov/grant\\_recipient/psc\\_272\\_reports/272\\_general.aspx?](http://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.

## 46. SUSPENSION, TERMINATION, AND DENIAL OF REFUNDING

The rules on grant suspension, termination, and denial of refunding procedures are contained in the regulations at [45 CFR 2553.31](#).

## 47. 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 program's financial position fairly;
- If the institution has the internal control 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.

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 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Jeffersonville, IN 47132

### 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. Sponsors are expected to follow generally accepted accounting practices. 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 your Corporation State Office or Grant Officer.

### **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 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**

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

The sponsor:

- A. Secures 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 nonprofit 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 RSVP project with other 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/](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/topics/).

## CHAPTER 11 REPORTS AND RECORD KEEPING

Reporting and record keeping 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 record keeping 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.

### 48. 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, to a specific grantee (See [Appendix 13](#) for standard NGA Terms and Conditions). For reporting related to Federal grant funds drawn down by the grantee, see [Section 45](#).

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 (FSR), 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 11](#) 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, 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 (3 years).
- 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) Request for Advance or Reimbursement using HHS/PMS

The Corporation contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which oversees 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 to 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
  - RSVP Federal regulations [[45 CFR 2553.73](#)]
- Funds returned to the Corporation at the closeout of the grant relationship with the Corporation or for disallowance of grant costs are to be forwarded to the Corporation's 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 9](#) 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 (Senior Corps Form A-1021)

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 RSVP volunteers 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.

#### **49. RECORDKEEPING**

As required by [45 CFR 2553.25\(g\)](#), the sponsor must develop record keeping and reporting systems in compliance with 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 Corporation staff to review on compliance monitoring site visits (See [Section 50](#)) or in case of audit. [See [45 CFR 2541.420](#) or [45 CFR 2543.53](#)]

In the event of a sponsor change, the previous sponsor will receive instructions from the State Office on making available selected project data to the new sponsor. [See [45 CFR 2543.36](#)]

Records may be kept in electronic or hard copy form.

##### **a. Sponsor Records on Volunteer Stations**

The project maintains a file on each volunteer station containing:

- (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 RSVP volunteers placed at the volunteer station.

##### **b. Sponsor Records on Individual RSVP Volunteers**

- (1) The project should maintain records for each volunteer containing:
  - (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 volunteer station(s) where the RSVP volunteer is placed.
  - (d) A copy of the written assignment description for each volunteer or a notation that the volunteer's assignment description is maintained at the volunteer station.
- (2) Due to the confidential nature of the information, the Corporation recommends that volunteer records be kept in secured files.

- (3) Personal information about volunteers contained on the enrollment form, such as home address, should be disclosed only with the expressed 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 date the grantee submits the final FSR for the project period or three years past the last audit, whichever is most recent. For exceptions, see [45 CFR 2541.420](#) or [45 CFR 2543.53](#).
- (4) *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 be determined and supported as defined in the Circular.

- (5) ***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, fair market value is the 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, building, 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 sponsor's files.

- (4) ***Reimbursement Claims:*** Documentation for all Volunteer Expenses related to transportation, meals, and/or other costs claimed during the period of volunteer service must for audit purposes:

- (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.

**Reminder**

Travel to and from home to the volunteer assignment and meal times that are not part of the assignment description, are not to be included in hours of service.

- (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.

Projects that use timesheets may incorporate volunteer expense claims on the timesheet form. (See [Appendix 16](#) for a sample timesheet that incorporates hours of service, mileage, and meal expenses.) Costs must be verified by signatures of the volunteer and the volunteer station supervisor.

- (5) *Sample Forms:* Sample forms for data collection developed by other RSVP projects may be requested from the Corporation's State Office. Sample forms are also available at [www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/sample\\_forms/index.php](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/sample_forms/index.php).
- (6) *Using RSVP Volunteers for Data Collection/Record Keeping:* RSVP volunteers can be assigned by project directors to various tasks that involve data collection and record keeping (see [Section 21.d](#), "Sponsor as Volunteer Station").

#### **d. Counting and Reporting RSVP Volunteers and Volunteer Hours**

RSVP projects are responsible for having a system that allows them to track volunteer hours accurately and in sufficient detail to meet the requirements of the FSR and PPR, including the PPR data supplemental (PPVA).

- (1) Reporting of RSVP volunteer data for the FSR is limited to:
  - (a) Cumulative volunteer hours served during each budget year and
  - (b) Total number of individual RSVP volunteers who served during the reporting period. No volunteer should be counted twice, regardless of the number of times and places served.
- (2) Reporting requirements for the PPR, including the data supplemental (PPVA) are found in [Appendix 9](#).
- (3) The reported number of volunteers serving and hours served should be approximately equal to or greater than the numbers projected in the budget. The Corporation will monitor and verify numbers reported.

See "Criteria for an Effective RSVP Volunteer Service Tracking System" in the following box.

### **Criteria for an Effective RSVP Volunteer Service Tracking System**

1. The system is documented in written sponsor policies as the standard used by the RSVP project and:
  - (a) Defines and describes the system
  - (b) Identifies tools to be used
  - (c) Identifies allowable persons and authentication method such as hard copy signature or e-mail
  - (d) Specified location of official records
  - (e) Requires storage and retrieval of records – hard copy or electronically
2. The system's reporting tools, such as the following, are consistent with sponsor policy:
  - (a) Hard copy time sheet
  - (b) Hard copy group sign in sheet
  - (c) E-mail sent by allowable person – volunteer supervisor or volunteer
  - (d) Electronic group sign in sheet
  - (e) Telephone report by volunteer supervisor or volunteer with written confirmation consistent with the sponsor policy
  - (f) Facsimile
  - (g) Web-based system
3. The system provides assurances that the person reporting the hours is authorized to do so – such as the volunteer or the volunteer station supervisor.
4. If hours are submitted via e-mail by the RSVP volunteer or the volunteer station supervisor:
  - (a) Sender uses an e-mail system that requires a recognizable sign-in name that is registered with the sponsor/project as the volunteer.
  - (b) The e-mail is addressed to the person identified by the RSVP/sponsor policies as having the authority to accept and view e-mails reporting hours.
  - (c) The system used by the e-mail recipient (i.e. RSVP Project Director) is capable of storing and retrieving the e-mails reporting RSVP volunteer hours.

## **50. 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 courtesy 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 concludes 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 Project Compliance Monitoring protocol is retained in the Corporation State Office's project file.

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN REPORTS AND RECORD KEEPING

(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), Part 1 (Every 6 months)
  - 2. PPR Part 2: 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 Plans and Performance Measures as blueprints 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 14](#) for a list of software packages available and vendor contact information.
- E. For Programming for Impact and performance measurement data collection and reporting, 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 those served, 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 record keeping 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 project’s activities and operations. 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 staff communicate regularly with certain groups of people, set up e-mail groups in an address book 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 Web Site can be found at [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)
  2. NSSCTALK – the Senior Corps online discussion list, can be subscribed to at [http://lists.etr.org/read/all\\_forums/subscribe?name=nssctalk](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 shares reporting and record keeping tips to others, including posting them in messages on NSSCTALK.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

#### **51. 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 with 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 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 RSVP Community Advisory Group.
  - (5) Collaborate with other Senior Corps projects to generate statewide or multi-county support.

#### **52. 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, church groups, and meetings with local, county, and state governmental units. Public relations materials about the Corporation's programs are available at the Corporation's website, [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov). To download media kit materials, click [here](#).
- d. Active support of the RSVP 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 RSVP volunteers before organizations in which they are active.
- e. RSVP is included in the Corporation's national advertising program. Through the Corporation's 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 RSVP Community Advisory Group or the establishment of a newsworthy special committee of the Community Advisory Group.
  - (3) Supporting statements made by officials and civic leaders.
  - (4) Achievement of a measurable impact on a critical community need.
  - (5) Any special RSVP project event, such as the presentation of awards to the 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 RSVP volunteers 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 RSVP volunteers as active seniors who meet critical community needs.

### **II. Effective Practices for Coordinating RSVP Services**

The project and volunteer stations:

- A. Collaborate with other Corporation-funded national service programs, including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps\*State and National, Learn and Serve America, and other Senior Corps programs, to meet critical community needs;
- B. Build broad-based relationships in the community, including the business sector, to gain their support for older volunteers.

## CHAPTER 13

### PROJECT SELF-ASSESSMENT

#### 53. PROJECT SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

##### a. Purpose

The RSVP sponsor, project staff, and Community Advisory Group all contribute to the effectiveness of the RSVP project. The Project Self-Assessment Checklist ([Appendix 10](#)) 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/Fund Raising
- 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/](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/).