Slide 1

Welcome to Module 1: Introduction to CNCS and Senior Corps. This module will lay out the basic concepts of the Corporation of National and Community Service (CNCS) and the Senior Corps programs.

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This is the first of five Modules of the New Project Directors' Orientation (NPDO). If you have not reviewed the NPDO Overview presentation and NPDO Syllabus, please do so before you start this presentation. The Overview and Syllabus provide the information, including resource documents, you will need to complete the NPDO curriculum.

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By the end of Module 1, you should be able to:
Identify key information about CNCS
- Describe the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles of CNCS
- Identify how CNCS achieves its mission
- Identify the CNCS authorizing legislations
- Identify the six priority areas of the CNCS Strategic Plan
- Understand the CNCS organization & roles of CNCS State Office staff
- Identify key characteristics and resources related to Senior Corps programs

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In Module 1 we will introduce you to The Corporation for National and Community Service including the legislative history, organizational and staffing information, and strategic focus areas. We will present an overview of the three Senior Corps program programs: FGP, SCP, and RSVP and the resources that are available to help project directors manage their Senior Corps projects.

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Let's get started with the introduction to the Mission and Guiding Principles of the Corporation for Nation and Community Service.

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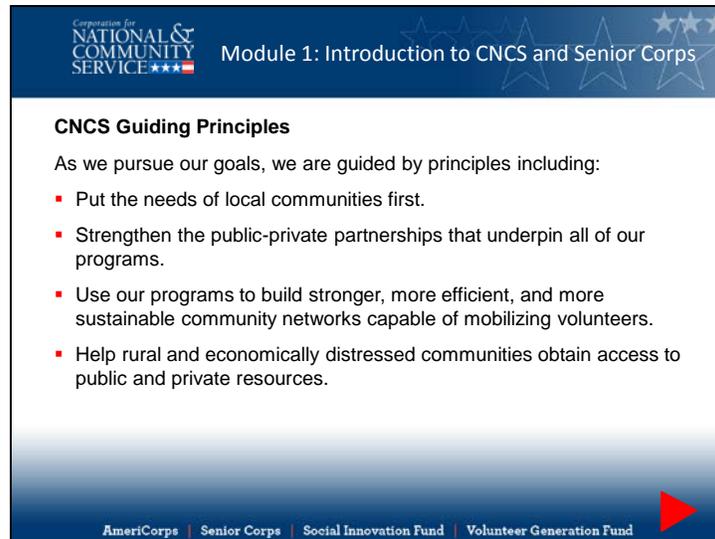
CNCS Guiding Principles
As we pursue our goals, we are guided by the following principles:
- Put the needs of local communities first.
- Strengthen the public-private partnerships that underpin all of our programs.
- Use our programs to build stronger, more efficient, and more sustainable community networks capable of mobilizing volunteers to address local needs, including disaster preparedness and response.
- Measure and continually improve our programs' benefits to service beneficiaries, participants, community organizations, and our national culture of service.
- Build collaborations wherever possible across our programs and with other Federal programs.
- Help rural and economically distressed communities obtain access to public and private resources.
- Support diverse organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations, minority colleges, and disability organizations.
- Use service-learning principles to put volunteer and service activities into an appropriate context that stimulates life-long civic engagement.
- Support continued civic engagement, leadership, and public service careers for our programs' participants and community volunteers.
- Exhibit excellence in management and customer service.

Over 5 million Americans are engaged in service through National Service Programs.

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The Corporation is the nation's largest grant maker supporting service and volunteering. We are a catalyst for change and champion for the ideal that every American has skills and talents to give. And we do that by:

1. Providing grants and training and technical assistance to developing and expanding volunteer organizations.
2. Exploring, developing and modeling effective approaches for using volunteers to meet the nation's human needs.
3. Conducting and disseminating research that helps develop and cultivate knowledge that will enhance the overall effectiveness of national and community service programs.
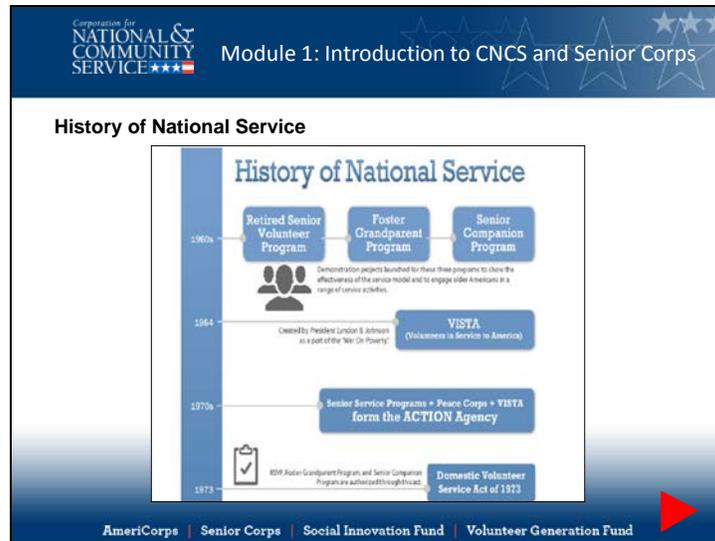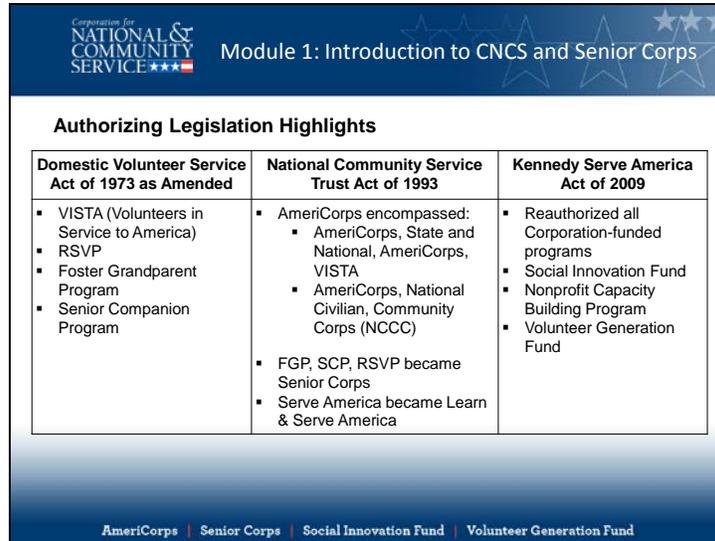
Next we will spend a few minutes discussing the bipartisan acts of Congress and endorsements of Presidents that created the Senior Corps programs and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

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On the CNCS website you can see the National Service Timeline. The timeline is a nice summary of the evolution of national service in the last century. Various Presidents over time and respective Congressional representatives have worked together to encourage volunteerism and service. A few of the Senior Corps milestones are highlighted on this slide.

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Knowing a little about the history and authorizing legislation of the national service programs helps to understand the funding streams and relationships of the CNCS programs.

Next, let's delve deeper into the authorizing legislations, starting with the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) of 1973.

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Module 1: Introduction to CNCS and Senior Corps

Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as Amended

- DVSA authorized the following programs:
  - Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
  - Senior Companion Program (SCP)
  - Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

- DVSA also created the federal agency ACTION to administer Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Peace Corps, and the three Senior Corps programs.

AmeriCorps | Senior Corps | Social Innovation Fund | Volunteer Generation Fund

The three Senior Corps Programs were first authorized by Congress in 1973 as part of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act. Several events lead up to the passage of the DVSA:
In 1961 President John F. Kennedy proposes establishment of the Peace Corps and Congress authorizes it on September 22, 1961. President Kennedy states, "The wisdom of this idea is that someday we'll bring it home to America." Also in 1961 The White House Conference on Aging was held, drawing attention to the continuing opportunity and need to engage older adults in meaningful service activities.
1964
As part of the "War on Poverty," President Lyndon B. Johnson creates VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) and the Foster Grandparent Program.

The Older Americans Act of 1965 is passed authorizing the Foster Grandparent Program to begin as a national demonstration effort to show how low-income persons aged 60 and over can establish meaningful relationships with children in need.

Shortly after that The Community Service Society of New York launched a pilot project involving a group of older adults in volunteer service to their communities. The project demonstrates the value of senior volunteers and serves as a precursor to the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The success of this program, which demonstrated beyond doubt the value of the services of older volunteers, led to an amendment to the Older Americans Act, creating RSVP in 1969.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Administration on Aging funded two Senior Companion demonstration projects called "Senior Friends" in Tampa, Florida, and Cincinnati, Ohio, during 1968-1971. In 1972 legislation was introduced to create the Senior Companion Program.

In 1973 FGP, RSVP and SCP were authorized by Congress in the DVSA and the ACTION agency was created to house these programs.

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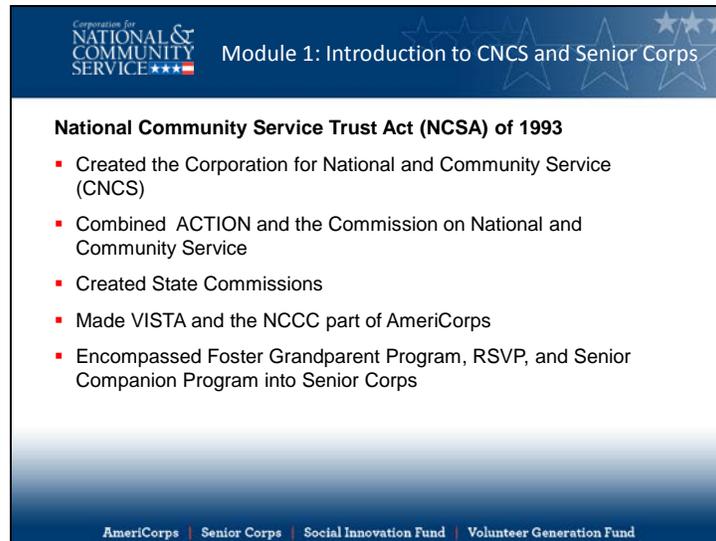
In September 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities. VISTA and the National Civilian Community Corps become part of AmeriCorps, and the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and the Senior Companion Program were combined to create Senior Corps.

With passage of National and Community Service Act, Congress changes Retired Senior Volunteer Program to Retired "and" Senior Volunteer program to reflect that not all volunteers were retired.

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On April 21, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which reauthorizes and expands national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

- Reauthorized and expanded National Service programs
- Amended the NCSA and DVSA
- Created the Social Innovation Fund, the Volunteer Generation Fund, and the Nonprofit Capacity Building Program

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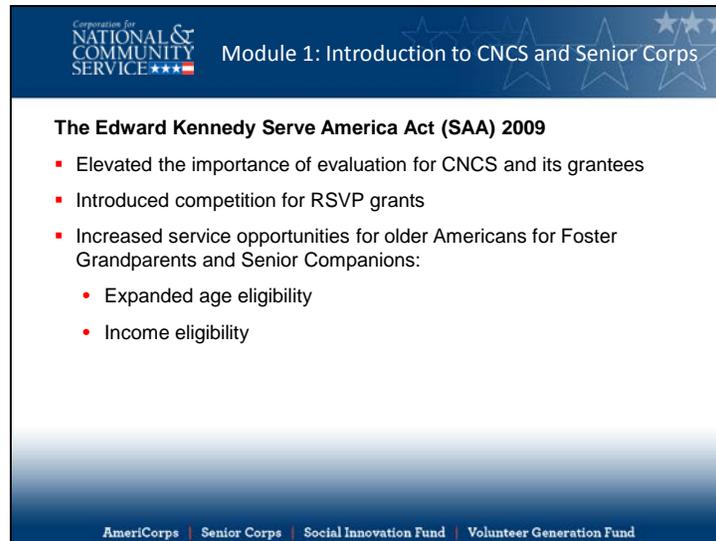
Elevated the importance of evaluation for CNCS and its grantees

In addition the Service America Act:
- Introduced competition for RSVP grants
- Drives service as a solution in the areas of education, health, clean energy, veterans, and economic opportunity
- Increases service opportunities for older Americans by expanding age and income eligibility for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions.

SAA created the:
- Social Innovation Fund - promotes public and private investments in effective nonprofit organizations to help them replicate and expand to serve more low-income communities.
- Volunteer Generation Fund - Strengthens the nation's civic infrastructure through creation of a to help nonprofits recruit, manage, and support more volunteers
- Nonprofit Capacity Building Program - improves nonprofits' performance in communities facing resource hardships.

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In addition to administering National Service Programs, Congress has given CNCS the responsibility to take the lead on several special initiatives and special days of service including The Martin Luther Kings Day of Service and the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance

All national service grantees, including Senior Corps, are encouraged to participate in special days of service and other national initiatives. You will be especially interested to know that Senior Corps Week is held annually in May. There are resources on the websites to help your project participate in the special initiatives and Days of Service.

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The Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for using national service to address critical challenges facing our communities and our nation. It builds on the strong foundation of national service that has developed over the past decades and the vision set forth in the bipartisan Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009. The Strategic Plan is the result of a collaborative effort between CNCS and our network of state commissions, grantees, project sponsors, participants, staff, and the public through which thousands of individuals provide input on our strategic direction.

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The Strategic Plan recognizes that national service will have its greatest impact if we target resources on a core set of critical problems and carefully measure our progress. It prioritizes six major challenges facing communities: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. It also provides strategies and performance measures which determine how we will evaluate our success.

CNCS' Strategic Plan leverages the strength of grantees, participants, programs, state service commissions and the American public to build a network of programs that offer effective solutions in the six priority areas. We will produce these results by investing in effective local initiatives, engaging more Americans in service, supporting evidence-based programs, and leveraging public-private partnerships.

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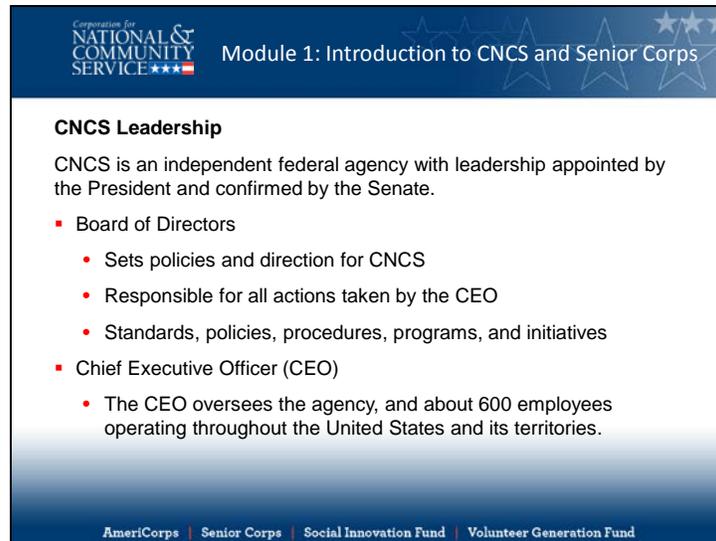
We have discussed the history, legislation, programs, and priorities. Now let's talk about how the Corporation is organized.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is an independent federal agency. The Corporation has a bipartisan Board of Directors, and Chief Executive Officer, all appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.
The Chief Executive Officer oversees the agency, which includes about 600 employees operating throughout the United States and its territories.
The Board of Directors sets policies and direction for the Corporation and is responsible for all actions taken by the Chief Executive Officer with respect to standards, policies, procedures, programs and initiatives as are necessary to carry out the mission of the Corporation.

Let's review the organizational chart next.

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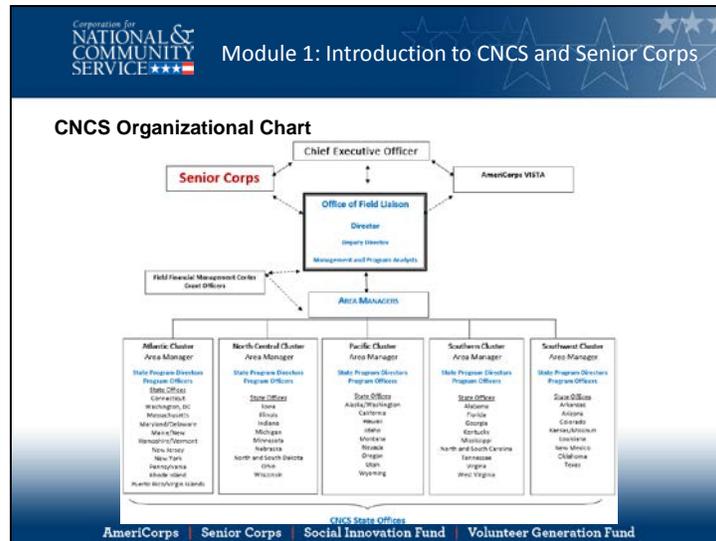
This Organization Chart focuses on the segment of CNCS that works directly with the Senior Corps grantees. As you can see the Senior Corps Director and the Director of the Office of Field Liaison report directly to the CEO.

Senior Corps HQ is Responsible for Senior Corps Policy

Office of Field Liaison coordinates the work of the CNCS State Offices with Senior Corps, VISTA, and the Field Financial Management Center. There is a grants officer and program officer assigned to each Senior Corps grant.

Grants Officers are located at the FFMC in Philadelphia. They provide fiscal oversight of grants and they review your grants and financial reports.

Program Officers are located in the State Offices.

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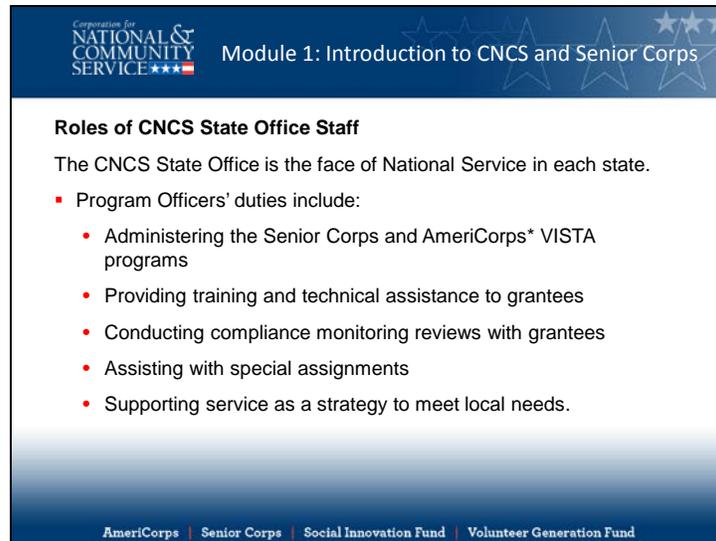
Your program officer is the CNCS staff member you will work with most frequently. Each State Office is managed by a state program director with several program officers to help manage the Senior Corps and VISTA programs.

The roles of CNCS State Office staff were discussed in the New Project Directors' Orientation Overview session. All new Project Directors should be in touch with their assigned Program Officer on a regular basis.

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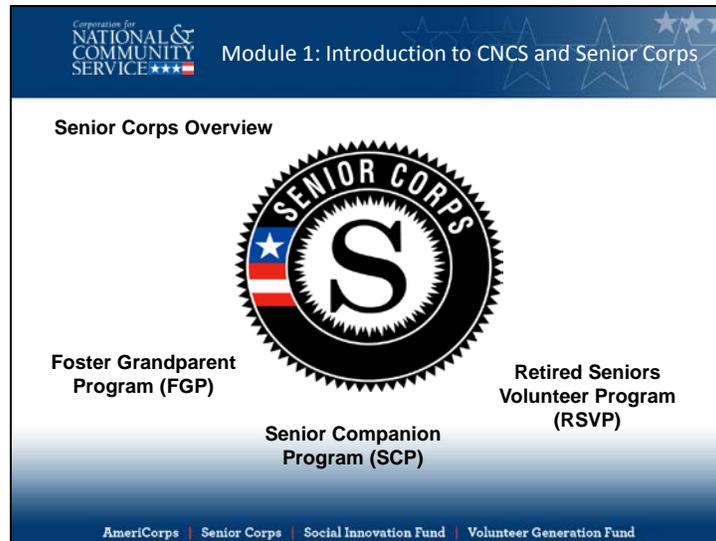
Now that we know more about the Corporation's history and staffing, let's take a closer look at the Senior Corps programs.

The Senior Corps programs recruits volunteers 55 and over to help their communities solve some of their most pressing problems in the areas of Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, and Veterans and Military Families. Working with community partners Senior Corps grantees develop performance measures, assignments plans, and evaluation plans that focus volunteer service on the needs in their communities and make it possible to tell a national story of the impact of senior volunteers.

The Purpose and Goals of each program are described in detail the Operation Handbooks. While SCP and FGP focus exclusively on Independent Living and Education, respectively. The RSVP is open to wide variety of volunteer assignments; all three programs aim to meet critical community needs and provide a high quality experience for volunteers.

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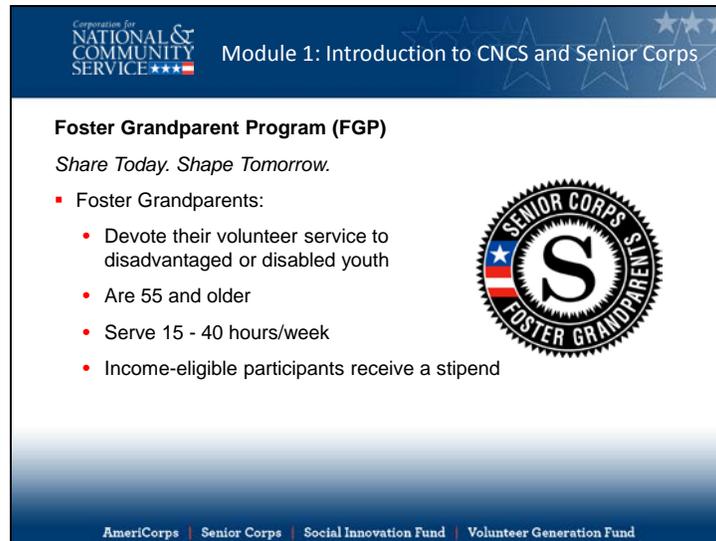
Foster Grandparents are individuals age 55 and over who thrive on direct interaction with children and believe they can make a difference in the lives of young people. Income-eligible Foster Grandparents receive a modest stipend to help offset the costs of volunteering.

Foster Grandparents devote their volunteer service entirely to disadvantaged or disabled youth. Across the country, Foster Grandparents help children in many ways including:
- Helping preschool children prepare for school;
- Tutoring K-12 students for school success;
- Helping qualified beneficiaries to develop skills and job training.

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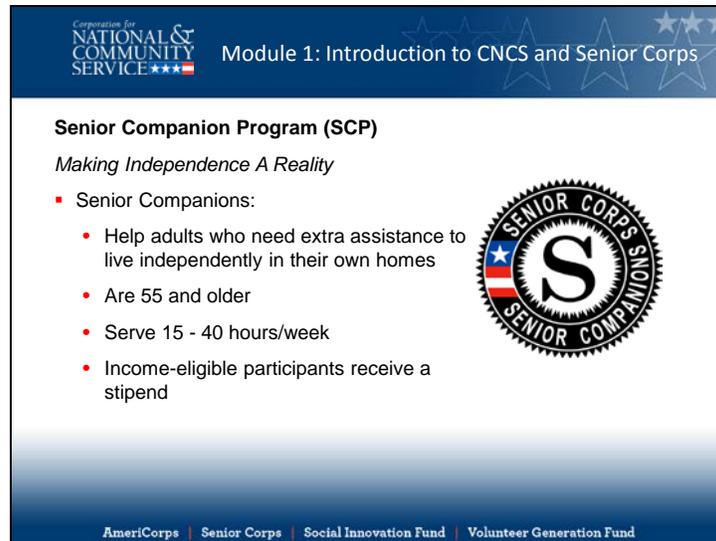
Senior Companions are individuals age 55 or over who touch the lives of adults who need extra assistance to live independently in their own homes. They serve frail older adults, adults with disabilities, those with terminal illnesses, and offer respite for caregivers.

They assist their adult clients in basic but essential ways by:
- Providing companionship and friendship to isolated and frail adults;
- Assisting with simple chores and;
- Providing transportation.

Income-eligible Senior Companions receive a modest stipend to help offset the costs of volunteering.

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RSVP volunteers are 55 and over who choose how and where they want to serve—from a few hours to more than 40 hours a week. RSVP offers flexibility and choice to its volunteers as it matches the personal interests and skills of older Americans with opportunities to serve their communities in the focus areas of Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Veterans, Capacity Building, and other community priorities.

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Managing a Senior Corps project is a big challenge. The Corporation provides resources, in addition to your grant, to help you manage your project.

The CNCS website, http://www.nationalservice.gov, hosts information you will need to help manage your project. We will review some of the sites frequently used by Senior Corps grantees.

Links to the resources listed are included in the NPDO Syllabus.

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You can go from the National Service website to the Knowledge Network. In the Knowledge Network you can find training resources on topics such as Criminal History Checks, Performance Measurements, Focus Area Resources, and other topics that are especially useful to Senior Corps projects.

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CNCS provides a number of resources to help project market their Senior Corps programs. You may be interested in using the fact sheets, web banners, or public service announcements to help promote your project.

Slide 27

From the Senior Corps Outreach page you can order brochures, Senior Corps Week Materials, and download videos. Printer-ready logos are available in several formats.

Slide 28

The Managing Senior Corps Grants webpage has links to the program regulations, the most current Grant Applications, Progress Report Instructions, and other documents projects use regularly.

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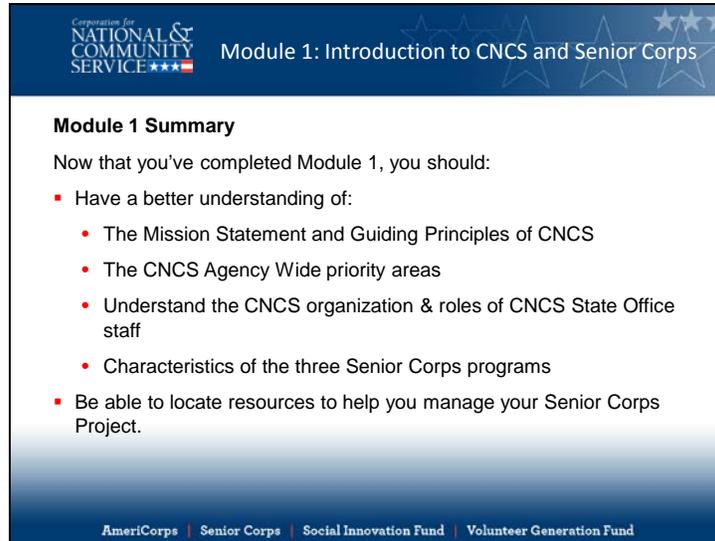
Module 1: Introduction to CNCS and Senior Corps

Module 1 Summary

Now that you've completed Module 1, you should:

- Have a better understanding of:
  - The Mission Statement and Guiding Principles of CNCS
  - The CNCS Agency Wide priority areas
  - Understand the CNCS organization & roles of CNCS State Office staff
  - Characteristics of the three Senior Corps programs
- Be able to locate resources to help you manage your Senior Corps Project.

AmeriCorps | Senior Corps | Social Innovation Fund | Volunteer Generation Fund

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If you have not completed the first Preparation Assignment, please take some time to complete it. Once you have completed the Preparation Assignment and Presentation 1 you are ready to conclude the 1st Module by consulting with your program officer regarding any question you may have about the information covered in Module 1.

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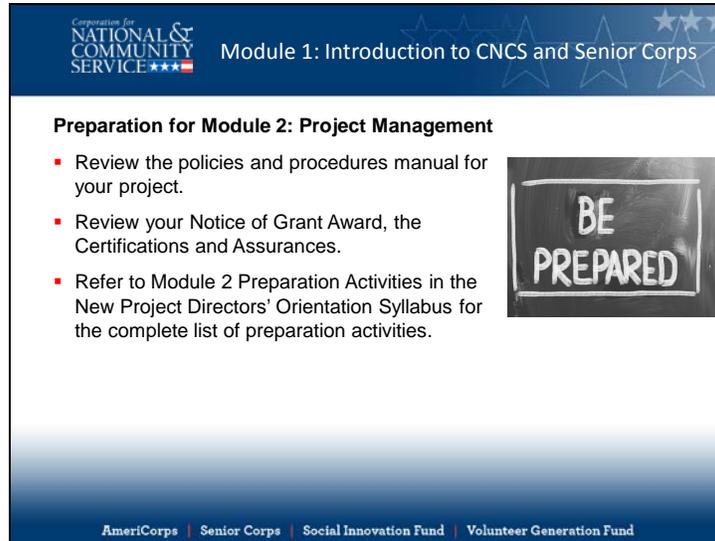
Please complete the Preparation Activities listed in the NPDO Syllabus for Module 2 before you view Module 2.

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