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Learning Systems International
FY 2021 FGP/SCP Expansion Competition Training and Technical Assistance
Series 3

[Date]

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15:18:54 [Please stand by]

15:26:29 Thank you for joining. The session will begin shortly.

15:31:10 [Please stand by]

15:32:11 Thank you for joining. The session will begin shortly.

15:32:21 >> This meeting is being recorded.

15:32:37 >> Good afternoon, and welcome to our AmeriCorps Seniors -- FY 2021 FGP/SCP Expansion Competition Training and Technical Assistance Series 3.

15:32:49 Let's get started with housekeeping notes. All lines are on mute and will remain that way throughout the call. If you have questions, let us know in the Q&A pod.

15:32:58 If you have technical problems, let us know in the chat making sure to send it to all panelists and attendees.

15:33:05 Audios being broadcast online and by phone if you have an issue with one way try the other.

15:33:11 This session is being recorded. If you don't wish to be recorded, you could disconnect at any time.

15:33:23 The slides and transcript will be made available on the competition website, which you have a link on this page for that.

15:33:34 My name is Anne Otih, SeniorCorps Senior Program Officer for Training and Knowledge Management and I am -- I am joined today by Courtney Sutton who you may see in the Q&A pod answering questions.

15:33:51 I want to make a note about questions. We are a small group which is nice for answering questions so try to get to everybody's questions today.

15:33:59 If I'm not able to get to your questions, reach out to the 2021 FGP SCP.gov mailbox and check the website.

15:34:21 Here is our calendar of sessions for this training series. We will round it up cycle one next Monday with how to submit your application in electronic grants management system.

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15:34:44 For our last preliminary, we have the poll question. Please pull up the first poll. We want to know whether your organization has received federal grant before, including one from AmeriCorps?

15:35:12 Thank you. For our next question, we would like to know how well you know AmeriCorps Seniors formerly known as SeniorCorps?

15:35:38 Looks like we have a great array of people on the line. Next question -- how would you describe primary field of your organization? I want you to choose the one that best describes you.

15:35:45 All right. One more second.

15:36:08 Awesome! Another question -- how did you hear about us?

15:36:31 Great, thank you. The last question -- have you attended any of our other webinars in this series?

15:36:40 Thank you very much. Let us look at our agenda for today.

15:36:56 It's our goal by the end of the session, you will understand if AmeriCorps Senior companion program is right for you and your organization and be able to develop realistic complete application for the senior companion program grant.

15:37:17 We have some people who this is the first time with us and they are new to AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors. We will do a quick refresher on competition basics before diving in more about the senior companion program and we will look at national performance measures and some examples.

15:37:29 Starting off with competition basics -- AmeriCorps Seniors is currently accepting applications for AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparents program and senior companion programs.

15:37:41 Go into the system, begin the application and submit it at any point between now and 5:00 PM, Eastern, on February 3, 2021.

15:38:09 This competition in particular we are looking to expand into the geographic service areas listed on Appendix A. In green, you will see all the states in which they are -- there are open counties for the senior companion program, AmeriCorps Seniors, Senior companion program.

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15:38:27 When you open the document of Appendix A, you will see a table that looks like this. It shows all open funding opportunities. We will talk about how you will use this document but it is important.

15:38:46 These are some other resources to help you in this process of applying to the program's. The NOFO which is gateway into the competition establishes competition and the application requirements answers questions you may have.

15:39:00 We have grant application instructions that are step-by-step guide to navigating eGrants, electronic grants management system. Our next session is going to mimic grant application instructions.

15:39:31 Appendix A, Appendix B, national performance measures instructions, we have the work plan development worksheets, which allow you to plan your work plans outside of our eGrants system and then the frequently asked questions that we update throughout the process based on questions that you send to 2021 FGP SCP website.

15:39:42 So this gets the basics out of the way and we could dive into AmeriCorps Seniors, Senior companion program.

15:40:13 On the screen you should see a screenshot from SCP NOFO. It explains purpose of the program and there is a dual-purpose, engaging people 55 and over, particularly those with limited income in volunteer service to meet critical community needs and to provide high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.

15:40:37 Programs support the programs that support the senior volunteers in the senior companion program and they provide supportive -- support of -- to individuals who help older adults keep their dignity and independence.

15:40:59 That's the purpose of the program. There's a few things we could talk about. Talk about idea of engaging individuals 55 and older in service but then also providing high quality experience to the volunteers. The second is specific purpose on focusing volunteers with limited income.

15:41:18 We will talk about how that plays out later but also providing support of individualized service to help older adults maintain independence in their dignity.

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So those principles combined create AmeriCorps Seniors Senior companion program as we know it.

15:41:39 We could start by thinking about volunteers. Volunteers do not have specific focus to provide opportunities to serve for those who are of limited income so anyone over age 55 may serve as volunteer.

15:41:58 For those who come from under 200% of poverty level, they are eligible to serve with a small stipend for their service. Right now the stipend is three dollars an hour and that is relatively new.

15:42:21 Stipend increase from 265 23 dollars earlier this year. Idea is that we have a lot of resort -- we have a lot of research we talk about during this session to show that volunteers who are a part of this program and have access to these opportunities show increased health benefits.

15:42:35 We have other potential cost reimbursements like supplemental insurance, meals, transportation, recognition that help to provide the opportunity for people who may not be able to serve otherwise.

15:42:50 If you are looking at these cost reimbursements and thinking to yourself how do I figure out what counts as income and how do I go about getting this check? We have resources that can help you that I want to share.

15:43:03 In the chat we are adding links and one goes to manage AmeriCorps Senior page, and then other goes to the electronic Code of Federal Regulations.

15:43:24 Manage AmeriCorps Seniors grants page is where we have operational resources available to current grantees. There's a lot there but look at the section that says program handbooks and supplements.

15:43:38 Current grantees use this to manage their grants and it has answers to about any kind of practical operational question you may have. Public resources available to you that you can use as a part of this process.

15:43:59 We also have the Code of Federal Regulation itself. The specific code for the senior companion program is 45 CFR 2551, SCP.

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15:44:08 This is the rulebook for Senior companion program from federal government. Many of you are familiar with this. About 50% on the call our current grantees.

15:44:27 It's a series of questions and answers and when you apply for the program, you are agreeing to abide by all these different rules. If you are interested in learning more about income guidelines for a stipend which we have circled on the screen right now, you could click on that.

15:44:40 And you would find the answer.

15:44:55 Moving onto the next topic of volunteer stations. If you look at Code of Federal Regulation, you find technical definition of a station. It is where volunteers serve.

15:45:17 This often is organizations that we see partnered with assignments, beneficiaries working with grantee on assignment plan, providing necessary orientation and training for that assignment and providing supervision and reporting it back to the sponsor making sure volunteers are safe and secure.

15:45:38 The station has oftentimes direct access to a client population that needs the support that AmeriCorps Seniors Senior companion program can provide.

15:45:58 Often those are external organizations. Who are bound by memorandum of understanding with the sponsor grantee. They don't have to be a sponsor or grantee or organization to serve as the station.

15:46:08 Oftentimes we have sponsors and grantees who their organization also serves as a station.

15:46:31 The volunteers who serve at those sites and stations follow this code. This regulation 45 CFR 2551.71 in determining what their assignments are so we could see criteria here for what appropriate senior companion assignment would be.

15:46:54 There's a lot of text on the screen but they result in person-to-person supportive relationships with each client support at that achievement and maintenance of the highest independent living for their clients meaningful to

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senior companion and they are supported by appropriate organization and training.

15:47:26 Senior companion shall not provide services such as those given by medical personnel, large number of clients, custodial services, admin support. Services or other services. Focus is on the person-to-person supportive role. We are looking at 121 -- one to one relationships to help boost independent living.

15:47:49 We have defined what a station is but I want to reiterate that sponsor and grantee are terms that we used interchangeably and that is the organization that receives funding from AmeriCorps Seniors. They are the ones responsible legally for the operation of the grant.

15:48:10 For those of you who are visual learners, we have two graphics that shows how that plays out. On the screen we have an example of what AmeriCorps Seniors companion program that focuses on multiple issues or has multiple external partners would look like so we have AmeriCorps Seniors.

15:48:26 Giving the funds to the sponsor and then sponsor recruiting volunteers and placing them at external stations. Those other organizations and volunteers could be serving in a variety of ways.

15:48:52 On the second slide we have a graphic of what it looks like if volunteers were serving at the sponsors -- the sponsoring organization so AmeriCorps Seniors could make a grant to the sponsor that runs its own program that might be focus working only in one specific area or doing one service activity.

15:49:04 Let's move on to talk about performance measures. I welcome you to add questions you may have to the Q&A pod.

15:49:41 We have a question -- why do we measure performance? Why are we interested in measuring performance? If you are were in yesterday's session, you were able to cheat and maybe add bullets to the chat and let me know in the chat. Why is AmeriCorps the agency interested in performance?

15:50:02 Any ideas? Make sure to send it to all panelists and attendees.

Evaluate use of funds, to know how to improve, that's a good one.

15:50:16 Any other ideas?

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15:50:44 All right. We are a federal program and we have to be stewards of taxpayer dollars. That comes with responsibilities. Show program success for future funding opportunities to be sure we are providing the service we state we're going to give, to see that the resources are used properly, toward this objectives and those are all correct answers.

15:51:06 We take that responsibility seriously. Why do we measure performance? Definitely all the things you mentioned. Accountability, improvement, and also helps us identify things that could be replicated or scaled up and done elsewhere.

15:51:33 We can take what an AmeriCorps Senior companion grantee is doing in one side of the country and scale it up and compare it to a program on the other end of the country and scale up that data to tell the story of service or if there's something going well, being able to adapt it and replicate it elsewhere.

15:51:47 What is unique is that it's unified measurement of these performance measures and it's all across not just AmeriCorps Seniors but all the AmeriCorps programs.

15:52:18 Specific system we use to do that is called national performance measures, uniform set of measures. We will look at menu of measures and everybody in the community uses some version of those measures and that allows us to measure and assess your effectiveness and communicate it and also supports our ability to tell unified story of service.

15:52:29 They are made up of a number of different components. We will walk through all of those starting at the bottom with focus area.

15:52:53 While the agency has six focus areas, the primary focus area for the Senior companion program is healthy futures. You must program VSYs into healthy futures work plan.

15:53:07 Objectives -- next category is general category within each focus area for healthy futures. There are two, aging in place and access to care.

15:53:43 With output and outcome, we get to specific measures for each objective. Those are reflected in the output and outcome. I like to say the way to

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differentiate them is the output is a seed and outcome is the flower that blossoms from the seed. You work with certain number of individuals, but most of the time not all individuals will achieve that social outcome that they are looking for.

15:54:03 Sometimes we get 100% success rate where we try to move somebody into a new way of life to create a change so people we are working with, that is the output and the number of people who experience the change is outcome.

15:54:23 We have example from healthy futures -- the output number of individuals served paired with the outcome number of individuals who report having increased social support or improved capacity for independent living.

15:54:46 A work plan is a specific part of the application. It is a table that mimics the logic model. National performance measures work plan is a work plan that results in output and outcome specified by AmeriCorps national performance measures.

15:55:10 You should see a screenshot of the work plan development worksheet. One of the tools I mentioned. Work plans are specific part of events, electronic grants management system. It's a specific part of application. They are built structured and constructed.

15:55:37 It's not a narrative, blank space where you can write what you want. You need to provide specific information in these specific columns. It will look different inside the system, but this tool gives you the ability to experiment and draft so you can copy and paste into eGrants.

15:55:58 Looking at fictional appendix A list of funding opportunities and example throughout the couple of weeks of fictional state in Verona. Just reiterate that you get to determine what you serve.

15:56:18 You get to propose to us whatever it is you think will make the biggest impact in your community. You get to propose the geographic service area, how many counties you want to group together, propose funding amount and you get to propose number of VSYs.

15:56:30 Regardless of the funding requests, all applicants are required to follow the calculation of one VSY for every \$6500 in funding request.

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15:57:05 I have shared this week and I know people like to start at total federal funding and work their way back to VSY. I like to do it the opposite way so looking at this proposed geographic service area, Montague and Kepler counties, maybe we think 40 VSYs to have the greatest impact we would multiply that by 6500 and we would get \$260,000.

15:57:33 For those of you who start from total federal funding that you request, one thing to point out, \$260,000 divided by 6500, you get the 40 VSYs, 40 VSYs is minimum amount of service that you can propose to have in the geographic service area that you are proposing.

15:57:48 In addition to the \$6500 telling you how many, how much total funding can be per VSY, we also use it to describe something called the cost per VSY misfold.

15:58:05 For every \$6500 in annual based federal funding, at least one VSY must be placed into work plans that result in national performance measures outcomes into healthy futures focus area.

15:58:31 We have 40 VSYs times 6500, those 40 VSYs, we must program into national performance measures outcomes, work plans that result in national performance measures outcomes in the healthy futures focus area.

15:59:03 Appendix B is national performance measures instructions. There's one for each of the AmeriCorps Seniors program so look at the Senior companion program specifically. At the top we have tables, breaks it down how we had the pyramid into the focus area and the objectives and the specific output outcome pairings that fall into that objective.

15:59:17 You get to see that sometimes there is an output with one single outcome like access to care, or there's output that has two potential outcomes you could select from in aging in place.

15:59:43 As you scroll through the document, you will see definitions that go along with certain outputs and outcomes and then different ways that you can track and measure and collect data in the Senior companion program, there is

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mandatory instrument for collecting data, SeniorCorps independent living study or survey not study.

16:00:25 You could find the link in the Appendix B performance measure instructions. We have 40 VSYS. We know we have to program 40 VSYS into work plans that result in healthy futures outcome. We have taken a stab at it right here as an example where we had one work plan where the output number of individuals served was paired with the outcome number of caregivers of older adults individuals with this a who reported having increased social support.

16:00:40 We placed 25 VSYS there. We have other outcome here in the second work plan number of individuals who report having increased social support or improved capacity for independent living and we placed 15 VSYS here.

16:01:10 One point I want to make is when you look in eGrants in the work plans, you will not see VSYS as a column. You will see unduplicated volunteers.

Unduplicated volunteers equals VSYS for your program. It's not intuitive but eGrants is a legacy computer system that we have so if you see unduplicated volunteers in the system, think VSYS.

16:01:24 For AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparent and senior companion programs we count hours and not people. It is written into the resources that you will see but hopefully you can navigate that.

16:01:59 We have come to this portion. What do you think determines a successful application? Let me know in the chat.

16:02:44 Outcomes that fill the needs of the community, I like that answer. Any other thoughts? Ability to manage grant funds meaning outcomes and outputs established in the grant, scalable, replicable, those are good. Awesome! Solving existing problem in promoting healthy futures for seniors. These are all great answers.

16:02:55 Progress, submitted on time and according to the NOFO application directions. That's a good segue.

16:03:22 We have the answer in the NOFO so on the screen we have a screenshot from page 10 of the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior companion program

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Notice of Funding Opportunity where he could find application information and review criteria.

16:03:26 We are giving you the specific criteria that reviewers will use to evaluate your application. This is primarily what determines successful application and then we provide more detail about what it means.

16:03:52 The work plan does play a significant role in all of that. The way that you reflect national performance measures instructions so it's important to take the work that you want to do, impact that you see and translate it into AmeriCorps Seniors Senior companion program. Translating it into our performance measures.

16:04:16 So that concludes our prepared content for today. We have a video. We went into the archives to pull this one so I will invite you to add your questions to the Q&A. We will switch up the screens a bit with Jeff and play the video and then we will come back and start the Q&A session.

16:08:00 [Video playing]

16:08:19 [End of video]

16:09:02 >> Thank you. I will encourage you to add your questions to the Q&A pod. Looks like we have a couple that have come in. We have a question about access. Look at the FAQs because we have it written out more in depth but in general the access column a budget, the excess column could be used to reflect amount of nonfederal cash and in-kind contribution generated by the sponsor or grantee in excess of what is required percentage.

16:09:15 Question about non-stipend volunteers but I don't see looks like it's second part of the question and I don't see the first part of the question.

16:09:43 Do you mind adding the first part again?

16:09:57 Feel free to add questions to the Q&A pod.

16:10:22 If volunteer does not meet 200% of poverty level, can they still volunteer and doesn't count towards the grant volunteer numbers? When you report back to us during the two reports in a year, you can count them there but they do not count as a VSY, volunteer Service Year.

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16:10:43 Those are stipended hours. No problem. Any other questions? It does not have to be specific to the Senior companion program.

16:11:03 While we wait for more questions, I will ask Jeff to add the poll.

16:11:25 I saw a question about additional documents having sent in additional documents but it's not showing as sent in eGrants. You will have to manually update the document section of eGrants, even after you have sent each document so it doesn't automatically update.

16:12:01 Have to manually update that part of the application. Any other questions you may have about the Senior companion program or foster grandparent program or AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors?

16:12:25 Ask the agency receiving the funds, can we match seniors with individuals who we serve who could use assistance or does that have to happen through [indiscernible]? As the agency or organization receiving the funds, your organization can serve as the station as well.

16:13:01 You are welcome, Tara. That goes along for both programs, both foster grandparent and senior companion programs. Any other questions?

16:13:31 What is a work plan? The work plan is a part of the grant application that shows how your volunteers will serve. Like a logic model with output and outcome, you describe community need and show how you will place the volunteer Service Year's.

16:14:11 If your county is not on Appendix A, can you apply for another County? You may apply for another County listed on Appendix A, even if your organization isn't in that county, however, you must serve the county you are applying to serve with those funds if awarded.

16:14:38 Can I speak more about reports? Sure. Progress reports, there are two progress reports and then we have supplemental report that you have to do annually. The two that I said were formal has to do with on what you are telling us that you are applying to serve on your application and the third one which is supplement is more demographic data about the volunteers that are serving.

16:14:48 And then we have the fiscal reports as well.

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16:15:06 Any other questions?

16:15:12 [indiscernible]

16:15:46 In the NOFO we say that for each VSY that you apply for, that is \$6500 or from the total federal funding that you have, is one VSY per \$6500. Volunteer Service Year is technically 1044 stipended hours.

16:16:35 Any other questions? Can stipend hours be shared between two persons? Yes, if you look at guidance, you will see minimum maximum amount individuals can serve.

16:17:04 One VSY could be two or three or 4 people, one VSY could relate to one person service. It comes from average if volunteer were to serve volunteer were to serve 20 hours for 52 weeks.

16:17:55 You can continue to add questions to the Q&A pod. Couple more questions about determining how much federal funding to request then when you can request what best suits your needs for the service location you are proposing to serve, regardless of the funding request, all applicants are required to follow calculation of one VSY for every \$6500 in funding requested.

16:18:34 In our example we had 40 VSYs and multiply that by \$6500 Annette gave us \$260,000. Those 40 VSYs which are stipended volunteers. One VSY is 1044 hours.

16:19:22 Organization may apply for less than 40 VSYs. But maximum amount of funding you can request is whatever number of VSYs times \$6500 to get maximum amount of funding that you request.

16:20:20 Question -- you can propose to request whatever number of VSYs you would like and then propose to place them in stations outside of your organization should that -- should that be the model you wish to follow.

16:20:50 Any other questions?

16:21:15 You may have stipended volunteers but the funding you are requesting a number of VSYs that you are requesting are associated with stipended volunteers.

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16:21:41 All right. I am not seeing any other questions. We will stop here for the day. I encourage you to send questions to 2021 fgpscp@cns.gov should you come across anything as you work through your application.

16:21:59 Next session is at this same time on Monday. We will walk through submitting an application in the electronic grant management system, eGrants. With that, I wish you a great afternoon and I will talk to you on Monday. Have a great day!

16:22:06 [End of session]

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