Senior Corps: Stipend Distributions – Senior Companion

Subpart D—Senior Companion Eligibility, Status, and Cost Reimbursements

§ 2551.41 Who is eligible to be a Senior Companion?
(a) To be a Senior Companion, an individual must:
   (1) Be 55 years of age or older;
   (2) Be determined by a physical examination to be capable, with or without reasonable accommodation, of serving adults with special needs without detriment to either himself/herself or the adults served;
   (3) Agree to abide by all requirements as set forth in this part; and
   (4) In order to receive a stipend, have an income that is within the income eligibility guidelines specified in this subpart D.
(b) Eligibility to be a Senior Companion shall not be restricted on the basis of formal education, experience, race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or political affiliation.

§ 2551.42 What types of criminal convictions or other adjudications disqualify an individual from serving as a Senior Companion or as a Senior Companion grant-funded employee?
Any individual who is registered, or who is required to be registered, on a State sex offender registry, or who has been convicted of murder, as defined under Federal law in section 1111 of title 18, United States Code, is deemed unsuitable for, and may not serve in, a position as a Senior Companion or as a Senior Companion grant-funded employee.

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§ 2551.43 What income guidelines govern eligibility to serve as a stipended Senior Companion?
(a) To receive a stipend, a Senior Companion may not have an annual income from all sources, after deducting allowable medical expenses, which exceeds the program's income eligibility guideline for the State in which he or she resides. The income eligibility guideline for each State is 200 percent of the poverty line, as set forth in 42 U.S.C. 9902 (2).
(b) For applicants to become stipended Senior Companions, annual income is projected for the following 12 months, based on income at the time of application. For serving stipended Senior Companions, annual income is counted for the past 12 months. Annual income includes the applicant or enrollee's income and that of his/her spouse, if the spouse lives in the same residence. Sponsors shall count the value of shelter, food, and clothing, if provided at no cost by persons related to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse.
(c) Allowable medical expenses are annual out-of-pocket medical expenses for health insurance premiums, health care services, and medications provided to the applicant, enrollee, or spouse which were not and will not be paid by Medicare, Medicaid, other insurance, or other third party payor, and which do not exceed 50 percent of the applicable income guideline.
(d) Applicants whose income is not more than 100 percent of the poverty line shall be given special consideration for enrollment.

(e) Once enrolled, a Senior Companion shall remain eligible to serve and to receive a stipend so long as his or her income, does not exceed the applicable income eligibility guideline by 20 percent.


§ 2551.44 What is considered income for determining volunteer eligibility?

(a) For determining eligibility, “income” refers to total cash or in-kind receipts before taxes from all sources including:

1. Money, wages, and salaries before any deduction, but not including food or rent in lieu of wages;
2. Receipts from self-employment or from a farm or business after deductions for business or farm expenses;
3. Regular payments for public assistance, Social Security, Unemployment or Workers Compensation, strike benefits, training stipends, alimony, child support, and military family allotments, or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
4. Government employee pensions, private pensions, and regular insurance or annuity payments; and
5. Income from dividends, interest, net rents, royalties, or income from estates and trusts.

(b) For eligibility purposes, income does not refer to the following money receipts:

1. Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, sale of property, house or car, tax refunds, gifts, one-time insurance payments or compensation from injury;
2. Non-cash income, such as the bonus value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms and the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied farm or non-farm housing.


§ 2551.45 Is a Senior Companion a federal employee, an employee of the sponsor or of the volunteer station?

Senior Companions are volunteers, and are not employees of the sponsor, the volunteer station, the Corporation, or the Federal Government.


§ 2551.46 What cost reimbursements are provided to Senior Companions?

Cost reimbursements include:

(a) Stipend. Senior Companions who are income eligible will receive a stipend in an amount determined by the Corporation and payable in regular installments, to enable them to serve without cost to themselves. The stipend is paid for the time Senior Companions spend with their assigned clients, for earned leave, and for attendance at official project events.

(b) Insurance. A Senior Companion is provided with the Corporation-specified minimum levels of insurance as follows:
Redesignated Companions: Understanding performing recognition


§ 2551.47 May the cost reimbursements of a Senior Companion be subject to any tax or charge, be treated as wages or compensation, or affect eligibility to receive assistance from other programs?

No. Senior Companion's cost reimbursements are not subject to any tax or charge or treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, or similar benefit payments or minimum wage laws. Cost reimbursements are not subject to garnishment and do not reduce or eliminate the level of, or
eligibility for, assistance or services a Senior Companion may be receiving under any governmental program.


Subpart J—Non-Stipended Senior Companions

§ 2551.101 What rule governs the recruitment and enrollment of persons who do not meet the income eligibility guidelines to serve as Senior Companions without stipends?

Over-income persons, age 55 or over, may be enrolled in SCP projects as non-stipended volunteers in communities where there is no RSVP project or where agreement is reached with the RSVP project that allows for the enrollment of non-stipended volunteers in the SCP project.


§ 2551.102 What are the conditions of service of non-stipended Senior Companions?

Non-stipended Senior Companions serve under the following conditions:

(a) They must not displace or prevent eligible low-income individuals from becoming Senior Companions.

(b) No special privilege or status is granted or created among Senior Companions, stipended or non-stipended, and equal treatment is required.

(c) Training, supervision, and other support services and cost reimbursements, other than the stipend, are available equally to all Senior Companions.

(d) All regulations and requirements applicable to the program, with the exception listed in paragraph (f) of this section, apply to all Senior Companions.

(e) Non-stipended Senior Companions may be placed in separate volunteer stations where warranted.

(f) Non-stipended Senior Companions will be encouraged but not required to serve an average of 20 hours per week and nine months per year. Senior Companions will maintain a close person-to-person relationship with their assigned special needs clients on a regular basis.

(g) Non-stipended Senior Companions may contribute the costs they incur in connection with their participation in the program. Such contributions are not counted as part of the required non-federal share of the grant but may be reflected in the budget column for excess non-federal resources.

§ 2551.103 Must a sponsor be required to enroll non-stipended Senior Companions?

Enrollment of non-stipended Senior Companions is not a factor in the award of new or continuation grants.

§ 2551.104 May Corporation funds be used for non-stipended Senior Companions?

Federally appropriated funds for SCP shall not be used to pay any cost, including any administrative cost, incurred in implementing the regulations in this part for non-stipended Senior Companions.