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EC

>>: Hello and welcome to today's call. I am Anne Otih and I'm joined by my colleague Morgan and we are excited to talk to you about the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster grandparent program.

Let's get started with some quick housekeeping notes.

All lines are on mute and we will keep them on mute throughout the duration of the call meeting that if you have questions, at any time, please let us know in the Q&A pod. If you're having technical issues, drop us a note in the chat box used to raise your hand feature and make sure to send to all panelists and attendees. Our wonderful webinar producer will help you out.

Let's test it out. If you can see the housekeeping icons on your screen, please give us a yes and the chat box.

Thank you.

Today's audio is being presented online or on the phone and you can try one or the other. If you are having visual problems, that should fix it.

We are recording this call and if you do not wish to be recorded, you can disconnect at any time and the recording and the slides will be made available on the FGP Expansion Competition Site.

I want to talk about two things as we have two contacts on the slide right now. One is the 2021 FGP and SCP as CNS.gov mailbox. Of course, the competition websites. We have a pretty small group today and I think I can get to everyone's questions. If there is something that is specific to you or I am not giving you as much information as you need today, I encourage you to use the mailbox and check out the website.

This is one in a series of four webinars that we will go over twice to go over this process. All of these sessions will be recorded and posted on the competition websites.

Now, one last preliminary as we want to know a little bit more so we have had simple questions to gauge who is in the room. If you could let us know if you have ever

received a federal grant before, if you have gone one from AmeriCorps Seniors?

I will give you a couple of seconds to complete the poll.

Let's close this one and get to the next one. If you can let us know how well you know AmeriCorps Seniors, Senior Corps, that is the grant program at our agency for which FGP is part.

I will give one more second to look at your answers. It looks like we have a good range. For the next question, who would like to know the primary filled of your organization. Try to choose the best one.

We have another poll, how did you hear about us?

I have another poll, have you attended any of our other webinars? We had the first one last week and we just want to know who is coming back for some more? Let's move on to our agenda for the day. Here is our agenda, but we want you to be able to understand if the AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparent program is right for you. You will be able to develop an application for an F GP grant.

We are getting practical of national performance measures and all of that fun stuff.

We are accepting applications for the AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparent and senior compared programs. You can go into our system and begin the application or submit an application at any point between now and 5:00 p.m. Eastern on February 3, 2021.

For this competition, we are looking to expand into the geographic service area listed on Appendix A on the competition website.

On the screen right now, you will see a color-coded map of the states. The red states on our map are those states where we have open foster grandparent program opportunities, which we will be talking about today.

Those opportunities are listed on a table called Appendix A, which shows all of the open funding opportunities. We will talk about how to propose what you and your organization look like to serve and how you can add performance measures. Know that

Appendix A is an important document and is a snapshot of some of the opportunities that are available.

We have some resources to get you through the application process. The Notice of Funding Opportunity or NOFO establishes the competition and application requirements. It is the gateway to the competition, I like to call. The grant application instructions, which are a step-by-step guide to navigating our electronic grants management system. Appendix A is referred to the list of available funding opportunities. We have Appendix B, which explains the national performance measures and work plan development worksheets, which will be helpful to you and trying to think and how to plan your activities and how you can communicate were plan to us.

We have our frequently asked questions that we do update throughout the process based on what you send through 2021 FGP SCP as CNS.gov.

These resources are available on the 2021 FGP SCP expansion homepage. If you don't get the information you need today, if it is not in one of the resources, I encourage you to use that additional e-mail box.

That gets our basics out-of-the-way so now we will dive into the AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparent program. We will be talking about the program and giving you enough information to assess if this opportunity is right for you.

We have a lot of words going on so let's talk about the program purpose. Here is the screenshot and notice the funding opportunity for NOFO. We went to spotlight this. That foster grandparent program is to provide grants to qualified agencies and organizations for the dual purpose of engaging individuals 55 and older, particularly those with limited incomes and volunteer service, and to provide a high-quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers.

Program funds are used to support foster grandparent for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and providing supportive person-to-person service to children with special and/or exceptional needs. These are circumstances that limit their academic social and

emotional development.

There is a lot in here, but I want to put this on a few things. First, the dual purpose. Engaging adults 55 and older and service while also providing high-quality experience to the volunteers themselves. We have two beneficiary groups, the groups themselves, the foster grandparent program that is limited to an income group, but is going with a specific purpose. Then you have the person-to-person individual one-to-one relationship.

Volunteers, under 200% of the poverty line may receive a stipend for service. Volunteers in the foster grandparent program don't have to be at the threshold. You may not have non-stipend volunteers and anyone over 55 can do that. The program does have the specific purpose of engaging Americans in service who often don't have the opportunity to do so.

We will talk about volunteering has concrete benefits are older Americans. Part of the program is to make sure other Americans at the poverty level have an equal opportunity to participate. The threshold for the stipend is at \$3 per hour so it is not a huge amount, but it is meant to offset the potential cost of serving. There are other potential cost reimbursements to volunteer the assessment including supplement insurance, meals, transportation, recognition, physicals and other costs related to volunteers.

For more information, you may say what counts as income? How do I apply, how do I find the poverty level in my state?

I want to show you where to get that information. There are two resources. The code of federal regulations and the foster grandparent operations handbook.

Two links will be added to the chat. One will take you to the manage AmeriCorps Seniors page and one that takes you to the electronic code of federal regulations. This is the page that manage AmeriCorps Seniors page is the page that we give operational resources to grantees right now. There is a lot there, but I want to draw your attention

to the program handbooks. They use this to manage their grants and it has answers to just about any kind of practical operational question you can think of. These are public resources available to you that you can use right now and there are tools in the handbook so it is a great resource for any kind of operational question, but there is another thing you can look at. There is the Code of Federal Regulation itself.

45 CFR 2552 is the portion of the Code of Federal Regulations dealing with the AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparent program. This is the official rulebook for the foster grandparent program from the federal government. When you apply on the program, you agree to abide by all of the different rules. If you are interested in learning more about the guidelines that govern the eligibility for a stipend, you can click on the answer were for the question.

You way to get the answer.

Moving onto the next topic, this is where our AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are out in the community and this is a station in the handbook, but this is where AmeriCorps Senior volunteers in the programs will start. Most programs will wind up facing their volunteers and community partners with the stations. Examples of stations could include schools, head start, places like juvenile justice facilities or home shelters. Stations play an important role in the program. They are responsible for selecting the clients, they on people that will receive the services, working with the grantee to develop a written assignment plan and any on-site orientation and training and supervision on site.

This is a synopsis of some formal rules and you can find them in our handbook and the code of federal regulations. I have those listed on the slide as well.

Many organizations will wind up placing stations external to them, placing an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer in a school or an organization that are external to their sponsoring organizations, you can actually place AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in your own program. The grantee can be the station itself and take on these responsibilities.

That does happen so don't feel like you have to go out and find external partners and stations.

What are the volunteers doing at the site? You will see direct quotes from the Code of Federal Regulations. What requirements govern the assignment of foster grandparents? They shall provide direct or give direct services to one or more eligible children that result in person-to-person supportive relationships with each child serve. That is what we really want to emphasize his foster grandparent partner volunteer should not be a teacher's aide or cleaning rooms. It is about the one-to-one relationship.

I will pause to hear to see if there are any questions in the Q&A pod.

I do not see any so we will move on.

We talked about a station, but another that I want to make sure we understand is the sponsor and grantee is used interchangeably and that is the organization that receives AmeriCorps Seniors funding and is legally responsible for distributing grant funds.

On this next slide, we have an example of what a foster grandparent program that focuses on multiple issues or has multiple partners would look like. You can see AmeriCorps Seniors makes a grant to a sponsor that recruits volunteers and places them at external stations, other organizations and they can be conducting a wide variety of activities.

On this next slide, we have another type of model. AmeriCorps Seniors would go to the sponsor that run the program and may be very focused on working in a specific area of education. The sponsor would recruit AmeriCorps Senior volunteers and place them in their own program.

Moving on to talk about performance measure. I will start with a question for all of you. Why measure performance? Why is it the agency I work for are making these funds available so interested in performance? Add your answers to the chat sending to

all panelists and attendees.

To see how well is your program meeting the grantee requirements is a good one. Any other thoughts? Improve desired outcomes, they can see how the funding is being utilized is to see if we can improve? All in all, we are a federal program. You all are bosses so as a result, you are paying for the funds through your taxpayer dollars. We do take this responsibility seriously. We have to make sure that that federal funds are used in a useful way meeting the needs of seniors and children.

We do take this responsibility seriously and we are all stewards of taxpayer dollars that AmeriCorps. If you receive a seniors foster grandparent grant, you would become a steward of taxpayer dollars. That comes with certain responsibilities including that of assessing your impact to know how you are doing and to improve and to use that information to make the greatest impact that you can.

Why do we measure performance? It is those things we just talked about with accountability, improvement and helps to identify things that can be replicated, scaled up or done elsewhere.

Morgan and I are in a special position because we get to work with partners, grantees and applications like you from all across the country. When someone is doing something outstanding, it can be measured or shown to be measured so why would we not like to do that in other places.

It is an important part of how we tell our story and service. National performance, this is a unified system and that lets us take the impact of the AmeriCorps foster grandparent grantee in Texas and added to the impact of an FGP grant in Virginia where I am. We can add it to the impact of an FGP grant in New Jersey.

Scale all of that to tell the National Service a story. The same system lets us use the impact with our colleagues in the other AmeriCorps programs. That is why we measure performance and why it is so important.

Has I already alluded to, the specific system is the national performance measures

and very uniform set of measures. We look at a menu of measures of every own and the National Service community who uses the same version of the measures allowing us to measure and assess your effectiveness and communicate it.

You can tell the unified story of service.

They are made up of a number of different components and we will walk through all of the different components of a performance measure. It is like a pyramid and that they start off pretty broad down here at the bottom and then they get more specific as you go up the pyramid.

Let's talk about what each one of these mean and we will start at the bottom with the focus area.

While the agency has six focus areas with capacity building, applicants to the seniors foster grandparent program, they must identify education as the primary focus area of their projects. Education is the primary focus area of the AmeriCorps Seniors foster grandparent program. Other available focus areas are economic opportunity and healthy features.

While we are here, I will note we have some funding priorities in this competition and they are listed in the notice of funding. They are not required, but you need at least one service activity in the education focus area.

Next, we have objectives and those are general categories within each focus area. For education there are two K-12 success and school readiness. Now, we get to specific measures. Those are reflected in the output and outcome. The way that we differentiate between the two is an output is like a seed that you plant in an outcome is a flower that blossoms from the seed.

You will work with a certain number of individuals, but most of the time, not all of the individuals are actually going to achieve the social outcome event that we are looking for. In our line of work, it is where we get 100 percent success rate where we are trying to move someone into a new way of life to create a change. The people we

work with is the output and the number of people who experience the change is the outcome.

On the side, we have an example from the education focus area so the output number of individuals who served and outcome is number of individuals with improved academic engagement or social emotional skills. If you add all of these together, that gives you performance measures.

A national performance measure work plan is a work plan, a work plan is a specific part of the application and is the structure that is like a table that mimics what some of you may know it as a logic model. Any work plan that results in an output and outcome, any work plan that has these measures associated with them is a national performance measure work plan.

On this slide, I will take this minute to highlight our work plan development worksheets and one of the resources available to you during this competition. The work plans are specific part of the electronic grants management system, a specific part of the application and they are built, structured and constructed. It is not really a narrative, not just a blank space to write what you want, but you need to provide specific information and all of these specific columns. Looks different within e-Grants, but this is all of the information that is asked for.

We are going to talk a little bit more about the specific columns, but I wanted to share this awesome tool that you can use.

You get to propose the funding amount that would best allow you to meet the needs of your respective geographic service area. You also get to propose the geographic service area you wish to serve and the number have VSY you will have. Regardless of the funding request, all applicants are required to follow the calculation of one VSY for every \$6500 in their funding request.

I talked about this last week and I know a lot of people like to start at the total federal funding and work their way down to VSY. I like to do it in the opposite manner

so we have on the screen are two fictional counties that we are grouping together to create our geographic service area and we want 40 VSY. We will take those 40 volunteer service years and multiply by \$6500 and we get the total federal funding we can apply for that is \$260,000.

Further, we know for one VSY, we can request \$6500, but to be in compliance with the conditions of the NOFA, for every \$6500 in annual based federal funding, at least one VSY must be placed into work plans that result in national performance measure outcomes in the education focus area.

We can go to the next slide please. Here, we have Appendix B, the national performance measure instructions and what you will see when you open up Appendix B is that at the beginning we have a table that shows the objectives, their associated outputs and their associated outcomes. Every output must be matched with an outcome and some of the objectives, there is a one to one pick if you want to do school readiness come you have to do the number of children demonstrating readiness. If you wanted to do a service activity in K-12 success, you have a couple more options in terms of outcomes.

Further and the document, we have definitions and the tools that you can use to measure your performance measures.

So work plans, we had our example and we go to populate counties. Once you know the number of VSY, you note the different service activities and the output outcome pairings that you would like to program in and you can start plugging those in. On here, I have an example of the way that you can allocate 40 VSY into three different education based output outcome pairings. One counterintuitive point that I want to make sure that I say is that when you look into e-Grants, you will not see a field that says VSY.

What you will see instead is unduplicated volunteer. I need you to know that for the purposes of your application, unduplicated volunteer equals VSY both volunteer

service years for the program. E-Grants, it is a legacy computer system that we have and I'm sure that our grantees on the line know how we feel about each grants. We have to work with what we have. If you see unduplicated volunteers in the system, thank VSY as we are not counting people, we are counting hours for the American senior foster parent program.

Hopefully, you will navigate it and I wanted to mention at his is tricky to digest.

Next we have what determines a successful application and that is my question to all of you. You can answer in the chat what has a successful application. Any thoughts? Be sure to only ask what you can reasonably manage, complete. Let's see if we can get one more.

I will ask a different question. Where can we find the answer? Clear, meaningful application that appears to all cramped requirements. We could find the answer to what determines a successful application and then Notice of Funding Opportunity.

We are back in the notice. Specifically, we are on page 10 where you can find application review information and the review criteria that our reviewers are going to use to evaluate the applications that come in. This is primarily what determines a successful application. Would provide more detail about what all of those mean.

You can see the strength of the work plans is an important part of that. Also come in the way they reflect the national performance measure instructions so it is important to take the work that you want to do, the impact that you see and translate it into American seniors FGP translating it into those performance measures.

That concludes our prepared content for today and we want to make sure we have time for questions at the end of the session so we will open it up to any questions that you may have.

I know this week we have received a couple of questions about if a separate application was needed for each area listed on Appendix A. Applicants can apply to his many opportunities as they wish in one application provided that you are able to

demonstrate sufficient local knowledge, presence and administrative capacity to be successful.

Any questions?

We serve vulnerable youth, can we require criminal background on our senior volunteers? One of the regulations, one of the requirements is that volunteers in the program go through a criminal history check, the National Service criminal history check.

You can find more information about that in the notice of funding.

Remember you can add questions to the Q&A pod. Since we are such a small group, you can add it to the chat as well. Can you elaborate on the unduplicated number of volunteers as it relates to a VSY volunteer? Sure. During session one we talked about what a VSY was, but a VSY is a volunteer service year and we calculate that to be 1044 hours. 1044 hours equals one volunteer service year.

Sometimes it gets confusing because one volunteer could actually serve as one VSY, but because we have some flexibility in the amount of time and the amount of hours a volunteer can serve, what we are looking at is one VSY is 1044 hours.

When you starch to plug in all of this information into e-Grants, electronic grants management system, our system doesn't have a column for VSY. Instead, it has four unduplicated volunteer. When you are paring and you are planning to have 23 volunteer service years worth of time in the projects, you would put 23 in the unduplicated volunteer color.

Hopefully, that helps.

I saw a question about COVID, with some schools closed due to COVID, let me pull this out quickly. There have been some flexibilities provided by the agency for COVID. There are a couple of documents that you may use. They are public resources so available for you to use during this time. I will be able to post that into the chat.

While we wait for more questions, I have a video that is an older video, but it is

really positive and I like it a lot.

I am trying to think of other frequently asked questions we have received this week. I know a few have asked if they are located outside of the geographic service area. Maybe you are a neighboring county. If they were allowed to apply. Yes, but if awarded the project would still have to serve the area listed on the appendix. Additional counties not on the appendix cannot be added.

I see that we have the video up.

VIDEO: She was handpicked by her teachers and there was so much language. She was really afraid that they were not making it to with great so they were so shy. Is there something you would rather do at the talk today. Yes, I would like to read. I have known her for a year and a half and she loves stuff like me. That she uses her ability as a journalist because that is what she likes is to elicit children's writing ability.

We take the pressure is off of the teachers in a lot of different ways because if they have a student that really needs extra help and they have 30 kids in their class, they don't have the time. Being a foster grandparent, I can take that child and get the child some confidence that he or she normally wouldn't have or didn't have. Foster grandparents shows the children that there is somebody that cares.

She is a little shy little lady. It is a wonderful experience. He has been such a bonus. 40 percent of kids with a dropout rate right now, it is getting better. We don't put our hands on them and we will lose them when they hit the middle school.

It is invaluable and you cannot put a price tag to what they have done. Without them, and a lot of the children will probably fall through the cracks. With foster grandparents, they come in and they have saved lives because they have changed lives with some of the children. Many children don't have male figures in their lives, they have closed that that. He shows them that he cares about their well-being.

If you show any interest with the children, your heart will just melt away. Morgan, he is supposed to be a problem child, but he is not. His father was in a wreck and so

with he. He hadn't talked to anybody. He got to know me and I got to know him. He opened or and more.

Julia Gonzales is a joy to work with. She is great with the bilingual kids. She comes and learn social studies, science and math and everything in Spanish and it is very challenging.

It is just something that I wanted to do and I said for it. Foster grandparents, from all walks of life. We have foster grandparents who work with children in the foster care system, children who have been neglected and are at risk for juvenile offense and children with special needs. You don't have to be trained as a teacher or a nurse come you just need to want to make a difference in a child's life.

>>: Thank you. One of our retro videos, but I love to share that as a way to end on a positive note. I will do one last call for questions. While that is happening, I am adding two links to the chat, one will show you a COVID performance measure sample and then one that talks about some of the flexibilities that the program has allowed during this time.

I see no other questions or thank you so much for joining us today. We will be having session three tomorrow on the senior companion program and will close out this cycle next week with how to submit your application and eager grants. Have a wonderful afternoon.