



Serve Washington

Changing Communities. Changing Lives.

COVID-19 – Member Support

March 16, 2020

Safety/Well Being



THANK YOU



Goals

- Remind programs of tools already available
- Discuss CNCS guidance to date
- Identify key differences that apply to COVID-19
- How programs/members can help
- Q&A

Our goal is not to update on the virus itself, we will leave that to the experts.



Short-Term Tools

- **Member Leave** – follow MSA/organizational policy
- **Alternative Service** – some programs already have this in place, talk to PO if new to your program
 - *Activities outside of grant scope need Serve WA approval PRIOR to being an allowable activity (and may require formal grant amendments AT A LATER DATE)*
 - *Prohibited Activities – still prohibited*
- **Teleservice** - similarly, some programs already have this in place, talk to PO if new to your program
 - *An organization policy on teleservice is required with Serve WA approval PRIOR to the allowability of teleservice*
 - *Supervision key!*



Longer-Term Tools

- **Make Up Hours** – after leave, assess ability to and plan for additional hours
- **eGrants Suspension** – essentially places a pause on service and extends that time in the system after reinstatement (usually also means living allowance/benefits are suspended, but under COVID-19 programs may choose otherwise)

“Suspension of service is defined as an extended period during which the member is not serving, nor accumulating service hours *or receiving AmeriCorps benefits.*”

- **MSA Extended** – within the current contract year, members may continue to serve if MSA is amended (budget for additional costs)



Longer-Term Tools

- **No-Cost Grant Extension** – not widely used in WA, but available, extends grant/state contract to allow members to continue to serve (budget for additional costs with program income, no additional federal share)
- **Exit with Compelling Personal Circumstances** – early exits, or those don't meet hours at end of term which results in a satisfactory service term and pro-rated education award
 - *45 CFR 2522.230*
 - *>15% of service completed*
 - *program documentation of decision*



CNCS Guidance

CNCS FAQs: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about-cnccs/frequently-asked-questions/covid-19-faqs>

- Allowing pay/benefits during zero-hour pay periods, and/or during suspension (consider budget, length of time)
- Reinforced use of CPC Exit
- Reinforced use of teleservice (but still required policy)
- Training over 20% NOT allowable (no accommodation here)



What's New/Different

- Allowing pay/benefits during zero-hour pay periods, and/or during suspension (consider budget, length of time)

Standard FAQ (**Does Not Apply to COVID-19**)

C. 26 How should a program handle a situation when a member serves no hours during a pay period? Situations in which a member serves zero hours during a pay period should be very rare and the member should be suspended if there are periods in which no service is performed. Otherwise, since the living allowance is to be distributed evenly over the service period, it should be paid regardless of the number of hours. However, a member's agreement could also stipulate conditions under which the living allowance is paid and what the member should do if a period occurs in which no hours are served. The agreement could also stipulate the minimum number of hours required during each service period.



What's NOT New/Different

Is CNCS going to cut the number of required service hours to be eligible for a full Segal Education Award if an AmeriCorps State and National member's site is closed due to COVID-19?

CNCS does not have the authority to reduce the number of service hours required to be eligible for a full Segal Education Award. AmeriCorps State and National grantees have the option to suspend members and reinstate them later, when circumstances allow, or they may exit the member for CPC due the closure of the service location.



How Can AmeriCorps Help?

- Serve WA exploring (safe) deployment and response efforts, including alternative service opportunities
- Programs continue to keep PO informed of program decisions and member concerns
- Be creative, feel free to bring any ideas forward – the worst that can happen is we say “no, not allowable”



Budget Implications

- Program staff and Fiscal staff should work together
- Cost-Reimbursement grants can reallocate funds to meet demand
- Fixed amount grants are still only allowed to be reimbursed for hours served
- Program Income will vary program to program
- Suggest all programs track/document formal notification of site closures, loss of service hours in detail in the rare chance there are funding streams available now or later (easy to document as you go, than go back during an application process) NO GUARANTEE



Closing



Questions?

Keep in touch with your PO!

