



AmeriCorps

Corporation for
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RESEARCH BRIEF – RETURN ON INVESTMENT STUDIES

AmeriCorps Seniors

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions

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The Foster Grandparents (FGP) and Senior Companions (SCP) programs are AmeriCorps Seniors programs that operate in communities throughout the U.S. FGP engages volunteers age 55 and over to serve as role models, mentors, and friends to children. FGP volunteers help children learn to read and provide one-on-one tutoring, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers care for premature infants or children with disabilities, and help children who have been abused or neglected.¹ SCP engages volunteers to provide assistance and companionship primarily to elderly individuals—and also to people with disabilities—who have difficulty with daily living tasks. SCP volunteers serve 15 to 40 hours per week helping an average of two to four adults live independently in their own homes.

AmeriCorps, a federal agency, brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges, through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture. Learn more at AmeriCorps.gov.

¹ AmeriCorps (formerly Corporation for National and Community Service). (2017). Foster Grandparents. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/senior-corps-programs/fostergrandparents>.



Return on Investment Analysis

To better understand the impact of FGP and SCP in relation to the program's costs, AmeriCorps commissioned a return on investment (ROI) analysis by ICF, an independent research firm. ROI analyses of national service programs estimate the monetary value of benefits that a program generates for per dollar invested. The ROI analysis estimated that FPG and SCP generate an ROI of \$3.50 per funder dollar. FPG alone had an ROI of \$2.75 per funder dollar, while SCP had an ROI of \$5.08 per funder dollar. The magnitude of the results is driven by savings on health care, savings on assisted living costs, and the value of in-kind services.

Overview of Benefits and Costs

To calculate the ROI for FGP and SCP, the program benefits were identified, quantified, and compared to the program's costs. It is important to note that the benefits to the children and youth that receive services from FGP volunteers are not included in the ROI analysis, due to a lack of evaluations that measure those long-term outcomes. The benefits to children and youth from FGP are likely substantial. Benefits of the FGP and SCP program that are included in the ROI analysis include:

- **Valuable services provided in-kind.** FGP & SCP program participants receive services that are provided in-kind by volunteers at no cost to themselves or their families.
- **Improvement in health outcomes.** FGP and SCP volunteers and SCP participants and caregivers experience improved health outcomes because of volunteering and the services provided by these programs.^{2,3}
- **Participants can remain in their homes longer.** Many of the individuals that receive services from SCP volunteers report that they can stay in their homes while receiving the services rather than having to move into an assisted living facility.⁴

Funding for FGP and SCP for the program year studied totaled \$199,685,702, consisting of \$135,379,628 and \$64,306,074, respectively. The sources of funding included the following:

- Federal Government (AmeriCorps) – \$152,875,570 or 77% (FGP: \$108,043,041 and SCP: \$44,832,529)
- Other Non-government Sources – \$46,810,132 or 23% (FGP: \$27,336,587 and SCP: 19,473,545)

² Georges, A., Fung, W., Liang, J., Smith, J., Pratt, D., Sum, C., Birmingham, C., & Gabbard, S. (2017). Does the Senior Companion Respite Service Matter for the Health and Well-being of Caregivers? Retrieved from https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CaregiverStudy_FollowUp_Report_2017_09_22_CNCS_508.pdf

³ Georges, A., Fung, W., Smith, J., Liang, J., Sum, C., & Gabbard, S. (2018). Longitudinal Study of Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs: Service Delivery Implications and Health Benefits to the Volunteers. Retrieved from https://nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/Longitudinal_Study_of_Foster_Grandparent_and_Senior_Companion_Programs_FINAL_508.pdf.

⁴ Georges, A., Gabbard, S., Sum, C., Lovegrove, P., & Macdonald, S. (2014). Descriptive Report for the Senior Companion Program Independent Living Pilot/Feasibility Survey. Retrieved from https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/FR_2014_SCP_DescrpRptSCPIndPilotFeasibilitySurvey_0.pdf.



ROI Results

The table below shows the full set of ROI results for FGP and SCP. Each row represents a different ROI calculation depending on which *benefits* are considered (all benefits or only benefits to the federal government) and which *funding* is considered (federal funding only, or all funding including federal and non-government). The ROIs are presented as dollars returned for every \$1.00 of investment.

ROI Calculation	AmeriCorps Seniors Program		
	FGP & SCP Combined	FGP	SCP
Total Benefits per Federal Dollar	\$4.57	\$3.45	\$7.29
Total Benefits per Funder Dollar	\$3.50	\$2.75	\$5.08
Federal Government Benefits per Federal Dollar	\$0.69	\$0.16	\$1.97

The magnitude of the positive ROI results is driven by:

- **Health care expenditure savings.** Volunteers, caregivers, program participants, private insurance, other healthcare payers, and the federal government realize significant savings in health care expenditures from the improvement in health outcomes of participants, volunteers, and caregivers because of FGP & SCP. Health care savings stem from reduced emergency department visits, reduced in-patient hospital stays, and overall improved health and wellness.
- **Assisted living expenditure savings.** Individuals that receive services from SCP volunteers report that they can stay in their homes while receiving the services rather than having to move into an assisted living facility. This generates significant cost savings for these program participants.
- **Value of in-kind services.** FGP & SCP program participants (and their households) that receive in-kind services of considerable value. These services have monetary value and do not displace labor, but instead add the capacity needed to address unmet needs in communities nationwide.

The content of this research brief was drawn from the full AmeriCorps ROI study: Modicamore, D., Naugler, A., Casey, B., Miller, B., Munaretto, C., & Pershing, J. (2020). *Return on Investment Study: AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program*. ICF. Visit nationalservice.gov/research.