

Grant amount	Match requirement
(1) First \$100,000	No match requirement.
(2) Amounts above \$100,000 but less than \$250,000	\$1 of non-Federal funds for every \$2 provided by the Corporation in excess of \$100,000.
(3) Amounts greater than \$250,000	\$1 of non-Federal funds for every \$1 provided by the Corporation in excess of \$250,000.

[74 FR 46508, Sept. 10, 2009]

PART 2551—SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Subpart A—General

Sec.

2551.11 What is the Senior Companion Program?

2551.12 Definitions.

Subpart B—Eligibility and Responsibilities of a Sponsor

2551.21 Who is eligible to serve as a sponsor?

2551.22 What are the responsibilities of a sponsor?

2551.23 What are a sponsor's project responsibilities?

2551.24 What are a sponsor's responsibilities for securing community participation?

2551.25 What are a sponsor's administrative responsibilities?

2551.26–2551.33 [Reserved]

Subpart C—Suspension and Termination of AmeriCorps Assistance

2551.34 What are the rules on suspension, termination, and denial of refunding of grants?

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

2551.41 Who is eligible to be a Senior Companion?

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?

2551.43 What income guidelines govern eligibility to serve as a stipended Senior Companion?

2551.44 What is considered income for determining volunteer eligibility?

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

2551.46 What cost reimbursements and benefits do sponsors provide to Senior Companions?

2551.47 May the cost reimbursements and benefits 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?

Subpart E—Senior Companion Terms of Service

2551.51 What are the terms of service of a Senior Companion?

2551.52 What factors are considered in determining a Senior Companion's service schedule?

2551.53 Under what circumstances may a Senior Companion be removed from service?

Subpart F—Responsibilities of a Volunteer Station

2551.61 May a sponsor serve as a volunteer station?

2551.62 What are the responsibilities of a volunteer station?

Subpart G—Senior Companion Placements and Assignments

2551.71 What requirements govern the assignment of Senior Companions?

2551.72 Is a written volunteer assignment plan required for each Senior Companion?

2551.73 May a Senior Companion serve as a volunteer leader?

Subpart H—Clients Served

2551.81 What type of clients are eligible to be served?

Subpart I—Application and Fiscal Requirements

2551.91 What is the process for application and award of a grant?

2551.92 What are project funding requirements?

2551.93 What are a sponsor's legal requirements in managing grants?

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?

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

§ 2551.11

2551.103 Must a sponsor be required to enroll non-stipended Senior Companions?
2551.104 [Reserved]

Subpart K—Non-AmeriCorps Funded Senior Companion Projects

2551.111 Under what conditions may an agency or organization sponsor a Senior Companion project without AmeriCorps funding?
2551.112 What are the resources and benefits to which a non-AmeriCorps funded project is entitled?
2551.113 What financial obligation does AmeriCorps incur for non-AmeriCorps funded projects?
2551.114 What happens if a non-AmeriCorps funded sponsor does not comply with the NGA?

Subpart L—Restrictions and Legal Representation

2551.121 What legal limitations apply to the operation of the Senior Companion Program and to the expenditure of grant funds?
2551.122 What legal coverage does AmeriCorps make available to Senior Companions?

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SOURCE: 64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

EDITORIAL NOTE: Nomenclature changes to part 2551 appear at 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024.

Subpart A—General

§ 2551.11 What is the Senior Companion Program?

The Senior Companion Program provides grants to qualified agencies and organizations for the dual purpose of engaging persons 55 and older, particularly those with limited incomes, in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers. Program funds are used to support Senior Companions in providing supportive, individualized services to help older adults with special needs maintain their dignity and independence.

[74 FR 46508, Sept. 10, 2009]

§ 2551.12 Definitions.

Act. The Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, Public Law 93–

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10–1–24 Edition)

113, Oct. 1, 1973, 87 Stat. 396, 42 U.S.C. 4950 *et seq.*

Adequate staffing level. The number of project staff or full-time equivalent needed by a sponsor to manage the AmeriCorps Seniors project operations considering such factors as: Number of budgeted Volunteer Service Years (VSYs), number of volunteer stations, and the size of the service area.

Adult with special needs. Any individual over 21 years of age who has one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and is in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living.

AmeriCorps. The Corporation for National and Community Service, established pursuant to section 191 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12651, which operates as AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps Seniors. The collective name for the Senior Companion Program (SCP), the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and Demonstration Programs, all of which are established under Parts A, B, C, and E, Title II of the Act.

Annual income. The applicant or enrollee's total income for the preceding 12 months, including the applicant or enrollee's spouse's income, if the spouse lives in the same residence, as calculated in § 2551.44.

Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer of AmeriCorps appointed under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA), 42 U.S.C. 12501 *et seq.*

Cost reimbursements. Reimbursements budgeted as Volunteer Expenses and provided to volunteers, including stipends to cover incidental costs, transportation, meals, recognition, supplemental accident, personal liability and excess automobile liability insurance and other expenses as negotiated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

In-home. The non-institutional assignment of a Senior Companion in a private residence.

Letter of Agreement. A written agreement between a volunteer station or sponsor and the person(s) served or the person legally responsible for that person. It authorizes the assignment of an SCP volunteer in the home of a client,

Corporation for National and Community Service**§ 2551.23**

defines SCP volunteer activities, and specifies supervision arrangements.

Memorandum of Understanding. A written statement prepared and signed by the Senior Companion project sponsor and the volunteer station that identifies project requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities.

Non-AmeriCorps support (excess). The amount of non-AmeriCorps cash and in-kind contributions generated by a sponsor in excess of the required percentage.

Non-AmeriCorps support (match). The percentage share of non-AmeriCorps cash and in-kind contributions required to be raised by the sponsor in support of the grant.

Performance measures. Indicators that help determine the impact of an SCP project on the community and clients served, including the volunteers.

Project. The locally planned SCP activity or set of activities in a service area as approved by AmeriCorps and implemented by the sponsor.

Proprietary Health Care Agency. Private, for-profit health care organization that serves one or more vulnerable populations.

Service area. The geographically defined area(s) in which Senior Companions are enrolled and placed on assignments.

Service schedule. A written delineation of the days and times a Senior Companion serves each week.

Sponsor. A public agency, including Indian Tribes as defined in section 421(5) of the Act, and private, non-profit organizations, both secular and faith-based, in the United States that have authority to accept and the capability to administer a Senior Companion project.

Stipend. A payment to Senior Companions to enable them to serve without cost to themselves. The amount of the stipend is set by AmeriCorps in accordance with Federal law.

United States and territories. Each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands.

Volunteer assignment plan. A written description of a Senior Companion's assignment with a client. The plan identifies specific outcomes for the client and the activities of the Senior Companion.

Volunteer station. A public agency; a private, non-profit organization, secular or faith-based; or a proprietary health care organization. A volunteer station must accept responsibility for the assignment and supervision of Senior Companions in health, education, social service, or related settings such as multi-purpose centers, home health care agencies, or similar establishments. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Private homes are not volunteer stations.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 69 FR 60094, Oct. 7, 2004; 83 FR 64644, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70541, Aug. 30, 2024]

Subpart B—Eligibility and Responsibilities of a Sponsor**§ 2551.21 Who is eligible to serve as a sponsor?**

AmeriCorps awards grants to public agencies, including Indian tribes as defined in section 421(5) of the Act, and private, non-profit organizations, both secular and faith-based, in the United States that have authority to accept and the capability to administer a Senior Companion project.

[83 FR 64644, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.22 What are the responsibilities of a sponsor?

A sponsor is responsible for fulfilling all project management requirements necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Senior Companion Program as specified in the Act. A sponsor shall not delegate or contract these overall management responsibilities to another entity. AmeriCorps retains the right to determine what types of management responsibilities may or may not be contracted.

[83 FR 64645, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.23 What are a sponsor's project responsibilities?

A sponsor shall:

§ 2551.24

(a) Focus Senior Companion resources within the project's service area, on critical problems affecting the frail elderly and other adults with special needs.

(b) In collaboration with other community organizations or by using existing assessments, assess the needs of the community or service area, and develop strategies to respond to identified needs using Senior Companions.

(c) Develop and manage one or more volunteer stations by:

(1) Ensuring that a volunteer station is a public or non-profit private organization, whether secular or faith-based, or an eligible proprietary health care agency, capable of serving as a volunteer station for the placement of Senior Companions;

(2) Ensuring that the placement of Senior Companions is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding:

(i) That is negotiated prior to placement;

(ii) That specifies the mutual responsibilities of the station and sponsor;

(iii) That is renegotiated at least every three years;

(iv) That states the station will not discriminate against SCP volunteers, service beneficiaries, or in the operation of its program on the basis of race, color, national origin including individuals with limited English proficiency, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service; and

(3) Reviewing volunteer placements regularly to ensure that clients are eligible to be served.

(d) Develop service opportunities that consider the skills and experiences of the Senior Companion.

(e) Consider the demographic make-up of the project service area in the enrollment of Senior Companions, taking special efforts to recruit eligible individuals from minority groups, persons with disabilities, and under-represented groups.

(f) Provide Senior Companions with assignments that show direct and demonstrable benefits to the adults and the community served, the Senior Companions, and the volunteer station; with required cost reimbursements

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10-1-24 Edition)

specified in § 2551.46; with 20 hours of pre-service orientation and at least 24 hours annually of in-service training.

(g) Encourage the most efficient and effective use of Senior Companions by coordinating project services and activities with related national, state and local programs, including other AmeriCorps programs.

(h) Conduct an annual appraisal of volunteers' performance and annual review of their income eligibility.

(i) Establish written service policies for Senior Companions that include but are not limited to:

(1) Annual and sick leave.

(2) Administrative leave, meaning a temporary absence the sponsor allows in extenuating circumstances that prevent the Senior Companion from serving or serving safely.

(3) Holidays.

(4) Service schedules.

(5) Termination and appeal procedures.

(6) Meal and transportation reimbursements.

(j) Conduct National Service Criminal History Checks in accordance with the requirements in 45 CFR 2540.200 through 2540.207.

(k) Provide Senior Companion volunteers with cost reimbursements specified in this section.

(l) Make every effort to meet such performance measures as established in the approved grant application.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 67 FR 60998, Sept. 27, 2002; 69 FR 60095, Oct. 7, 2004; 74 FR 46508, Sept. 10, 2009; 77 FR 60933, Oct. 5, 2012; 83 FR 64645, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70541, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.24 What are a sponsor's responsibilities for securing community participation?

(a) A sponsor shall secure community participation in local project operation by establishing an Advisory Council or a similar organizational structure with a membership that includes people:

(1) Knowledgeable of human and social needs of the community;

(2) With an interest in the field of community service and volunteerism;

(3) Capable of helping the sponsor satisfy its administrative and program responsibilities including fund-raising,

publicity, and meeting or exceeding performance measures;

(4) With an interest in, and knowledge of, the range of abilities of older adults; and

(5) Of a diverse composition that reflects the demographics of the service area.

(b) The sponsor determines how such participation shall be secured, consistent with the provisions of paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(5) of this section.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 83 FR 64645, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.25 What are a sponsor's administrative responsibilities?

A sponsor shall:

(a) Assume full responsibility for securing maximum and continuing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully.

(b) Provide levels of staffing and resources appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the project and carry out its project management responsibilities.

(c) Employ a full-time project director to accomplish project objectives and manage the functions and activities delegate to project staff for Senior Corps project(s) within its control. The project director may participate in activities to coordinate project resources with those of related local agencies, boards or organizations. A full-time project director shall not serve concurrently in another capacity, paid or unpaid, during established working hours. A sponsor may negotiate the employment of a part-time project director with AmeriCorps when the sponsor can demonstrate that such an arrangement will not adversely affect the size, scope, or quality of project operations.

(d) Consider all project staff as sponsor employees subject to its personnel policies and procedures.

(e) Compensate project staff at a level that is comparable to similar staff positions in the sponsor organization and/or project service area, as is practicable.

(f) Establish risk management policies and procedures covering Senior Companion project activities. This includes provision of appropriate insurance coverage for Senior Companions,

which includes; accident insurance, personal liability insurance, and excess automobile liability insurance.

(g) Establish record keeping and reporting systems in compliance with AmeriCorps requirements that ensure quality of program and fiscal operations, facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports and cooperate with AmeriCorps evaluation and data collection efforts.

(h) Comply with, and ensure that Memorandums of Understanding require all volunteer stations to comply with, all applicable civil rights laws and regulations, including non-discrimination based on disability.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 83 FR 64645, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70541, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.26–2551.33 [Reserved]**Subpart C—Suspension and Termination of AmeriCorps Assistance****§ 2551.34 What are the rules on suspension, termination, and denial of refunding of grants?**

(a) The Chief Executive Officer or designee is authorized to suspend further payments or to terminate payments under any grant providing assistance under the Act whenever he/she determines there is a material failure to comply with applicable terms and conditions of the grant. The Chief Executive Officer shall prescribe procedures to insure that:

(1) Assistance under the Act shall not be suspended for failure to comply with applicable terms and conditions, except in emergency situations for thirty days;

(2) An application for refunding under the Act may not be denied unless the recipient has been given:

(i) Notice at least 75 days before the denial of such application of the possibility of such denial and the grounds for any such denial; and

(ii) Opportunity to show cause why such action should not be taken;

(3) In any case where an application for refunding is denied for failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant, the recipient shall be afforded an opportunity for an informal

§ 2551.41

hearing before an impartial hearing officer, who has been agreed to by the recipient and AmeriCorps; and

(4) Assistance under the Act shall not be terminated for failure to comply with applicable terms and conditions unless the recipient has been afforded reasonable notice and opportunity for a full and fair hearing.

(b) Hearings or other meetings as may be necessary to fulfill the requirements of this section should, to the extent practicable, be held in locations convenient to the recipient agency.

(c) The procedures for suspension, termination, and denial of refunding, that apply to the Senior Companion Program are specified in 45 CFR Part 1206.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999. Redesignated at 72 FR 48583, Aug. 24, 2007; 83 FR 64645, Dec. 17, 2018]

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; and

(2) In order to receive a stipend, have an income that is within the income eligibility guidelines specified in this subpart D.

(b) Eligibility to serve as a Senior Companion shall not be restricted on the basis of formal education, experience, race, color, national origin including limited English proficiency, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 74 FR 46508, Sept. 10, 2009; 83 FR 64645, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 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

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10-1-24 Edition)

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.

[74 FR 46508, Sept. 10, 2009]

§ 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, income is based on annual 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, as calculated in § 2551.44.

(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.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 67 FR 60998, Sept. 27, 2002; 69 FR 20830, Apr. 19, 2004; Redesignated at 72 FR 48584, Aug. 24, 2007; 74 FR 46508, Sept. 10, 2009; 83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70541, Aug. 30, 2024]

Corporation for National and Community Service**§ 2551.46****§ 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;

(2) Receipts from self-employment or from a farm or business after deductions for business or farm expenses;

(3) Social Security, Unemployment or Workers Compensation, alimony, and military family allotments, or other legally required financial support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household.

(4) Government employee pensions, private pensions, regular insurance or annuity payments, and 401(k) or other retirement savings plans;

(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;

(3) Regular payments for public assistance, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);

(4) Social Security Disability or any type of disability payment; and

(5) Food or rent received in lieu of wages.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999. Redesignated at 72 FR 48584, Aug. 24, 2007; 83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 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, AmeriCorps, or the Federal Government.

[83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.46 What cost reimbursements are provided to Senior Companions?

Cost reimbursements and benefits provided by sponsors include:

(a) *Stipend.* The stipend is paid for the time Senior Companions spend with their assigned clients, for earned leave, for administrative leave, and for attendance at official project events. The sponsor may pay a stipend for administrative leave for extenuating circumstances lasting up to seven calendar days, but must obtain AmeriCorps' written approval to pay a stipend for administrative leave based on extenuating circumstances lasting beyond seven calendar days.

(b) *Insurance.* Insurance is made available to Senior Companions with the AmeriCorps specified minimum levels of insurance as follows:

(1) *Accident insurance.* Accident insurance covers Senior Companions for personal injury during travel between their homes and places of assignment, during their service, during meal periods while serving as a Senior Companion, and while attending project-sponsored activities. Protection shall be provided against claims in excess of any benefits or services for medical care or treatment available to the Senior Companion from other sources.

(2) *Personal liability insurance.* Protection is provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. Such protection does not include professional liability coverage.

(3) *Excess automobile liability insurance.* (i) For Senior Companions who drive in connection with their service, protection is provided against claims in excess of the greater of either:

(A) Liability insurance Senior Companions carry on their own automobiles; or

(B) The limits of applicable state financial responsibility law, or in its absence, levels of protection that AmeriCorps determines, and that the sponsor must provide, for each person, and each accident, and for property damage.

(ii) Senior Companions who drive their personal vehicles to, or on, assignments or project-related activities,

§ 2551.47

shall maintain personal automobile liability insurance equal to or exceeding the levels established by AmeriCorps.

(c) *Transportation.* Senior Companions shall receive assistance with the cost of transportation to and from, assignments and official project activities, including orientation, training, and recognition events.

(d) *Meals.* Senior Companions may be provided assistance with the cost of meals taken while on assignment, within limits of the project's available resources.

(e) *Recognition.* Senior Companion volunteers shall be provided recognition for their service.

(f) *Physical examination.* Senior Companions may be provided a physical examination or assistance with the cost of a physical examination prior to assignment and annually thereafter.

(g) *Other volunteer expenses.* Senior Companions may also be reimbursed for allowable out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing their assignments.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 67 FR 60998, Sept. 27, 2002; 69 FR 20830, Apr. 19, 2004. Redesignated at 72 FR 48584, Aug. 24, 2007; 83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.47 May the cost reimbursements and benefits 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 and benefits 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 and benefits 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.

[83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018]

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10-1-24 Edition)

Subpart E—Senior Companion Terms of Service

§ 2551.51 What are the terms of service of a Senior Companion?

A Senior Companion shall serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week. A Senior Companion may serve a maximum of 2080 hours annually, or a maximum of 40 hours per week. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs.

[83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.52 What factors are considered in determining a Senior Companion's service schedule?

(a) Travel time between the Senior Companion's home and place of assignment is not part of the service schedule and is not stipended.

(b) Travel time between individual assignments is a part of the service schedule and is stipended.

(c) Meal time may be part of the service schedule and is stipended.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 83 FR 64646, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.53 Under what circumstances may a Senior Companion be removed from service?

(a) A sponsor may remove a Senior Companion from service for cause. Grounds for removal include, but are not limited to: Extensive and unauthorized absences; misconduct; failure to perform assignments or failure to accept supervision. A Senior Companion may also be removed from stipended service for having income in excess of the eligibility level. A Senior Companion shall be removed immediately if ineligible to serve based on criminal history check results.

(b) The sponsor shall establish appropriate policies on removal from service, as well as procedures for appeal.

[83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018]

Subpart F—Responsibilities of a Volunteer Station

§ 2551.61 May a sponsor serve as a volunteer station?

Yes. A sponsor may serve as a volunteer station, if the activities are part

of a work plan in the approved project application.

[83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.62 What are the responsibilities of a volunteer station?

A volunteer station shall undertake the following responsibilities in support of Senior Companion volunteers:

- (a) Develop volunteer assignments that meet the requirements specified in §§ 2551.71 through 2551.72, and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness.
- (b) Select eligible clients for assigned volunteers.
- (c) Develop a written volunteer assignment plan for each Senior Companion that identifies their roles and activities, each client served, and expected outcomes.
- (d) Keep a Letter of Agreement for each client who receives in-home service.
- (e) Provide Senior Companions serving the station with:
 - (1) Orientation to the station and any in-service training necessary to enhance performance of assignments; and
 - (2) Resources required for performance of assignments, including reasonable accommodation, as needed, to enable Senior Companions with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their service.
- (f) Designate a staff member to oversee fulfillment of station responsibilities and supervision of Senior Companions while on assignment.
- (g) Keep records and prepare reports required by the sponsor.
- (h) Provide for the safety of Senior Companions assigned to it.
- (i) Comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations, including providing Senior Companions with disabilities reasonable accommodation, to perform the essential functions of their service.
- (j) Undertake such other responsibilities as may be necessary for the successful performance of Senior Companions in their assignments or as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018]

Subpart G—Senior Companion Placements and Assignments

§ 2551.71 What requirements govern the assignment of Senior Companions?

(a) Senior Companion assignments shall provide for Senior Companions to give direct services to one or more eligible adults that:

(1) Result in person-to-person supportive relationships with each client served.

(2) Support the achievement and maintenance of the highest level of independent living for their clients.

(3) Are meaningful to the Senior Companion.

(4) Are supported by appropriate orientation, training, and supervision.

(b) Senior Companions shall not provide services such as those performed by medical personnel, services to large numbers of clients, custodial services, administrative support services, or other services that would detract from their assignment.

[67 FR 60999, Sept. 27, 2002, as amended at 83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.72 Is a written volunteer assignment plan required for each Senior Companion?

(a) All Senior Companions performing direct services to individual clients in home settings and individual clients in community-based settings, shall receive a written volunteer assignment plan developed by the volunteer station that:

(1) Is approved by the sponsor and accepted by the Senior Companion;

(2) Identifies the client(s) to be served;

(3) Identifies the role and activities of the Senior Companion and expected outcomes for the client(s);

(4) Addresses the period of time each client is expected to receive such services; and

(5) Is used to review the impact of the assignment on the client(s).

(b) [Reserved]

[67 FR 60999, Sept. 27, 2002, as amended at 83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.73

§ 2551.73 May a Senior Companion serve as a volunteer leader?

Yes. Senior Companions—who on the basis of experience as volunteers, special skills, and demonstrated leadership abilities—may spend time, in addition to their regular assignment, to assist newer Senior Companion volunteers in performing their assignments and in coordinating activities of such volunteers.

(a) All Senior Companions serving as volunteer leaders shall receive a written volunteer assignment plan developed by the volunteer station that:

(1) Is approved by the sponsor and accepted by the Senior Companion;

(2) Identifies the role and activities of the Senior Companion and expected outcomes;

(3) Addresses the period of time of service; and

(4) Is used to review the status of the Senior Companion's services identified in the assignment plan, as well as the impact of those services.

(b) While serving in the capacity of a volunteer leader, a Senior Companion may be paid a stipend (at the same rate as the established Senior Companion stipend) for his or her additional hours served as a volunteer leader.

(c) Senior Companion leaders, through recognition, may receive an additional monetary incentive.

[83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018]

Subpart H—Clients Served

§ 2551.81 What type of clients are eligible to be served?

Senior Companions serve only adults, primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and are in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living.

Subpart I—Application and Fiscal Requirements

§ 2551.91 What is the process for application and award of a grant?

(a) *How and when may an eligible organization apply for a grant?* (1) An eligible organization may file an application in response to AmeriCorps' pub-

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10-1-24 Edition)

lished request, such as a Notice of Funding Opportunity or a Notice of Funding Availability. Applicants are not assured of selection or approval and may have to compete with other applicants.

(2) The applicant shall comply with the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," (3 CFR, 1982 Comp., p. 197) in 45 CFR part 1233 and any other applicable requirements.

(b) *Who reviews the merits of an application and how is a grant awarded?* (1) AmeriCorps reviews and determines the merit of an application by its responsiveness to published guidelines and to the overall purposes and objectives of the program. When funds are available, AmeriCorps awards a grant in writing to each applicant whose grant proposal provides the best potential for serving the purpose of the program.

(2) The award will be documented by the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). AmeriCorps and the sponsoring organization are the parties to the NGA. The NGA will document the sponsor's commitment to fulfill specific programmatic objectives and financial obligations. It will document the extent of AmeriCorps' obligation to provide financial support to the sponsor.

(c) *What happens if AmeriCorps rejects an application?* AmeriCorps will notify the applicant if the applicant is not approved for funding, along with an explanation of AmeriCorps' decision.

(d) *For what period of time does AmeriCorps award a grant?* AmeriCorps awards a Senior Companion grant for a specified period that is usually three years in duration.

[83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018, as amended at 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.92 What are project funding requirements?

(a) *Is non-AmeriCorps support required?* A AmeriCorps grant may be awarded to fund up to 90 percent of the cost of development and operation of a Senior Companion project. The sponsor is required to contribute at least 10 percent of the total project cost from non-Federal sources or authorized Federal sources.

Corporation for National and Community Service**§ 2551.102**

(b) *Under what circumstances does AmeriCorps allow less than the 10 percent non-AmeriCorps support?* AmeriCorps may allow exceptions to the 10 percent local support requirement in cases of demonstrated need such as:

(1) Initial difficulties in the development of local funding sources during the first three years of operations; or

(2) An economic downturn, the occurrence of a natural disaster, or similar events in the service area that severely restrict or reduce sources of local funding support; or

(3) The unexpected discontinuation of local support from one or more sources that a project has relied on for a period of years.

(c) *May AmeriCorps restrict how a sponsor uses locally generated contributions in excess of the 10 percent non-AmeriCorps support required?* Whenever locally generated contributions to Senior Companion projects are in excess of the minimum 10 percent non-AmeriCorps support required, AmeriCorps may not restrict the manner in which such contributions are expended provided such expenditures are consistent with the provisions of the Act.

(d) *Are program expenditures subject to audit?* All expenditures by the grantee of Federal and non-Federal funds, including expenditures from excess locally generated contributions in support of the grant, are subject to audit by AmeriCorps, its Inspector General, or their authorized agents.

(e) *May a sponsor pay stipends at rates different than those established by AmeriCorps?* A sponsor must pay stipends at rates no less than the rate established by AmeriCorps. A sponsor may use non-AmeriCorps funding to pay stipends at rates higher than the rate established by AmeriCorps but may not use AmeriCorps funding for this purpose.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 75 FR 51415, Aug. 20, 2010; 83 FR 64647, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.93 What are a sponsor's legal requirements in managing grants?

What rules govern a sponsor's management of grants?

(a) A sponsor shall manage a grant in accordance with:

- (1) The Act;
- (2) Regulations in this part;
- (3) 2 CFR part 200 and 2 CFR part 2205;
- (4) All applicable AmeriCorps policies; and
- (5) All other applicable AmeriCorps requirements.

(b) Project support provided under a AmeriCorps grant shall be furnished at the lowest possible cost consistent with the effective operation of the project.

(c) Volunteer expense items, including transportation, meals, recognition activities and items purchased at the volunteers' own expense and which are not reimbursed, are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget.

(d) Costs to bring a sponsor into basic compliance with accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities are not allowable costs.

(e) Payments to settle discrimination complaints, either through a settlement agreement or formal adjudication, are not allowable costs.

(f) Written AmeriCorps approval is required for the following changes in the approved grant:

- (1) Reduction in budgeted volunteer service years.
- (2) Change in the service area.

[79 FR 76077, Dec. 19, 2014, as amended at 83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018]

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?**

Over-income persons as described in § 2551.43, age 55 or over, may be enrolled in SCP project as non-stipended volunteers.

[83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018]

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

Non-stipended Senior Companions serve under the following conditions:

§ 2551.103

(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, whether 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 apply to Senior Companions.

(e) Non-stipended Senior Companions may contribute the costs they incur in connection with their participation in the program. An SCP project may not count such contributions as part of the required non-AmeriCorps support (match) for the grant.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

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

No. Enrollment of non-stipended Senior Companions is not a condition for a sponsor to receive a new or continuation grant.

[83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018]

§ 2551.104 [Reserved]

Subpart K—Non-AmeriCorps Funded Senior Companion Projects

§ 2551.111 Under what conditions may an agency or organization sponsor a Senior Companion project without AmeriCorps funding?

An eligible agency or organization who wishes to sponsor a Senior Companion project without AmeriCorps funding must make an application through the designated grants management system which is approved by AmeriCorps and documented through the Notice of Grant Agreement (NGA).

[83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018]

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10-1-24 Edition)

§ 2551.112 What are the resources and benefits to which a non-AmeriCorps funded project is entitled?

The Notice of Grant Award entitles the sponsor of a non-AmeriCorps funded project to:

(a) All technical assistance and materials provided to AmeriCorps funded Senior Companion projects; and

(b) The application of the provisions of 42 U.S.C. 5044 and 5058.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.113 What financial obligation does AmeriCorps incur for non-AmeriCorps funded projects?

Issuance of an NGA to a sponsor of a non-AmeriCorps funded project does not create a financial obligation on the part of AmeriCorps for any costs associated with the project.

[83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018, as amended at 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.114 What happens if a non-AmeriCorps funded sponsor does not comply with the NGA?

A non-AmeriCorps funded project sponsor's noncompliance with the NGA may result in suspension or termination AmeriCorps' agreement and all benefits specified in § 2551.112.

[83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018, as amended at 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

Subpart L—Restrictions and Legal Representation

§ 2551.121 What legal limitations apply to the operation of the Senior Companion Program and to the expenditure of grant funds?

(a) *Political activities.* (1) No part of any grant shall be used to finance, directly or indirectly, any activity to influence the outcome of any election to public office, or any voter registration activity.

(2) No project shall be conducted in a manner involving the use of funds, the provision of services, or the employment or assignment of personnel in a matter supporting or resulting in the identification of such project with:

Corporation for National and Community Service**§ 2551.121**

(i) Any partisan or nonpartisan political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election; or

(ii) Any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election; or

(iii) Any voter registration activity, except that voter registration applications and nonpartisan voter registration information may be made available to the public at the premises of the sponsor. But in making registration applications and nonpartisan voter registration information available, employees of the sponsor shall not express preferences or seek to influence decisions concerning any candidate, political party, election issue, or voting decision.

(3) The sponsor shall not use grant funds in any activity for the purpose of influencing the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition, except:

(i) In any case in which a legislative body, a committee of a legislative body, or a member of a legislative body requests any volunteer in, or employee of such a program to draft, review or testify regarding measures or to make representation to such legislative body, committee or member; or

(ii) In connection with an authorization or appropriations measure directly affecting the operation of the Senior Companion Program.

(b) *Non-displacement of employed workers.* A Senior Companion shall not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers, or impair existing contracts for service.

(c) *Compensation for service.* (1) An agency or organization to which AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are assigned or which operates or supervises any AmeriCorps Seniors program shall not request or receive any compensation from AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, or from beneficiaries, for the services provided by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

(2) This section does not prohibit a sponsor from soliciting and accepting

voluntary contributions from the community at large to meet its local support obligations under the grant or from entering into agreements with parties other than beneficiaries to support additional volunteers beyond those supported by AmeriCorps.

(3) A Senior Companion volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the Senior Companion Program. However, this support shall not be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain Senior Companion service.

(4) If a volunteer station agrees to provide funds to support additional Senior Companions or pay for other Senior Companion support costs, the agreement shall be stated in a written Memorandum of Understanding. The sponsor shall withdraw services if the station's inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the project under the Memorandum of Understanding diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligations.

(5) Under no circumstances shall a Senior Companion receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends.

(d) *Labor and anti-labor activity.* The sponsor shall not use grant funds directly or indirectly to finance labor or anti-labor organization or related activity.

(e) *Fair labor standards.* A sponsor that employs laborers and mechanics for construction, alteration, or repair of facilities shall pay wages at prevailing rates as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act, as amended, 40 U.S.C. 276a.

(f) *Nondiscrimination.* A sponsor or sponsor employee shall not discriminate against a Senior Companion on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or political affiliation, or on the basis of disability, if the Senior Companion with a disability is qualified to serve.

(g) *Religious activities.* (1) A Senior Companion or a member of the project staff funded by AmeriCorps shall not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of

§ 2551.122

proselytization as part of his/her duties.

(2) A sponsor or volunteer station may retain its independence and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, development, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs, provided that it does not use AmeriCorps funds to support any inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded. If an organization conducts such activities, the activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded under this part.

(h) *Nepotism.* Persons selected for project staff positions shall not be related by blood or marriage to other project staff, sponsor staff or officers, or members of the sponsor Board of Directors, unless there is written concurrence from the Advisory Council or community group established by the sponsor under subpart B of this part, and with notification to AmeriCorps.

[64 FR 14115, Mar. 24, 1999, as amended at 69 FR 60095, Oct. 7, 2004; 83 FR 64648, Dec. 17, 2018; 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

§ 2551.122 What legal coverage does AmeriCorps make available to Senior Companions?

It is within AmeriCorps' discretion to determine if Counsel is employed and counsel fees, court costs, bail and other expenses incidental to the defense of a SCP volunteer are paid in a criminal, civil or administrative proceeding, when such a proceeding arises directly out of performance of the volunteer's activities. The circumstances under which AmeriCorps may pay such expenses are specified in 45 CFR part 1220.

[83 FR 64649, Dec. 17, 2018, as amended at 89 FR 70542, Aug. 30, 2024]

PART 2552—FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

Subpart A—General

Sec.

2552.11 What is the Foster Grandparent Program?
2552.12 Definitions.

45 CFR Ch. XXV (10-1-24 Edition)

Subpart B—Eligibility and Responsibilities of a Sponsor

- 2552.21 Who is eligible to serve as a sponsor?
- 2552.22 What are the responsibilities of a sponsor?
- 2552.23 What are a sponsor's project responsibilities?
- 2552.24 What are a sponsor's responsibilities for securing community participation?
- 2552.25 What are a sponsor's administrative responsibilities?
- 2552.26–2552.33 [Reserved]

Subpart C—Suspension and Termination of AmeriCorps Assistance

- 2552.34 What are the rules on suspension, termination, and denial of refunding of grants? (eff. until 11-22-07)

Subpart D—Foster Grandparent Eligibility, Status, Cost Reimbursements and Benefits

- 2552.41 Who is eligible to be a Foster Grandparent?
- 2552.42 What types of criminal convictions or other adjudications disqualify an individual from serving as a Foster Grandparent or as a Foster Grandparent grant-funded employee?
- 2552.43 What income guidelines govern eligibility to serve as a stipended Foster Grandparent?
- 2552.44 What is considered income for determining volunteer eligibility?
- 2552.45 Is a Foster Grandparent a federal employee, an employee of the sponsor or of the volunteer station?
- 2552.46 What cost reimbursements and benefits do sponsors provide to Foster Grandparents?
- 2552.47 May the cost reimbursements and benefits received by a Foster Grandparent be subject to any tax or charge, be treated as wages or compensation, or affect eligibility to receive assistance from other programs?

Subpart E—Foster Grandparent Terms of Service

- 2552.51 What are the terms of service of a Foster Grandparent?
- 2552.52 What factors are considered in determining a Foster Grandparent's service schedule?
- 2552.53 Under what circumstances may a Foster Grandparent be removed from service?

Subpart F—Responsibilities of a Volunteer Station

- 2552.61 May a sponsor serve as a volunteer station?