CORONOVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
General Program Questions
Last update 3/12/20

CNCS is closely monitoring the latest developments related to COVID-19. As Americans prepare for the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak in their community, you may have concerns about the potential impact of this new virus on your program. To help address these concerns, we are providing you with these FAQs. They will be updated regularly.

What should we share with our members/volunteers about Coronavirus/COVID-19?
All of us can take measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Everyone can do their part to help respond to this emerging public health issue. The best source of COVID-19 resources is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The CDC with the Department of Health and Human Services is the lead government agency on the management of the Coronavirus outbreak. They have created resource guides on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in specific communities. This includes specific guidance for childcare centers and schools, colleges and universities, community events, and first responders, among many others. These guides, along with additional resources and up-to-date information from the CDC, can be found at the following links.

- CDC Coronavirus Hub
- Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities

I am an AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, or Senior Corps grantee or project sponsor. Who should I contact with questions?
AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, or Senior Corps Project Sponsors should contact their Portfolio Manager or Program Officer.

I am an AmeriCorps NCCC Project Sponsor. Who should I contact with questions?
NCCC Project Sponsors should contact their NCCC Region campus staff with questions.

What if a member or volunteer is showing symptoms of illness or respiratory problems? Should they be sent home?
Yes. Grantees and project sponsors should instruct members and volunteers to stay home and not return to their service sites until they are free of fever (100.4 degrees or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of fever, and any other symptom for at least 24 hours, without medication. Grantees and project sponsors should also document the reason for the determination to instruct a member or volunteer to stay home due to illness.

To prevent stigma and discrimination during service, do not make a determination to send a member or volunteer home based on race or country of origin. Also, ensure that you maintain confidentiality of any member(s) and volunteer(s) who are confirmed to have COVID-19 or other illnesses as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).
What if a member or volunteer lives with or has been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19? What should grantees and project sponsors do?

Service members and volunteers who are well but live with, or have been in close contact with, someone who is known to have COVID-19 should promptly notify their respective program/project director. More importantly, the individual should self-report to their physician, and in consultation with their physician, to the state health department responsible for the local management of COVID-19 issues.

The grantee or project sponsor should also refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure. While maintaining confidentiality, the grantee or project sponsor should inform fellow service members and volunteers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 at the service site.

Should my organization cancel planned congregate events (e.g.: training, recognition ceremonies or other special events)?

Each organization should make the decision on whether to proceed with upcoming congregant events by consulting information from the Centers for Disease Control and other relevant state and local agencies. A list of state and territorial health organizations can be found at the CDC State Health Department Portal.

Will CNCS be cancelling upcoming trainings and convenings such as the Senior Corps Convening or upcoming AmeriCorps VISTA Sponsor Events?

Yes, the agency has cancelled and/or postponed all meetings, convenings and events through May 15. The agency is monitoring the situation in locations where events after May 15 are are planned and will make a determination on whether to proceed with the advice and counsel of federal and local health officials for each jurisdiction. Grantees or project sponsors should continue to monitor the CNCS website and other communication for updates.

What if our organization has paid for staff, member, and/or volunteer travel that is canceled by the host organization or it is otherwise imprudent for the travel to happen as planned?

Due to safety concerns, CNCS would treat these scenarios like a weather-related travel cancellation and would allow the costs if they are otherwise reasonable and necessary. You should clearly document the reasons for the cancellation as they relate to the specific costs incurred.

May members be exited for Compelling Personal Circumstances if they are unable to serve?


For AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps NCCC members, the agency will follow established protocols. Grantees and project sponsors should direct specific questions to their Portfolio Manager, Program Officer, or NCCC campus staff.

If an AmeriCorps State and National program allows members to do additional training at a time that they cannot serve at their sites, will they be allowed to exceed the maximum 20 percent aggregate training hours?

No, per 45 CFR § 2520.50 How much time may AmeriCorps members in my program spend in education and training activities?, “No more than 20 percent of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member service hours in your program, as reflected in the member enrollments in the National Service Trust, may be spent in education and training activities.”
Information for Members and Volunteers

May I leave my site for a compelling health reason, such as I have a compromised immune system?
Yes, members and volunteers who are unable to serve at their assigned service location should work individually with their project sponsor and program to determine an appropriate alternative. Members/volunteers must notify their project sponsor/program about their risk to potential exposure. See CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

If I am serving in AmeriCorps NCCC or AmeriCorps VISTA, will CNCS pay for the return to my Home of Record (HOR)?
If you are unable to complete your service term, we will follow normal VISTA and NCCC program protocols for returning members to their Home of Records, where appropriate.

Can we teleserve?
For AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps VISTA members, please refer to the teleservice policies AmeriCorps State and National Teleservice Guidance and AmeriCorps VISTA Teleservice Guidance. For Senior Corps sponsors, please follow the appropriate guidance as outlined in the Senior Corps Operations Handbook.

For more information, please visit:
- CDC Coronavirus
- U.S. Government Response to Coronavirus