



Strengthening Communities

35% of application score

PART II. SECTION B – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

In your Strengthening Communities Narrative, please respond to the following:

1. Describe the community and demonstrate that the community need(s) identified in the **Primary Focus Area** exist in the geographic service area.
2. Describe how the service activities of the volunteers in the Primary Focus Area: Education for FGP or Healthy Futures/Independent Living and/or Respite for Caregivers for SCP will lead to National Performance measures output and outcomes.
3. Describe a plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed.

1. **Describe the community and demonstrate that the community need(s) identified in the Primary Focus Area exist in the geographic service area.**

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

Using the work plan scenarios, what is Jane's Primary Focus Area?

FGP:

SCP:

What community need(s) were identified?

Scenario: Jane has not defined her geographic service area. She has taken her proposal to the Tribal Council and has received authorization to apply for the Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program and has determined with the council to define the service area as within the tribal borders. She checks Appendix A to see where existing FGP and/or SCP programs are in relation to the geographic service area she wants to propose. She finds that Springfield Seniors has a Foster Grandparent Program service area that covers tribal land. There is no Senior Companion Program that covers tribal land.

Can Jane apply for the Foster Grandparent Program? Can she apply for the Senior Companion Program?



2. Describe how the service activities of the volunteers in the Primary Focus Area: Education for FGP or Healthy Futures/Independent Living and/or Respite for Caregivers for SCP will lead to National Performance measures output and outcomes.

What will volunteers do; what are the service activities?

FGP:

SCP:

What is/are the output(s) and outcome(s)?

FGP:

SCP:

How will the service activities of the volunteers lead to the output(s) and outcomes(s) selected in Jane's work plans?

3. Describe a plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed.

What is the data collection plan, i.e. when Jane selected outputs and outcomes, what tools did she plan to use, how frequently did she plan to collect information, what did she plan to do once she collects the information? Did she outline all steps necessary to ensure that she can collect, measure and manage the data?

FGP:

SCP:

What other elements of the work plans might be used to complete the Strengthening Communities narrative?



What new information should be introduced in order to fully complete the section?

Ideas for YOUR application
How would you describe your community and its needs?
How could an FGP or SCP program respond to those needs?
How do you plan to define your geographic service area?
Where can you look to find supporting evidence and detail for your community needs statement and strengthening communities narrative?
How could you plan to collect, measure, and manage data to ensure that your program is able to report on outputs and outcomes? Collect: Measure: Manage:



Recruitment and Development

15% of application score

PART II. SECTION C – RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

In this section of the narrative, please describe:

1. Your plans and infrastructure to create well-developed high quality FGP or SCP assignments with opportunities to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities.
2. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure FGP or SCP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to address the identified community need(s).
3. The demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the demographics of the geographic communities served. These could possibly include:
 - a. Individuals of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and degrees of English language proficiency,
 - b. Veterans and military family members as FGP or SCP volunteers,
 - c. FGP or SCP volunteers with disabilities, including individuals with age-related disabilities.
4. Your plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize FGP or SCP volunteers.

1. **Your plans and infrastructure to create well-developed high quality FGP or SCP assignments with opportunities to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities.**

Assignment refers to the activities to be performed by a volunteer after placement at the volunteer station by the FGP project. Assignment also refers to the action taken to designate or assign the volunteer's functions or responsibilities.

FGP Volunteer Assignment Plan is a written description of a Foster Grandparent assignment with a child. The plan defines the impact of the assignment on the child's development as a result of the relationship with a Foster Grandparent and the specific activities to be performed by the Foster Grandparent in the assignment.

SCP Volunteer Assignment Plan is a written description of a Senior Companion's assignment with a client. The plan identifies specific outcomes for the client served and the activities of the Senior Companion.

Scenario: When preparing her applications, Jane researched the community needs identified for FGP and SCP. She also reviewed the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) for both programs to understand the rules and regulations governing both programs. She found that, in addition to supporting the community, the programs aim to support volunteers as well.

How can Jane's projects give volunteers opportunities to share experiences, abilities, and skills?



How can those opportunities to share improve their communities?

How might those opportunities to share impact volunteers themselves?

What plans can Jane put in place to ensure that volunteers have well-developed assignments?

What kinds of opportunities to share do you think your prospective volunteers may enjoy?
How do you think those opportunities might impact the community and the volunteers themselves?
What do think are important components to include in volunteer assignments for your prospective volunteers and your community?

2. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure FGP or SCP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to address the identified community need(s).

In-Service Training refers to group meetings scheduled for an average of four hours each month to provide Foster Grandparents or Senior Companions with expanded knowledge about assignment-related activities, supportive services available to them in the community and special-interest subjects related to the program. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring the trainings are offered, but they may be provided by stations, outside organizations, or the sponsor itself. Additionally, volunteer stations



orient the volunteer to the station before service begins and provide any in-service training necessary to enhance performance of assignments at the station.

Scenario: Another way in which the programs provide support to volunteers is through training. Jane reads in the CFRs that she must develop a 20-hour Pre-Service Orientation to orient volunteers when they begin their service and 4 hours of in-service trainings each month thereafter.

What should Jane consider when developing a pre-service orientation?

Which topics below might Jane use for in-service trainings?

- First Aid/CPR
- Financial Literacy for Elders
- Recognizing Signs of Dementia
- Classroom Management
- Public Benefits
- Intergenerational Issues
- All About Diabetes
- Computer Literacy
- Yoga for Elders and Healthy Living
- Working with Challenging People
- Cooking with Jane
- Sharing Circles – Reflections on a Year of Service

How can Jane relate the training she plans to provide to the community need(s) identified?



Ideas for YOUR application
What kinds of training topics do you think your prospective volunteers would benefit from? Who might offer to conduct them for your volunteers?
How might those trainings connect to your community need(s)?

- 3. The demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the demographics of the geographic communities served. These could possibly include:**
- a. Individuals of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and degrees of English language proficiency,**
 - b. Veterans and military family members as FGP or SCP volunteers,**
 - c. FGP or SCP volunteers with disabilities, including individuals with age-related disabilities.**

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.

Scenario: Jane has held discussions with tribal leadership and elders to gauge interest in both FGP and SCP and has identified a number of potential volunteers for each program. Based on a recent tribal census, Jane can determine that the majority of community members are native. Some residents are veterans, and some have disabilities. Jane decides to make an inclusive recruitment plan.

How can she turn the existing interest in the FGP and SCP programs and the community demographics into a recruitment plan?



Ideas for YOUR application
What are the demographics of your community? How can you find them?
What are your ideas for a recruitment plan in your community?

4. Your plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize FGP or SCP volunteers.

Scenario: In reading the CFRs, Jane has also found that the programs require volunteer recognition. She recognizes that good recognition efforts may help volunteers feel like their service is valued and that their contributions make a difference which can lead to volunteer retention. Jane also sees that she can budget for recognition. After reviewing suggestions from other Project Directors on the National Service Knowledge Network (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources>), she plans to hold an annual recognition luncheon and give each volunteer a gift basket with both donated items and items purchased directly.

What else can she plan to do to retain and recognize volunteers throughout the year?

Ideas for YOUR application
What kinds of recognition might make your prospective volunteers feel appreciated?



Program Management

15% of application score

PART II –SECTION D. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

In this section, describe specific plans and strategies for overall management of the FGP or SCP project that you propose. Please focus your narrative on the following:

1. The plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with FGP or SCP program regulations (such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities).
2. The plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.
3. The plans and infrastructure to meet changing community needs, to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating stations as necessary.
4. Evidence of an organizational track record in managing volunteers in the Primary Focus Area, to include, if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area.
5. Plans and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with FGP or SCP federal regulations to include establishing an Advisory Council, ensuring volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve in FGP or SCP.

- 1. The plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with FGP or SCP program regulations (such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities).**

Resources:

“Responsibilities of a volunteer station” from the Code of Federal Regulations

Section 2551.62 (SCP) and 2552.62 (FGP)

Search for these at <http://www.ecfr.gov>

“What legal limitations apply to the operation of the program?”

Section 2551.121 (SCP) and Section 2552.121 (FGP)

Search for these at <http://www.ecfr.gov>

Per regulations, responsibilities of an FGP and SCP station include:

- a) Develop appropriate volunteer assignments
- b) Select eligible children/clients for assigned volunteers
- c) Develop a written volunteer assignment plan for each child/client
- d) Obtain a letter of agreement for volunteers assigned in-home
- e) Provide volunteers with an orientation, in-service training, necessary resources, recognition
- f) Designating a staff member to supervise the volunteer and ensure station responsibilities are met
- g) Keep records and reports required by sponsor
- h) Provide for volunteer safety
- i) Comply with civil rights laws and regulations including accommodations for volunteers with disabilities

Scenario: *What could Jane or her program staff do to ensure stations meet these regulations?*



Prohibited Activities Include:

- a) Political activities (influencing elections, registering or transporting voters, influencing legislation)
- b) Displacing paid workers
- c) Sponsor may not accept money from volunteers or from clients/beneficiaries served (stations MAY contribute funds but cannot be required to do so)
- d) Volunteers may not accept money from clients/beneficiaries or their friends and family
- e) Labor and anti-labor activity: The sponsor shall not use grant funds directly or indirectly to finance labor or anti-labor organization or related activity.
- f) Discrimination against volunteers on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or political affiliation, or on the basis of disability.
- g) Religious activities: No volunteer or project staff shall give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytization as part of his or her duties.
- h) Nepotism: Persons selected for project staff positions shall 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.

Scenario: *What could Jane or her program staff do to prevent prohibited activities from taking place?*

What could they do to identify whether they are taking place, despite the preventative measures taken?



2. The plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

Volunteer stations for both FGP and SCP are required to develop written assignment plans for all volunteers. These assignment plans identify the volunteer's role and activities as well as the expected outcome or impact for the individual being served.

Scenario: Jane is applying to run both a Foster Grandparent program and a Senior Companion program.

a) *What are some appropriate service activities for FGP and SCP volunteers?*

FGP:

SCP:

b) *How could Jane or her program staff ensure that volunteer stations understand appropriate service activities?*

c) *What activities do you foresee the volunteers might be asked to do that wouldn't be appropriate?*

d) *How could Jane or her program staff ensure the volunteers are performing **only** their assigned activities?*

3. The plans and infrastructure to meet changing community needs, to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating stations as necessary.

Scenario: A local factory that employed half of the working adults in one community closes. As a result...

- a) *The number of families and children in poverty goes up. How might this impact a Foster Grandparent program?*

- b) *Many working-age adults move away from the community to find work. They are no longer available to care for elders in the community. How might this impact a Senior Companion program?*

- c) *Jane, the Foster Grandparent Director, decides to reduce services to one town in her service area in order to provide more volunteers at the school where families were hit hard by the factory closure. How might she reduce or ultimately shut down operations at the first school ("graduate the station") in way that minimizes disruption to volunteers, students, and the school?*

Ideas for YOUR application
Do you anticipate any changing community needs in the coming 3 years? How will you inform yourself about changing community needs?
How could your FGP or SCP program respond to those needs?
How would you minimize disruption to current volunteers and graduate stations out of your program if necessary?

4. Evidence of an organizational track record in managing volunteers in the Primary Focus Area, to include, if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area.

Every application has a Primary Focus Area selected from one of CNCS's agency-wide focus areas. The Primary Focus Area for the Foster Grandparent Program is Education. The Primary Focus Area for the Senior Companion Program is Healthy Futures.

Sample response from a Senior Companion application:

"For the past five years, we have been running a grocery delivery program that engages 50 volunteers each year. The volunteers pick up items from our local food shelf and deliver them weekly to homebound elders in our community. We know that the elders are very satisfied with this service, and so are our volunteers. We have a 90% volunteer retention rate from year to year."

a) *What are the strengths of this response?*

b) *How could it be improved?*

Ideas for YOUR application
What relevant experience does your organization have managing volunteers in either Education (FGP) or Healthy Futures (SCP)?
How has your organization measured performance in either Education (FGP) or Healthy Futures (SCP)?



- 5. Plans and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with FGP or SCP federal regulations to include establishing an Advisory Council, ensuring volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve in FGP or SCP.**

Advisory Council: Sponsors should establish an Advisory Council comprising individuals who are knowledgeable of community needs, reflect the demographics of the service area, and can help the sponsor meet responsibilities such as fund-raising, publicity, and program evaluation.

Required MOU: A Memorandum of Understanding between the sponsor and station must be in place prior to volunteer service starting, and the MOU must be renewed every three years.

Volunteer eligibility: Volunteers must be 55 years of age or older, show through an annual physical examination that they are capable of serving, be income-eligible if receiving a stipend, and undergo appropriate background checks.

Sample response from an FGP applicant:

“We will develop an Advisory Council with the help of the local schools we will serve. We will ask those schools to recommend active parents, school board members, and teachers who can provide guidance on our work. We will also invite several respected community elders, whose participation will help us recruit volunteers.

“Program staff will ensure MOUs are signed before volunteers begin service.

“A volunteer enrollment form will ask volunteers for their age and date of birth, ensuring that all volunteers are age-eligible. We will verify their date of birth by reviewing their tribal or state ID card. If anyone is too young, we will keep their information in our files and contact them once they become age-eligible. Background checks and annual physical exams will be conducted.”

a) *What are the strengths of this response?*

b) *How could it be improved?*



Organizational Capability

20% of application score

Briefly describe your organization's capability to operate the FGP or SCP project that you propose with respect to:

1. The plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind), day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with FGP or SCP program requirements (statute, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.
2. Clearly defined paid staff positions, including (as applicable) identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives.
3. Your organization's capacity to:
 - a. Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing
 - b. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies.
4. Demonstrating organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience managing federal grants.

1. **The plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind), day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with FGP or SCP program requirements (statute, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.**

Scenario: *What kind of information should Jane include to demonstrate sound programmatic and fiscal oversight?*

Scenario: *What kind of information should Jane include to demonstrate day-to-day operation support to ensure compliance with FGP or SCP program requirements?*

Scenario: *What kind of information should Jane include to demonstrate that they will ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources?*

2. Clearly defined paid staff positions, including (as applicable) identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives.

Program regulations establish several requirements for FGP and SCP sponsors around project staff. A sponsor's responsibilities include:

- Employ a full-time project director. A part-time project director may be allowed if the sponsor can demonstrate that such an arrangement would not negatively impact the program. (This should be explained in the application.)
- Provide staffing levels appropriate to carry out project management responsibilities.
- Consider project staff as sponsor employees subject to its personnel policies and procedures.
- Compensate project staff at a level comparable with similar staff positions in the sponsor organization and/or project service area.

The answer to this question should make a clear connection between staff roles and the activities required to make the program successful. Link program activities described elsewhere in your application to the staff positions you describe here.

Scenario: *Jane is writing applications for her tribe to sponsor both an FGP and an SCP. Between the two programs, she will have \$80,000 to spend on staff salaries. How might she respond to this question?*

Scenario: *Jane's employer has decided to apply to sponsor a small Senior Companion program. She will have \$20,000 to spend on staff salaries. How might she respond to this question?*



Ideas for YOUR application

What staffing structure would make the most sense for you, given the geographic area to be served and the scope of need in your community? What will be the specific responsibilities of each staff position?

Are there any current part-time staff whose roles might expand to include these positions? If you will be hiring new staff, what skills, education, or experiences would qualify someone to take on these positions?

What do you think will be the minimum dollar amount needed for staff salaries in order to carry out the project? What funding sources aside from the CNCS grant are available for staff salaries? (If you are using ONLY CNCS funds for this, there will be a direct implication on the minimum VSY levels you will want to propose.)



- 3. Your organization's capacity to:**
 - a. Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing**
 - b. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies.**

Ideas for YOUR application
What internal policies and operating procedures are already in place to provide governance and manage risk? What new policies or procedures might need to be established?
How are capital assets currently managed? What new policies or procedures might need to be established?

- 4. Demonstrating organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience managing federal grants.**

Ideas for YOUR application
What infrastructure currently exists around financial management? What staffing structure exists? What policies or procedures are in place?
What, if any, past experience does your organization have managing federal grants? If you have had federal grants, what details or stories demonstrate that they were managed successfully?



Executive Summary

PART II. SECTION A – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please provide a summary of your proposed or ongoing project. The Executive Summary must be no longer than one page. You may also use the template below, filling in specific details of your grant application, for your Executive Summary.

Template provided in application instructions:

“An estimated [**fill in the number**] FGP or SCP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include [**fill in a sample of no more than six (6) service activities**]. The primary focus area of this project is [**fill in CNCS Focus Area**]. At the end of the three-year grant, [**fill in the anticipated outcome(s)**]. The CNCS federal investment of \$ [**fill in the annual federal grant amount or the requested amount**] will be supplemented by \$ [**fill in the anticipated level of non-federal resources**].

Ideas for YOUR Application(s)

Executive Summary	FGP
Total volunteers	
Service Activities	
Focus Area	
Outcome selected	
Federal Funding Requested	
Non-Federal Funding Anticipated	

Executive Summary	SCP
Total volunteers	
Service Activities	
Focus Area	
Outcome selected	
Federal Funding Requested	
Non-Federal Funding Anticipated	