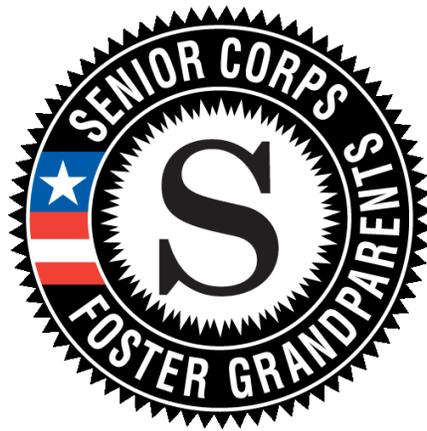


Foster Grandparent Program



Procedure Handbook

Revised December 2013

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The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) is part of the Senior Corps, a network of national service programs that provides older Americans with the opportunity to apply their life experiences to meeting the community needs. Foster Grandparents serve as mentors, tutors, and caregivers for children and youth with special needs. Foster Grandparents offer emotional support to children who have been abused and neglected, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers, and care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities. They strengthen communities by providing youth services that community budgets cannot afford and by building bridges across generations.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Foster Grandparent Program is to provide meaningful retirement opportunities for low-income persons (55) fifty-five and over to serve as mentors, tutors, and caregivers for children and youth with special needs. FGP Volunteers will develop a supportive intergenerational relationship that will enable these students to achieve their educational and personal goals. The Senior Volunteer Program Office Staff will provide the training, encouragement and support that our FGP Volunteers need in order to carry out their program duties and to achieve their own personal goals.

The Foster Grandparent Program, sponsored by the City of Alamogordo, has been providing services to children since 1995.

Advisory Council:

The Senior Volunteer Programs (SVP) is required to have an Advisory Council and is composed in accordance with Federal guidelines and City of Alamogordo Ordinance's. The council includes volunteer station representatives, volunteerism, program staff, businesses, and other interested community members. We encourage and invite your participation. The council's role is to keep abreast what is being accomplished by SVP programming. The council will also assist with specific tasks such as program evaluation and recognition events; fundraisers also promote Senior Volunteers Programs to the community.

Volunteer Eligibility Requirements:

- ◆ Be age 55 or older.
- ◆ Meet Income Eligibility Requirements.
- ◆ Be willing to work a minimum of 15 - 20 hours a week.
- ◆ Complete and submit an application to include: two references, emergency contact information, copy of valid driver license (if applicable), proof of vehicle insurance (if applicable), and signed agreement allowing completion of a background check and a confidentiality statement.
- ◆ Meet income eligibility requirements as set forth by the Federal government in order to receive the \$2.65/hr. stipend. Proof of Income (Social Security, SSI, VA award letter or other proof of income) is required for each person

living in the household. Eligibility information will be updated annually. Individuals who do not meet income eligibility requirements may serve as non-stipend volunteers and are eligible for other program benefits.

- ◆ Be willing to serve clients as assigned and accept supervision.

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action:

FGP receives assistance from a federal agency, The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). FGP will not discriminate in the selection of volunteers or those to receive services based upon race, color, creed, belief, religion, sex, national origin, age, political affiliation or past participation in the discrimination complaint process.

Any person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against for any of the above reasons may receive information regarding how to file a grievance by contacting the SVP Program Director.

Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities will be made available upon advance notice for placements, meetings or conferences.

Volunteer Code of Conduct:

- ◆ The Foster Grandparent shall respect the confidentiality of the student and information provided about the student. (Confidentiality Statement must be signed by volunteer.)
- ◆ The use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs during work hours is not permitted. A Foster Grandparent may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at their volunteer assignment.
- ◆ Foster Grandparents are expected to act in a professional manner, treating other Foster Grandparents, Site Supervisors, FGP Staff, Sponsor Staff and Clients with respect (avoiding criticism, gossip, rudeness or being bossy and influencing other volunteers with their disapproval; this can be considered as bullying. Use appropriate channels to make complaints and/or suggestions.
- ◆ Under no circumstances will a Foster Grandparent subject a student to any form of abuse: physical verbal or emotional.
- ◆ The Foster Grandparent will strive to be a good listener.
- ◆ The Foster Grandparent will not interfere with another Volunteer's assignment. Each Volunteer has a unique assignment and it is not fair to compare jobs.
- ◆ The Foster Grandparent will always conduct themselves in a manner as to promote the Foster Grandparent Program.

Orientation and Training:

Pre-Service and Monthly In-Service Training will be provided for each enrolled Volunteer. The Pre-Service orientation will include:

- ◆ Introduction to the program, the sponsor and the volunteer station.
- ◆ Current information on project Policies and Procedures.
- ◆ Training on such topics and issues related to mental health and aging.
- ◆ Information on available community services in order to better advocate for clients.
- ◆ Orientation on placements.
- ◆ Background Checks

Monthly In-Service Training is provided and attendance is **mandatory**. An agenda for that month's training will be given out at the time of the meeting.

- ◆ Volunteers must be on time to the Monthly In-Service trainings.
- ◆ Volunteers must notify Program Staff in advance if unable to attend the Monthly In-Service training due to illness, out of town or emergency. Please set up medical and any other appointments either around the time of the training or another day.
- ◆ Absence from Monthly In-Service training will be treated as leave time.
- ◆ Continued absences or two absences in a row from the Monthly In-Service training may be grounds for dismissal.

Volunteer Insurance:

Each Volunteer is provided with three kinds of supplemental insurance coverage at no cost. Insurance applies only when participating in scheduled program activities and services. The insurance is not a substitute for any insurance normally carried. Volunteers will need to maintain personal insurances and those as required by law. The types of supplemental insurance are listed below.

Accident Insurance: This covers the volunteer for personal injuries arising from scheduled volunteer activities. The insurance does not duplicate expenses paid by Medicare or any other valid and collectible insurance coverage. An accidental death and dismemberment benefit is also provided in this policy. Certain exclusions do apply

Personal Liability Insurance: All volunteers are provided protection for a personal injury or a property damage liability claim arising from the performance of the volunteer's duties. This is in excess of and non-contributing with any other valid and collectible insurance the volunteer may have. Certain exclusions do apply

Excess Automobile Liability Insurance: This coverage protects the volunteer against a bodily injury or property damage or automobile liability claim arising from related volunteer activities. This insurance is in excess of the personal

automobile liability insurance that volunteers are required to have on their personal automobiles. Insurance coverage for volunteers may have certain limits and stimulations.

Accident Reporting:

The safety of volunteers is of the utmost importance. Volunteers must report any unsafe conditions encountered while providing volunteer services. Any injuries occurring during volunteer work hours must be reported immediately to Program Staff and Volunteer Station Supervisor. Volunteer work hours include going to or from the worksite.

Holidays:

Volunteers will be able to receive the same Holiday taken by Program Staff and the City of Alamogordo. Volunteers will receive four hours of stipend pay for:

- ◆ New Years Day
- ◆ Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- ◆ President's Day
- ◆ Memorial Day
- ◆ Independence Day
- ◆ Labor Day
- ◆ Thanksgiving
- ◆ Veterans' Day (observed)
- ◆ Christmas Day

Leave Time:

Foster Grandparents are granted vacation and sick time per a 12 month period beginning every July 1. Leave time may be taken at any time for any reason with advance notice (when possible), if leave time is available. If leave time is not available, leave is taken without pay. All vacation/ sick time must be taken before the end of the current fiscal year or the Volunteer will forfeit the time accrued. It is the responsibility of the Volunteer to use the leave time before the end of the fiscal year.

Volunteers are responsible for notifying the Volunteer Station Supervisor and Program Staff prior to the start of scheduled shift if unable to report to their assignments.

Leave of Absence:

A Volunteer may take a leave of absence of up to six (6) months with written notice. A request for a Leave of Absence must be approved by Program Staff. If the leave of absence is taken for medical reasons, a physician's statement of ability to return to their duties must be provided and approved in writing by Program Staff before the Volunteer resumes his/her work duties.

Bereavement/Funeral Leave:

Volunteers may receive stipend pay for up to three (3) days bereavement or funeral leave for death of immediate family member (spouse, parent, sibling, children, grandchildren, immediate in-law).

Other Days:

In cases where a decision is required on days that are in question, the Program Staff will make a decision on whether a volunteer can get paid or not. Program Staff will document the reason for their decision and notify the volunteer and give justification for decision and will place justification in the Volunteer file folder.

Travel/Mileage:

Volunteers who claim mileage by driving their own vehicle to and from assignments are required to furnish proof of automobile insurance and a copy of their valid New Mexico Driver License yearly.

1. Mileage reimbursements for Volunteers are verified by the FGP/SCP Coordinator. When mileage is in question, Map Quest will be used to determine reportable miles.
2. The reimbursement rate paid for mileage to and from the program participants assignment is \$0.35 per mile paid to a maximum of \$35 per pay period. Unless, there is enough funding to rescind the maximum of

\$35 per pay period, then the volunteer will receive the full mileage reimbursement.

Meals:

Volunteers will receive four meals every pay period as part of their program. Additional meals will be reimbursed as funds are available.

Volunteers who request a meal on their Time Sheets must have the signature of the worksite supervisor, signature of the Volunteer and the signature of the FGP/SCP Coordinator before it can be processed for reimbursement.

Stipends:

The stipend a Volunteer receives is a **reimbursement** for volunteer related expenses. The stipend is not a salary and it cannot (per federal regulations) be used to determine or prevent eligibility for any other benefit program, (such as Medicaid, SSI, Housing, Food Stamps, Social Security or LIHEAP).

The stipend is not taxable and is not subject to income tax withholding. If a Foster Grandparent has a problem with an agency counting the stipend as income, the Volunteer should contact the FGP/SCP Coordinator immediately.

Tax Form 1099 is not applicable to this program and is not issued.

Stipend checks will be mailed by the City Finance Office to the Volunteer's mailing address as on record.

The FGP/SCP programs provide the stipend to Volunteers in order to permit persons to serve their communities and to share their life experiences with others without out-of-pocket expenses. Currently the hourly stipend rate is \$2.65 per hour. In order to receive two (2) hours each of vacation and sick pay volunteer hours need to meet a minimum of 30 hours per pay period.

Annual Physicals:

It is the responsibility of each Volunteer to under go an annual physical examination. Volunteers must coordinate the scheduling of their physical with the FGP/SCP Coordinator. When an appointment of a physical has been scheduled it is the responsibility of the Volunteer to meet that appointment.

If the Volunteer cannot meet the appointment that was scheduled for them by the FGP/SCP Coordinator, it is the Volunteer's responsibility to reschedule the appointment and notify the FGP/SCP Coordinator that the appointment was rescheduled.

Policy for Hours of Service:

- ◆ Normal Hours of Work: Volunteers are required to work a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week (physical condition permitting). It is the volunteer's responsibility to notify the FGP/SCP Coordinator if unable to work the minimum hours.

The Volunteer is eligible to work up to forty (40) hours per week. It is the Volunteer's responsibility to notify the FGP/SCP Coordinator before working up to forty (40) hours per week; or for any changes in work schedule.

The FGP/SCP Coordinator is responsible for reviewing Volunteer's Physical examination to ensure that the Volunteer is capable of working up to forty (40) hours per week or when work schedule changes.

- ◆ Request for Reduction of Hours: A Volunteer may request a reduction in hours served. This request must be made in writing to the FGP/SCP Coordinator. This request may be made for one or more of the following reasons:

Change in Health Status

Increased Responsibilities at Home

Physical Limitations

Increased Community Responsibilities

The FGP/SCP Coordinator will approve or deny the request for reduction of hours, basing the decision upon whether the allowable conditions are met and always considering what the FGP/SCP Coordinator considers to be in the best interest of the Volunteer.

Recognition:

At least one annual recognition event will be provided for volunteers. Individual Volunteer Stations will be encouraged to provide recognition events as well.

Appropriate Foster Grandparent Activities:

Foster Grandparent Volunteers may assist children with special or exceptional needs in the following activities:

Institutional Children:

- Activities of daily living that involve self-care.
- Exercises and activities that develop motor skills.
- Educational and learning activities.
- Emotional support and assistance in developing basic learning skills.
- Assist with activities that will increase the child's self esteem.

- Assist with skills that will help the child to achieve a more independent living status.
- Tutoring children with literacy or English language learning needs.

Public/State/Private School Children:

- Provide emotional support and guidance.
- Assistance in developing basic learning skills.
- Tutoring children with literacy or English language learning needs.
- Assisting with skills that can prevent or delay placement in an institution.
- Assist teacher with one on one attention.

Youth in Correctional Facilities:

- Help to ease their emotional pain.
- Assist with accepting institutionalization.
- Assist with improving life skills.
- Assist them in their quest to regain independence.
- Acting as a community link.

Status Offenders and Delinquent Offenders:

- Assist to encourage youth to remain in the community by offering a supportive relationship.

- Assist with programs to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Helping abused and neglected children, children affected by drugs, HIV/AIDS or homelessness:

- Provide emotional support and empathy.
- Help regain stability through contact with older adults and community involvement.

Inappropriate Foster Grandparent Activities:

Foster Grandparents are not allowed to participate in the following activities:

- Serve in staff roles.
- Perform household or custodial functions such as cleaning, repair work, or rearranging furniture. Should never be on ladders.
- Be left alone to supervise children.
- Supervise other Foster Grandparents/Volunteers.
- Act as substitute teacher or teacher aides.
- Perform office work.
- Perform any services that the Volunteer Station receives compensation for from any source or replace paid staff.
- Discipline and punishing the children in anyway.

Retirement/Withdrawal/Termination of Services/Resignation:

There may come a time when it is in the best interest of the Volunteer to retire, to be reassigned or to be placed on indefinite leave of absence as an active Volunteer. When this time comes it will be handled with dignity.

An assessment should be made when a Volunteer is no longer able to comfortably or safely work the minimum of twenty (20) hours per week on a permanent basis. When there are indications that a volunteer is having difficulty with the program or site commitment, a discreet investigation of the situation should be undertaken by the FGP/SCP Coordinator to determine if the Volunteer should retire or be reassigned. This should include observation of the Volunteer and discussion with the workstation staff. The FGP/SCP Coordinator should complete a workstation evaluation with input from the workstation supervisor. The interests and the well being of the Volunteer will be considered foremost.

Please contact the SCP office if you are moving or would like to withdraw permanently from the FGP.

Volunteer's services may be terminated for any of the following reasons: unauthorized absences, misconduct and an inability to perform assignments or income in excess of the guidelines established by the Senior Corp.

Any of the involved parties may terminate services at any time. Ideally the Volunteer Station Staff, the Volunteer (if appropriate), and Program Staff should make this decision jointly.

Each Volunteer will be given the opportunity to appeal and/or grieve a termination action to the Senior Advisory Council and then to the sponsoring organization City of Alamogordo. If the situation remains unresolved, the decision of the Sponsoring Agency is final. A copy of the Grievance/Appeal Procedure is attached.

The Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Programs will not enroll an applicant if he/she has been terminated by another RSVP/SCP/FGP Organization.

A Volunteer may resign at anytime. A resignation must be made in writing and must be signed and dated by the volunteer.

Dismissal from FGP:

Volunteers can be dismissed for the following reasons:

- **Misconduct**
- **Breach of confidentiality**
- **Unsatisfactory performance**
- **Disregard for policies and procedures**

- **Health unacceptable to the point of being a hazard to self or others**
- **Extensive absences**
- **Suitable assignment not available or unlikely become available**

Other:

- If the Volunteer goes to a student's home at the appointed time and the student is not there, the Volunteer will be paid for that day as a regular day. If this action continues with a client, the FGP/SCP Coordinator will do a site visit and an assessment of the client to evaluate for any problems.

- FGP Volunteers are not considered full or part-time employees. They are, by federal definition, Volunteers.

- If funds are exhausted and no other funds are available, Volunteers and Volunteer Work Sites will be notified of program suspension until other funds are available.

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs

PERSONNEL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE: To provide a means of improving morale, effective communication, working conditions and to provide consistency in handling of problems.

APPLICABILITY: All Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents, permanent or temporary.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs that every Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent receives fair, just and equitable treatment, regardless of position, political and/or religious philosophies, ethnic background, color or sex; that each Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent be given the opportunity to be heard and express his/her grievance with assurance of receiving impartial consideration and freedom from any form of retribution.

PROCEDURE:

- A. A Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent, as an individual or as a group of Companions and/or Grandparents, feeling that his/her rights have not been respected, shall discuss the situation with his/her supervisor in an attempt to resolve the problem.

- B. In the event the problem is not resolved, the aggrieved shall meet with the Program Coordinator. At this time either the Program Coordinator, the Companion or Grandparent or someone of his/her choice will reduce the grievance to writing. It must be signed by aggrieved. If no immediate solution is reached, the Program Coordinator shall have three (3) working days in which to further consider and reply to the grievance in writing in an attempt to resolve it. (At this time, a copy of the grievance and reply will be forwarded to the Project Director and to the Chairperson of the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs Advisory Council).
- C. If no solution to the grievance can be reached at Steps A or B, the Program Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the Senior Advisory Council, or its designee. The aggrieved may request that the Senior Companion/Foster Grandparent representative to the Advisory Council be present at this meeting.
- D. The Program Coordinator will notify the aggrieved individual(s) of the meeting date and time in writing.
- E. A copy of the final determination of the grievance by the Senior Advisory Council shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.
- F. A Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent will not lose pay for any time that is spent in discussion of his/her grievance with the Supervisor, the Program Coordinator, the Project Director or the latter's designated representative.

February 23, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and AmeriCorps VISTA Project Directors

FROM: Frank R. Trinity *Frank R. Trinity*
General Counsel

SUBJECT: Income disregard provisions under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973

This memorandum concerns “income disregard” provisions applicable to national service participants who receive benefits under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA). Specifically, the memorandum is intended to ensure that governmental (Federal, state, and local) entities are aware of, and properly apply, sections 404 and 418 of the DVSA in treating benefits provided to Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, Retired and Senior Volunteers, Senior Demonstration Program Volunteers, and AmeriCorps*VISTA members.

Section 404 of the DVSA states, in relevant part, as follows:

(f)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law except as may be provided expressly in limitation of this subsection, payments to volunteers under this Act shall not in any way reduce or eliminate the level of, or eligibility for, assistance or services any such volunteers may be receiving under any governmental program, except that this paragraph shall not apply in the case of such payments when the Director determines that the value of all such payments, adjusted to reflect the number of hours such volunteers are serving, is equivalent to or greater than the minimum wage then in effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq.) or the minimum wage, under the laws of the State where such volunteers are serving, whichever is greater.

(f)(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person enrolled for full-time service as a volunteer under Title I of this Act who was otherwise entitled to receive assistance or services under any governmental program prior to such volunteer’s enrollment shall not be denied such assistance or services because of such volunteer’s failure or refusal to register for, seek, or accept employment or training during the period of such service.

42 U.S.C. § 5044 (f) (1) and (2).

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The income disregard rule applies except when payments to national service participants are equivalent to or greater than the applicable minimum wage. Only the Corporation for National and Community Service may make this determination. To date, payments to such participants have not been determined to exceed the applicable minimum wage. Therefore, the income disregard rule applies to DVSA-supported national service participants.

Section 418 of the DVSA also states as follows:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no payment for supportive services or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses made to persons serving pursuant to Title II of this Act shall be subject to any tax or charge or be treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, workers' compensation, or similar benefit payments, or minimum wage laws. This section shall become effective with respect to all payments made after the effective date of this Act [October 1, 1973].

42 U.S.C. § 5058

In summary,

- a government program may not consider payments to national service participants under the DVSA in determining to reduce or eliminate the participant's level of, or eligibility for, public assistance or services;
- entitlements to assistance may not be denied because of a participant's failure or refusal to seek or accept employment or training, including those established for welfare to work programs; and
- no payments to participants shall be considered wages or unemployment for the purposes of any tax, unemployment, workers' compensation, or for similar benefit payments.

Please share this memorandum with anyone with questions concerning this issue. In the event this memorandum does not resolve the issue, please contact either Tom Bryant (202-606-6678) or Andrea Grill (202-606-6674) in the Office of General Counsel.

NOTES