



Strengthening Communities – Answer Guide

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

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

FGP: Education

SCP: Healthy Futures

What community need(s) were identified?

FGP: Students are not paying attention in class; students are not completing homework; students are not learning traditional language and culture

SCP: Elders are more isolated and must carry out activities of daily living on their own, which can lead to stress and injury

Can Jane apply for the Foster Grandparent Program? Can she apply for the Senior Companion Program?
She can apply for both.

- 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: Tutoring-Public Schools; They may refocus attention when necessary and may encourage their child to participate in classroom activities using traditional language.

SCP: Companionship; Activities may include visiting with elders, driving them to social activities or to medical appointments or sharing light meals.

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

FGP:

Output ED2. Number of students that completed participation in CNCS-supported K-12 education programs.

Outcome ED27. Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service-learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement.

SCP:

Output H8. Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently.

Outcome H9. Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support.



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

FGP: By spending one-on-one time with children for at least the proposed amount of time, Jane believes about 75% of the children served will demonstrate improved academic engagement. Jane should include evidence to support this idea. This evidence may come from research or studies that suggests that interventions similar to Jane's proposed interventions lead to increased academic engagement.

SCP: By developing person-to-person supportive relationships with elders for at least the proposed amount of time, Jane believes about 80% of the elders served will report having increased social ties. She is applying the findings from a 2014 Department of Aging study that has shown that increased interaction among older individuals who are socially isolated can help them be more responsive to their own needs as a result of the increase in their social support system.

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: Jane plans to use attendance logs to collect output data and a teacher pre/post survey to collect outcome data. She plans to collect output data at the middle and end of the year, and she plans to collect outcome data at the beginning and end of the school year. She has not outlined all steps necessary to ensure that she can collect, measure, and manage data.

She still needs to consider:

- how she plans to aggregate the data she collects,
- how/where she plans to store the data,
- who will help interpret and analyze the data,
- what other stakeholders may be interested in project outcomes,
- and possibly other factors.

SCP:

Jane plans to use activity logs to collect output data and the required Independent Living Survey to collect outcome data. She plans to collect activity log data with timesheets weekly. She will collect the Independent Living Survey data annually.

She still needs to consider:

- how she plans to aggregate the data she collects,
- how/where she plans to store the data,
- who will help interpret and analyze the data,
- what other stakeholders may be interested in project outcomes,
- and possibly other factors.



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

- Detail and evidence presented in the community needs statement

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

- A more detailed explanation of the need and evidence showing that the need exists in the geographic service area.
- Background information on the community to contextualize the application (demographics, culture, history, governance structure, services available, etc.).
- The data collection plan should be more detailed and include steps to collect, measure, and manage data. Not all of these elements are requested in the Instrument Descriptions on the work plans.

Recruitment and Development

- 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.**

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

Ideas might include:

- Surveying volunteers about their experiences, abilities, and skills
- Including specific skills that a volunteer has in the volunteer assignment
- Seeking out stations that are a natural fit with a volunteer's experiences, abilities, and skills
- Asking volunteers to contribute to in-service trainings where relevant
- Involving volunteers in Advisory Council activities

How can those opportunities to share improve their communities?

Ideas might include:

- Passing on knowledge to younger generations
- Passing on knowledge to other volunteers and peers
- Helping students/clients feel more connected to their community
- Contributing to other aspects of the programs may help strengthen them and raise awareness in the community

How might those opportunities to share impact volunteers themselves?

Ideas might include:

- Volunteers feel more engaged, more likely to continue to volunteer
- Volunteers build new meaningful relationships with others
- Volunteers are healthier (physical and/or emotional health)
- Volunteers feel they are contributing positively to their communities



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

Jane should have clearly defined service activities and service schedules for each volunteer-child or volunteer-client pair. Potential service activities should reflect the needs of each child or client and the goals for them for the program year. Jane should also schedule periodic check-ins with teachers, clients, and families where possible to adjust volunteer assignments as needs may change over time. In addition, periodic check-ins with stations supervisors will allow Jane to assess how the volunteer-beneficiary relationship is developing and make adjustments as needed. Jane might also survey her volunteers annually to determine if they are satisfied with their assignments, how their service is impacting them, and if they feel they are using their skills.

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).

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

- CNCS program rules and regulations
- The policies and procedures she has developed to implement the programs
- The policies and procedures specific to her organization/agency
- Orientation specific to the place(s) in which volunteers will serve
- Orientation specific to the people the volunteers will serve

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

All can be good training topics – trainings should relate to service, and some can be provided to benefit volunteers themselves.



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

Jane can discuss the training needs of the volunteers in the context of the community need(s) identified for each program. For example, as clients of SCP volunteers may be socially isolated, volunteers may be among the first to notice signs of dementia in their clients, making training on recognizing those signs invaluable.

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.**

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

Jane can develop recruitment and outreach materials that outline the benefits of the program to volunteers and to the community. She can use multiple avenues for recruiting volunteers like posting information in senior center newsletters, on school bulletin boards, in community gathering spots, through word of mouth, etc. To ensure that her recruitment plan includes a volunteer pool reflective of the community served, Jane can highlight or target specific groups. For example, she could conduct outreach to veterans by posting materials or holding a community meeting to explain the programs at the local Veteran's Affairs office.

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

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

Ideas might include:

- Birthday cards
- Certificates of recognition
- Highlighting specific volunteers in the local senior newsletter and/or local newspaper
- Holiday cards and/or small tokens of appreciation
- Reminding schools/FGP stations to recognize volunteers, children can draw pictures or write cards, teachers can give small tokens of appreciation, etc.
- Recognition of volunteers at community events or festivals



Program Management

Question 1 Answer Key

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

Possible responses to describe in the application include:

- Establish a new station orientation plan to educate stations about program policies including appropriate volunteer assignments, client eligibility, and other policies
- Develop and implement a volunteer policy handbook
- Create a template volunteer assignment plan that stations are given at orientation
- Require a copy of the volunteer assignment before starting a volunteer at a station
- Ensure that SCP clients or their authorized caregiver agrees to allow the volunteer to visit the client in his/her home (signs a letter of agreement)
- Establish a new volunteer orientation manual and training event
- Establish a regular volunteer training schedule and solicit feedback from volunteers and station supervisors about needed training topics
- Include station responsibilities in Memorandum of Understanding with station
- Describe a volunteer recognition plan
- Describe procedures around record-keeping (who, what, when, where)
- Create a safety checklist all stations must complete before volunteers begin serving
- Develop and include non-discrimination policies in project materials like policy handbooks, MOUs, etc.
- Describe how the program will be made accessible for all qualified volunteers, including volunteers with physical disabilities and volunteers with limited English proficiency

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

Possible responses to describe in the application include:

- Establish procedures for how stations and volunteers will be instructed about prohibited activities
- Include list of prohibited activities in the sponsor's organizational or program policies, the volunteer handbook, and the station memorandum of understanding
- Establish a policy on nepotism and include in the program policies
- Train stations and volunteers annually on allowable and unallowable service activities

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

Possible responses to describe in the application include:

- Establish a plan for sponsor staff to regularly visit stations and check in with station staff and volunteers about their activities and experiences
- Establish a plan for occasional volunteer observation, perhaps as part of a volunteer training plan
- Ask questions about prohibited activities on the annual volunteer survey



Question 2 Answer Key

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

Appropriate service activities include:

Foster Grandparent Program:

- Work one-on-one with a student on reading or math skills
- Work one-on-one with a student on American Indian language acquisition
- Mentor a young person who has been neglected, has been involved with the juvenile justice system, is a teen mother, or needs other support
- Provide emotional support or reading readiness support for a child in Head Start or other pre-school setting

Senior Companion Program:

- Drive a client to doctor's appointments
- Take a client grocery shopping
- Go on walks with clients
- Talk or play games with clients
- Accompany a client to a cultural or community event
- Perform light housekeeping tasks
- Help plan or prepare meals
- Help clients learn about and receive support from community or government services
- Bring unmet needs to the attention of the client's care providers and station staff
- Assist homebound clients who are served regularly by caregivers in need of respite care
- Accompany client to elder financial literacy trainings on how to avoid fraud, scams, and other risks

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

Possible responses to describe in the application include:

- Establish a new station orientation manual to educate stations about program policies including appropriate volunteer assignments
- Develop examples of volunteer assignment plans and activities and provide these to station staff at the initial meeting with a new potential station

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

Possible inappropriate activities include:

- FGP: Working with an entire classroom of students, working with students who don't have assignment plans on file, taking the place of a paid classroom aide
- SCP: Deposit cash in the bank, doing major household repairs, shoveling snow, cleaning up after guests, providing brief and casual contact with a large number of clients, performing custodial services normally provided by paid staff, performing healthcare services

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

Possible responses to describe in the application include:

- Establish a plan for sponsor staff to regularly visit stations and check in with station staff and volunteers about their activities and experiences



- Establish a plan for occasional volunteer observation, perhaps as part of a volunteer training plan
- Establish a system for regular feedback from volunteers about their service, possibly using the annual survey
- Include refresher trainings on program rules as part of an ongoing volunteer training plan
- Establish a system for periodically reviewing, with the volunteer and station staff, the assignment plan for each of that volunteer's students/clients and discussing any needed changes

Question 3 Answer Key

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

- Children who weren't previously eligible to be served are now eligible
- A community that previously wasn't served by the program may now need new services
- The sponsor may want to shift more volunteer activities to the impacted community, and therefore may need to do more outreach and volunteer recruitment in this area, and may need to reduce services in another area

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?

- There may be a sudden increase in the number of elders requesting assistance from the Senior Companion program
- A community that previously wasn't served by the program may now need new services
- The sponsor may want to shift more volunteer activities to the impacted community, and therefore may need to do more outreach and volunteer recruitment in this area, and may need to reduce services in another area

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?

- Jane could decide to stop recruiting new volunteers for the first school so that natural attrition of volunteers gradually allows for program funds to be used in the other community where there is a higher need.
- Jane could work with school staff to see if current FGP volunteers at the first school could transition into volunteer roles supported by the school or another community organization rather than FGP.
- If Jane does stop all services to that school, she could offer volunteers the opportunity to serve at the other school where she is increasing services.
- If the first school continues to have a high need for volunteers, Jane could seek other funding sources that would allow her to support an increased number of volunteers to serve both communities.
- Jane could reduce the number of hours served by volunteers at the first school to redirect funds towards volunteers in the other community where there is a higher need.



Question 4 Answer Key

Strengths include:

- Applicant has experience managing volunteers.
- Volunteers are serving in the Healthy Futures focus area and performing an activity that SCP volunteers could also perform, so the applicant has some directly relevant experience.
- Strong retention rate demonstrates success at managing those volunteers.

Possible Improvements include:

- Will the same staff be involved with the SCP project? If so, say so.
- Describe any processes currently being used to recruit, manage, or train volunteers, if those processes will be duplicated for the proposed Senior Corps project.
- Include data to demonstrate that the elders are satisfied. Describe the evaluation tool used and the process for data collection, storage, and analysis.
- Connect the need for the SCP program to this existing volunteer program. Would the grant allow them to expand this program in size or scope?
- If volunteer satisfaction is being measured, include that information.

Question 5 Answer Key

Strengths include:

- Applicant has plans to engage Advisory Council members knowledgeable about the education system.
- Respected elders serving on the Advisory Council increases the likelihood of successful volunteer recruitment.
- The applicant has a plan to check age eligibility at the moment of application and verify it against an ID card.

Possible Improvements include:

- Does the applicant have good relationships with the school that suggest this plan is feasible?
- How often will the Advisory Council meet?
- Will the Advisory Council support the program in any other ways besides recruitment?
- There is no plan associated with the statement that signed MOUs will be in place. How could the sponsor plan to sign or renew MOUs with its stations?
- How will the sponsor monitor MOU dates to ensure they are renewed every three years?
- No plan is provided for how background checks or physical exams will be conducted. What will be the applicant's system for conducting and documenting these? The applicant could explain at what moment forms will be given to volunteers, provide timelines for these activities, suggest a tracking system, etc.



Organizational Capability

Question 1 Answer Key

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

Jane could include information such as:

- Identification of the department or staff position who will supervise the FGP or SCP program director
- Plans for how the director and the program itself will be monitored by the sponsor organization
- A description of the role of the tribal council or organization's board of directors and other senior leaders in providing programmatic and fiscal oversight
- Any other policies or procedures that will support programmatic and fiscal oversight which should be included in the project's policy handbook

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

Jane could include information such as:

- Plans and procedures for how the program director will monitor stations, volunteers, and other sponsor staff to ensure they understand and comply with program requirements
- Plans for regular meetings or check-ins both internally at the sponsoring organization and externally with station staff or advisory council members, and a description of how these meetings will help ensure compliance with program requirements
- Additional sponsor staff who may provide periodic guidance in support of the FGP and/or SCP programs
- Any other policies or procedures that will help support program compliance

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

Jane could include information such as:

- Plans for how the sponsoring organization will regularly monitor grant expenditures and program progress to ensure funds are being used effectively and efficiently (regular meetings, reports, etc.)
- Identification of other resources (in-kind, personnel, supplies, etc.) that will be used and describe plans to monitor and evaluate use of those resources
- Explanation of existing internal controls
- Procedures for mid-year course corrections as necessary to promote efficient and effective use of resources

Question 2 Answer Key

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?

One possible staffing structure would be to have one full-time director who is half-time FGP and half-time SCP. One part-time program coordinator could also be hired. The responsibilities assigned to each position should be clearly outlined in the application and in the Project Director's job description attachment.



If Jane or other current staff will be filling any of these staff positions, she should provide brief biographical sketches of each staff person, emphasizing the skills, experience, and knowledge that will make that individual successful in the role. If new staff will be hired, Jane should describe the skills, experience, and knowledge they will look for when recruiting new staff.

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?

Such a budget would likely support a part-time project director and no other staff. Jane will need to make a case for how the program objectives will be met despite having only a part-time project director. If there are other departments at the sponsoring organization that will be able to support the program objectives – for example, a volunteer coordinator who can help with volunteer recruitment, or an evaluation department that will help develop evaluation tools – include that information. Describe how much time the program director will spend on various activities. Describe any existing community partnerships or programs that will help ensure program success.

In addition, the sponsoring organization may secure additional financial support from other sources which would allow Jane's project to hire a full-time director.