

## **Presenting your Senior Corps Project to the Community (for FGP and SCP Tribal Grantees)**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to the webinar for Senior Corps tribal grantees on presenting your project to the community.

### **Agenda**

Here is our agenda for today.

First, we will talk about introducing your project, including the importance of involving partners to help you; how you might want to talk about the service you're providing to the community as well as the volunteer opportunity; and different ways to get the word out about your project.

We'll also talk about establishing a presence in the community, building a reputation for your project and suggestions for building a presence when you can't be there. We will talk about the importance of ongoing outreach to the community and planning for that. We'll point out some resources that are available.

Then, we will have time for questions and discussion and we hope that you will share some of your own ideas introducing your projects into your communities. Sharing your own experience, and hearing other people's ideas, will help us learn from each other and people can come away from this webinar with practical suggestions.

### **Introducing your Project**

#### **Work with Partners**

Let's begin with introducing a new project. We all know, when you want to do something new, it's good to have friends supporting you.

You increase your ability to reach people when others help you spread the message so enlist partners - community members that the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion project touches, or will touch - the people who have an interest in the success of your project. Your supporters might be community leaders, tribal council members, organizations that provide related services like schools, community and senior centers, and health centers.

These are the relationships that help you get things done, get approval or cooperation you need, and get the word out - that is, recommend your project to people who want to volunteer and people who could benefit from the service. The best word of mouth happens when you get your partners or supporters to talk about the good work your project can do for the community.

Partnerships are especially important if you don't live in the community. You need them to keep your project activities visible, talked about, and used. It's important to get others talking about your project. It is a good idea to be clear with your partners that you're trying to get the word out about your project because it's new and success ultimately depends on acceptance and involvement from the community.

It's also important to maintain good communication with people who support you – like the partners you talked to during initial conversations about the application and programming. Meet with people periodically, or by phone if you can't be there, to let them know how your project is progressing and how they can get involved. Also, you might want to use letters, emails, or social media to give partners regular updates.

### **Talking about the Services**

Let's talk about getting the message out. How do you want to talk about the service your volunteers offer to children and elders?

Your audience is the entire community – you want everyone to know what you are offering - but especially families caring for children or elders.

When you talk about the service – either in person or if you are giving out information on paper (brochures, flyers):

- Let them know who you are. 'We are your neighbors', or 'we are working with an organization you know.' 'We are from the community; we are addressing needs in the community.'
- Or if you aren't from the community...Use the connections you have. 'We work with people or organizations you know.' Name your partners like schools and health centers.
- Talk about what you do – 'We are working to improve our community, the lives of our children and elders. 'Our volunteers are (or will be) doing things you care about, teaching traditions and language to children' (for FGP) and 'keeping elders supported and living in the community' (for SCP).
- Add that you are part of a national effort. 'We are part of a national service program that supports local volunteers to serve in the community.'

You don't have to reinvent the wheel; there are resources on the CNCS website in different formats that you can use if you want to. There are explanations of the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs aimed at the general public, and outreach resources you can order (logos, banners, fact sheets, videos, etc.). You don't need to use the same language as the CNCS resource examples. You can adapt the information for your audience, revising the language, putting it in Native language, using points that your audience would care about most. I will show you an example in a minute.

### **Talking about the Volunteer Opportunity**

Besides the service for children or elders, you also want to get people excited about the volunteer opportunity. In this case, your audience is the entire community but especially people age 55 and over.

How do you want to talk about the volunteer opportunity? What does your audience care about? How would you get their attention and appeal to them?

- Let them know, 'Our children or elders could use help. You can make a difference. We need your compassion and talents.'

- Tell them what they would be asked to do – the activities, the time commitment, where they would serve.
- Let them know the personal benefits as well; ‘this is a good way to stay active, spend time with others, meet new friends and learn new things.’
- Tell them about the stipend and training - ‘Here is the support we can offer you’.

Again, CNCS resources are available to help you craft these messages; you can use them ‘as is’ or as something to get you started and then tailor the message in terms of the community’s values, things that are important to your community.

### **Flyer Example: Round Valley Indian Tribes**

Let’s take a look at an example from Round Valley Indian Tribes. This is a flyer for their Foster Grandparent Program.

- Program Director Joe Dukepoo couldn’t be here today but he wanted me to tell you that elders have a connection to this tribal logo, so when they see it they know to look at the flyer/materials. This is especially important when posting at general public places like the post office, grocery stores because it grabs tribal members’ attention, and even if it isn’t a senior reading it, a family member is more than likely to see it and encourage their elder to check it out. Right away this grabs their attention.
- It uses the Senior Corps FGP logo as a header but also adapts it (lower left corner) to make it the tribe’s.
- It starts with “FGPs are role models, mentors, and friends to Round Valley youth” – tells what they do, for who, and why (“goal of improving academic success” but also “friends to youth”). It shows the value of this program for the tribe and the elders and the youth that are involved. It also explains that a volunteer typically spends 15 hours a week with a particular youth which shows the project is designed to support mentoring relationships.
- It uses a picture to give people an idea of what the volunteer would be doing and where.
- It is easy to read, not too much text, and formatted nicely.
- The message is aimed at potential volunteers –‘What is a Foster Grandparent?’ and ‘How do I become one?’ - AND families who might want to use the service – ‘Does your child need academic support?’
- The whole thing gives enough detail plus a contact name and number to learn more – a name and a person you can talk to.
- It follows best practices for written materials that you post or hand out: it has an attractive flyer layout with graphics plus clear and informative headers, and contact information for people who want to learn more.

# ROUND VALLEY INDIAN TRIBES



## FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

**Share Today. Shape Tomorrow.**

The Round Valley Indian Tribes are pleased to announce their partnership with the Corporation for National & Community Service to establish the Round Valley Foster Grandparent Program.



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**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 



### What is a Foster Grandparent?

The RVIT Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends to Round Valley Youth with a goal of improving their academic success. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving children and youth in our community. Volunteers typically spend 15 hours per week with their assigned youth and may be eligible for a stipend for their time.

### How Do I Become a Foster Grandparent?

Volunteers age 55 and over may submit an application at the Building Horizons Youth Program, and must be able to pass a background check to work with children.

### Does Your Child Need Academic Support?

The RVIT Foster Grandparents Program is geared towards improving the academic success of youth in grades 6-12. If your child is in need of academic support, please complete a Student Registration Form at Building Horizons

For more information about the program, please contact Joe Dukepoo, Building Horizons Manager at (707) 272-2317.

**Example: National Indian Council on Aging (<http://nicoa.org/for-caregivers/>)**

I am sorry that I don't have a SCP flyer to share right now, but here is an example from the National Indian Council on Aging's website – this is the home page addressed to caregivers who are looking for resources.

You may already be familiar with this, but I just wanted to point it out as another way of addressing people who may need the kind of service that Senior Companions offer. The tone of this whole message is gentle and kind, but also encouraging. It offers respect and appreciation for what the caregiver does.

'...thank you for listening and taking time to ask them about their thoughts. Thank you for listening to them tell traditional stories and speak to you in your language. Thank you for cooking them their favorite foods and being a good dinner companion....'

This is another way to address the people whose attention you want ...of course when you talk about your service, you need to give people information like who you are, what you do and how to find out more – but you also want to show them that you understand their situation and care about them.

'...The Elder that you are caring for may have already changed or is in transition from their independence and significant place in mainstream and tribal society. You now have the honored responsibility of helping them, whether they remain in the home or are in transition...'

In some ways, a Senior Companion project has to approach their message delicately - people don't often like to ask for help, or admit that they need help caring for a loved one, or maybe they don't know the help is out there – so I think someone who heard a message like this – a kind and reassuring message, especially someone who is beginning to feel anxious and overwhelmed – they would be more open to asking for the help they need, the kind of help that the Senior Companion Program offers.

Think about how you talk about your service – if you have tried something you think works especially well, please share it with us during the Q&A/discussion at the end.

**Delivering the Message**

Of course, your message can be great but how do you get it out to people?

Let's do a quick interactive poll and then Brian is going to talk about how he introduced his national service program.

What do you think are the best ways to let people know about your project? (Please check your top 2-3)

- Word of mouth, talking to people one-on-one
- Event where you can give a presentation, or set up a table
- Posting or distributing flyers;
- Stories in local radio, TV, newspaper;

- Announcement on tribe's official website;
- Social media

Results: Most people said word of mouth, talking one-on-one, was the best way. Also presenting or an event, posting or distributing flyers, and stories in local radio, TV, or newspaper. A couple people chose announcement on tribe's official website. No one chose social media.

Would anyone like to comment on why you chose a particular method or how you've used it? Or maybe there is a method that is not here?

[Heather] One of the first positive steps I've noticed – building on the relationships with other tribal programs, other directors or coordinators – they can help get the word out, mention your program while they are helping others.

Thank you, Heather. The most effective ways are situations where there can be interaction - Talking to people in person: individually during informal conversations, or if you have a table set up at a community event, or presentations to groups where they can ask you questions. Try to have something you can give people with your project's contact information, like flyers or brochures or business cards – so they can contact you later or give the information to someone else who might be interested in the service or the volunteer opportunity.

There are other ways that are not face-to-face but have the potential to reach more people. For example, putting up flyers or posters that catch people's eye. Flyers can include little tear-off tags with the project's contact information if you want to post them.

Or your project gets a feature story or mention in the local newspaper or radio. Maybe this is something you, or someone you know, can initiate. Seeing a picture with a quote in a flyer or newspaper story, or on the radio, hearing the voice of someone in the community that you have been able to help is good testimony, and a good way to get people's attention and interest.

### **Guest Speaker: Brian King**

So now I would like to turn it over to Brian King, who can tell you about how he introduced his program in the community.

[Brian] That was an interesting poll. I found it interesting that word of mouth was the number one choice. That is true in tribal communities especially, the key to getting the word out there. I was thinking back to when I first started our AmeriCorps program in 1994, AmeriCorps had just launched, people weren't sure what 'community service' was – it had a different meaning then – people thought it was court-ordered. So we really had to work hard on introducing it and relating it to our culture – 'this is what service means to us', and other concepts. It came down to a lot of word of mouth.

What happened was, we had to make sure we had matching funds and support and office space and so we started talking to different people early. As we did that we would say 'this is what we're working on, what we need what the program's about.' We started meeting key people, and connecting. We had one

council member that we knew pretty well and got their support. So we really started back then and by the time we submitted the grant we needed to get letters of support. At least for our tribe, the tribal council members got voted on. We could establish these relationships but then there would be turnover. We have since changed so only half the council is voted on, so every two years, instead of having a sweep you might only lose 3 or 4 supporters.

We made connections with key leaders. We were doing work in the schools so we made sure we made connections in the schools and tribal health. So that is how we started, and then a lot of word of mouth.

I like that flyer from Round Valley, we used flyers like that and would hand them out.

We also recruited six elders for our project and we had to go where they were at, this place called Eagle Shield. So we would go down there and hand out our flyers and tell them about our program. We had to get out there and keep introducing the language of the program.

At our program launch, we asked the tribal council to be part of that. We had our AmeriCorps members come out and do the pledge in front of the council. If there is a Senior Corp pledge, you might want to do that – involve the tribal council early. Sometimes councils are busy, so for them it was really refreshing to have us come and do this ceremony. We weren't asking for money then (we did later).

So we started building a lot of relationships all the way to program launch, then we would take pictures and follow up with the press and newsletters and talk about it at meetings. And the last thing was to set up an advisory group – we started that during our planning process.

### **Establishing a Presence**

Thank you, Brian. We talked about introducing your project – let's talk a little about establishing a presence.

Of course this takes time. However, over time, the project will gain a reputation in the community. Over time, people will become more accepting of the project and want to be more involved.

You can use 'branding' to build a presence for your project in the community. Use the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion logo on all your information. The logo reminds the community that you are part of an ongoing national effort. You can take the Senior Corps logo (download it from the CNCS website) and add your own logo the way Round Valley Indian Tribes did, which you can see here. Besides printed materials, you can provide volunteers with branded items – pens, tote bags, etc. – that include logos.

Be sure to maintain in-person connections as much as possible. Be visible and available to talk about the project. Showing enthusiasm for the work you are doing will rub off on others. If you are in a small community, remember you might be the face of the project for them even when you're on your own time.

Encourage your volunteers to tell others about the service and recommend their friends when you are recruiting. You may want to have flyers or postcards for your volunteers to give friends, with a brief description and the project's contact information.

You and your volunteers should be proud of the important work you are doing with children and elders. Be sure to collect information that you can use to tell your story, like how many people you serve, and what they say about the service. Share examples of success stories when you talk about the work you do.

### **Establishing a Presence Long Distance**

We have talked about the importance of face-to-face communication, but what if your project covers a large service area and you can't easily get everywhere in person? What are your options?

Someone else who lives in these other parts of the community may be able to serve as the 'face' of the project.

If you have volunteer stations, you can support stations to get the word out through regular communication to make sure you are on the same page, including written materials (for example, station handbooks that have something in writing - a brief history of the community served, your organization, and the national service program). Remember to brand stations as well. Make sure they have the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion logo on information about the service.

If you don't have stations, there may be leaders in the community (based in tribal government, schools, health centers, or community centers) who you can partner with to reach target audiences. Think about how you can build a relationship with them and gain their support to get the word out about your project. They might be willing to speak to others or distribute brochures and flyers.

Last, make the most of the times when you (or a staff person) can be present. Consider hosting a community gathering, or become part of an event someone else is already organizing where you could be a speaker or set up a table.

### **Ongoing Outreach**

Let's talk about ongoing outreach. By 'ongoing outreach' we mean letting people know about the project, reminding them that the service is there for them, staying visible - keeping your project in the public eye.

There are benefits to actively reaching out to the community on a regular basis. It makes it easier to recruit volunteers year-round. This is especially important for a Senior Companion project since you are not on a school-year timeline.

You are also raising awareness that assistance is available for people who might not have heard about it yet. Ongoing outreach helps you get continued support from the community – people know you are still there, still serving.

### **What is the plan?**

It is a good idea to create a plan for community outreach. This is important because it can become too easy to overlook doing outreach given your many responsibilities. Creating an outreach plan can help you target your efforts and plan resource commitments. It can also help you keep track of what needs to happen and when. An outreach plan can be shared with other staff so that people can take on different roles and responsibilities. You have a plan in place that keeps outreach as a priority even if you have staff turnover.

To put together a plan, think about:

- What is the goal of your outreach efforts? What specifically do you hope to see happen? What is your timeline? For example, you need at least 5 new Foster Grandparents signed up by August so you can start training them for the school year.
- Consider who your audience is. Is your message aimed at everyone or a particular group? You may want to identify specific target audiences and then tailor your message to them. For example, your audience might be potential volunteers; it might be people who might use the service, or their family members; it might be community leaders. You want to make sure your message includes the things that are important to your audience – what would they want to know?
- Plan for the best way to present your message. (e.g., word-of-mouth/informal meetings, presentations, newspaper, radio, social media) What do you need to do to make it happen? Who will be responsible for doing what in the plan? What support does each person need to carry out those responsibilities?
- Think about what resources you have to work with (people, funds, materials). What resources do you need to find?

Writing down these details gives your outreach some structure even if much of it happens word-of-mouth. We have an outreach plan template and sample we will email you after this call. It is a Word document that you can type in or change. This is not something you are required to do; only use it if you find it helpful.

### **“Elevator Pitch”**

In addition to putting together an outreach plan, be prepared for spontaneous face-to-face opportunities to do outreach. Have your ‘elevator pitch’ ready. That is, be ready to talk about what the project does. You can do it different ways, however you see fit- you know the best way to frame it for your audience.

One example of an elevator pitch approach is called “Know-Understand-Engage.” This is more of a conversational approach but with intention. Of course, you want to adjust it to the person you are talking to and the context so you’re comfortable.

'Know' is just an opening, so the person can get to know what you do. 'Understand' – you tell them why you do it or why it's important. And 'Engage' means getting the person you're talking to involved.

For 'Know', you might say: 'I am serving with a program that connects older volunteers in our community to... elders who might need a little help at home' (or) ... 'kids who might need a little help at school.'

For 'Understand': 'We are helping elders stay active, maintain their health. We are working to make sure our elders can stay independent as long as possible but not stuck at home. We get them out in the community to socialize ...' (or) 'We want to make sure our kids get the support they need to do well in school, that they retain their language and culture, that they have good relationships with elders...'

For 'Engage': 'Would you be interested in learning more?' (If yes) Then...'we have an event coming up...' or 'we are looking for volunteers, are you interested or do you know anyone?'

You might want to carry business cards or some written material to give people you meet.

#### ***Example: Foster Grandparent Program***

So, for example, using the Foster Grandparent Program, you might say...

'I'm working with a new afterschool intergenerational program that connects some of our elder volunteers- or 'Foster Grandparents' - with kids to teach them traditional songs and crafts.

It's great because not only are we making sure our kids don't lose their culture, we're also getting elders out sharing their experience with kids, a great way to stay active.

Do you know [NAME] school? We are actually looking for more elders to volunteer as Foster Grandparents; do you know anyone who might be interested?'

#### ***Example: Senior Companion Program***

Using the Senior Companion Program, you might say...

'We are connecting some of our elders, as 'Senior Companion' volunteers, to other elders in [COMMUNITY] who aren't able to get out much anymore.

Our Senior Companions make regular visits to their homes and bring them to tribal events like [NAME]. It's great because we're bringing our elders out with us where they belong and helping them stay connected.

Do you know any elders who might want to volunteer? Or elders who might feel lonely and would enjoy a regular visitor close to their own age?'

Of course, these are just suggestions. You know the best way to approach people in your community and talk about what you do in a way that resonates with them.

## **Opportunities**

Take advantage of opportunities to talk about your project at public gatherings. Look for upcoming scheduled gatherings where you might get permission to put up a table and talk with people as they stop by.

Be visible even when you're not there by posting flyers at local businesses or putting up banners, if you can.

There may be opportunities to remind people about the good work you are doing during project tasks that you already have to do—either now or in the future. For example: during volunteer recruiting and recognition events, share success stories. This passes on your enthusiasm and gets people talking. Or if you are talking to potential guest speakers for volunteer in-service trainings – people in related fields or working with the same populations will be interested in the work you're doing. You have to collect data for your performance measures. Once you have performance measure results, share them with partners and community leaders who are interested in the service you are providing.

Participate in CNCS annual national events like Senior Corps Week which is happening now. There is a lot of media content coming out this week that you can check out. You can also see how other grantees talk about their Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs.

CNCS also has other national events like Tribal Leader Recognition Day in April and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service in January. CNCS has a “Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education Plan” where all national service programs are encouraged to focus on certain topics with blogs, posts, events each month; for example, May includes Older Americans Month as well as Senior Corps week.

Do the people you are trying to reach use social media? If yes, you may want to use your tribe's or CNCS' social media and website to keep an online presence. Blogs are good for telling stories, Facebook and twitter for announcements and links to articles, announcements, videos.

[Brian] I used a lot of those suggestions to keep our community profile going once we got a foot in the community. A couple of things that worked well for us, and one of these I was surprised - having AmeriCorps signage, logos, I was surprised how much that worked for us. We put up a sign in our window and we had t-shirts for everybody with the logo on there. We also had jackets and sweatshirts. Certain times and special events we would ask our members to wear those items, but also they would wear them on their own. Over time, people would say 'I saw that sign' or 'I saw your members over here or there.'

Another thing we did that was really helpful is we would respond to the needs of the community or the partners. We had our program set up and we were engaged in our work every day, but every once in a while, we would get a request from our tribal council or a program or maybe there was a special event going on and 'could we come here and help out', or be part of this event? We would always say 'yes' and show up with our t-shirts and logo, pretty soon we got a really good reputation for our program – we were always here or there, whenever something is going on in the community. I would encourage other programs to be on the lookout for opportunities to help out where you can.

We were talking about word of mouth and that's a great way to get the word out about your program, but it can work against you, too. So if things aren't working well, you don't want a negative word of mouth happening. We were really proactive in trying to get a positive word of mouth, it is important to stay on top of that.

I know some of the PR things were rated a little lower but I wouldn't underestimate those either especially if you are recruiting elders. They may not be on Facebook or twitter but they may be reading a newspaper or listening to rez radio or rez TV so we took advantage of those. We had someone interview us or put a recruitment ad on the radio and people hear that. For us it was doing all those things consistently throughout the year, keeping a presence in the community. Then it started to build on itself. We noticed in years 2 and 3 and beyond and people just knew who we were.

Recognition events are really important to honor the work but also a great opportunity to invite people in, key people, tribal council members, directors, and the community at large. It's a great time to celebrate the program and develop a lot of good positive feelings about the program, and for sure invite the press. That's how we were able to maintain a community profile.

### **Resources**

Thank you, Brian. As I noted earlier, CNCS has resources online you can download and adapt at [nationalservice.gov](http://nationalservice.gov). These include sample press releases, brochures, photos and logos you can add to written materials, and social media resources like the ones listed here for Senior Corps Week.

I will also send you two Word documents after the webinar – one has talking points about the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent programs, and the second document is the sample outreach plan that you can revise and use if you find it helpful.

- Senior Corps Week resources

Website: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/senior-corps-week>

Twitter: #SeniorCorpsWorks

National Service blog: <http://nationalservice.tumblr.com/>

- Senior Corps marketing resources

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/sc-marketing-resources>