CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Senior Corps Specific Questions
Last update 3/13/20

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 precautions are CNCS and Senior Corps taking regarding coronavirus (COVID-19)?
CNCS is closely monitoring information and recommendations provided by the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) related to the COVID-19. As this is an evolving situation, the information and guidelines will continue to develop as conditions change. To help address general concerns, CNCS has released agency-wide FAQs that can be found here.

Should my organization cancel planned events (i.e. training, recognition, or other special events)?
Each organization should make their own assessment and decision on whether to proceed with upcoming congregant events by consulting information and guidance 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.

Can Senior Companion Program and Foster Grandparent Program volunteers teleserve?
Teleservice is appropriate when the activity can be meaningfully supervised, and the hours verified independently. It is important for any project that chooses to include an element of teleservice, that the program has a teleservice policy in place to guide volunteers. Further guidance can be found in each Program’s Operations Handbook.

Can Senior Corps Grantees and Sponsors ask volunteers if they have traveled to one of the affected areas?
Yes. Given the ongoing travel advisories and the recommendations of the CDC and other federal agencies regarding travel to affected areas and self-quarantining to limit the spread of the coronavirus, you can require volunteers to disclose their recent travel destinations.

What if a volunteer is showing symptoms of illness or respiratory problems? Should they be sent home?
Yes. Grantees and project sponsors should instruct volunteers to stay home, seek medical attention 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. The decision to discontinue home isolation should be made in consultation with the volunteer’s health care providers and state and local health departments. Grantees and sponsors should consistently apply and clearly communicate its practices.
with regard that service members self-quarantine. Grantees and project sponsors should also document the reason for the determination to instruct 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 volunteer lives with or has been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19?**
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 and follow their guidance and instructions.

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 confirmed Coronavirus cases and their potential exposure to COVID-19 at the service site.

**I am a volunteer with a compromised immune system. May I leave my volunteer worksite for a compelling health reason?**
Yes, volunteers who are unable to serve at their assigned service location because of a compromised immune system or other chronic medical condition should notify their project sponsor’s director about their medical condition and potential health risk should they have coronavirus exposure. They should work individually with their project sponsor to determine an appropriate alternative accommodation or measure related to their volunteer service.

**I am a Senior Corps grantee. Who should I contact if I have any further questions?**
All Senior Corps Project Sponsors should contact their Portfolio Manager or Program Officer with any questions about the program’s management of the coronavirus.

**I have questions regarding the mandatory training requirements for FGP and SCP volunteers as I am concerned about holding in-person trainings for my volunteers.**
Mandatory training requirements will not be waived. We recognize that COVID-19 may impact planned in-person trainings but recommend that you work with your Program Officer/Portfolio Manager to provide alternative trainings, if needed. These could include implementing virtual trainings, sending materials to volunteers to read at home, etc. Please note that per regulation, each FGP and SCP volunteer must receive a minimum of 20 hours of pre-service orientation and 24 hours of in-service orientation annually. Please refer to your program’s Operations Handbook for more information on trainings.

**Are stipended volunteers able to receive their stipend if their volunteer station is closed?**
Senior Corps recognizes that in these exceptional circumstances an FGP and SCP volunteer may be unable to serve due to the impact of the Coronavirus. Senior Corps is authorizing FGP and SCP grantees to pay volunteers a temporary allowance and has outlined the process below. Senior Corps authorizes this allowance to help preserve the volunteer workforce and to minimize potential service disruptions. Rather than risk the
eventual loss of valuable Senior Corps volunteers because of their inability to serve during a potential brief shutdown period of a program sponsor or volunteer station, Senior Corps determined that it is advantageous to the respective Senior Corps programs, as well as to the individual program sponsors and volunteer stations, to provide a temporary pay allowance. More information can be found here.