



NSCA e-News

April 2009

This is the monthly National Senior Corps Association update for all FGP, RSVP, and SCP Directors, volunteers and friends.

The Effect of the Serve America Act on Senior Corps Programs

On March 31, by a vote of 275-149, the House passed The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (H.R. 1388). The bill, now headed to President Obama for signature, reauthorizes Senior Corps for the first time since 1993. Below is a summary of the reforms that will impact Senior Corps programs. Their effective date is October 1, 2009 (unless otherwise specified).

- The minimum age is lowered from 60 to 55 for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions.
- The Federal share of the hourly stipend may increase to \$3 (up from \$2.65).
- Individuals up to 200% of poverty may be eligible for the hourly stipend (up from 125%).
- Authorizes FGP to serve children "having special or exceptional needs or with conditions or circumstances identified as limiting their academic, social, or economic development." Previously, FGP was only authorized to serve children "having special or exceptional needs."
- Beginning in fiscal year 2013, competition will be instituted for RSVP, provided that service areas maintain level volunteer service years, program distribution remains similar, and disruption of volunteers is minimized. Competition selections will incorporate performance measures, outcomes, and other criteria established in regulation by the Corporation. Implementation of this evaluation process may result in non-renewal of under-performing grantees prior to 2013. The Corporation must provide online resources for the RSVP program, including examples of high-performing programs, corrective actions for under-performing programs, and examples of meaningful outcome-based performance measures.
- At least 25% of grants under Programs of National Significance (PNS) must be to organizations currently not receiving Corporation assistance and when possible in locations where no Senior Corps projects operate. PNS may include respite care, mentoring disadvantaged youth, before- and after-school programs serving low-income children, clean energy activities, and prisoner

reentry. Removes from list of PNS: boarder babies, child care, environmental needs, outreach to labor unions and other national organizations, criminal justice, and augmenting State human service agency work. 75% of PNS funding will be available to existing grantees. This is an improvement over the current 1/3 of new funding allocated to existing programs.

- Sponsors will be permitted to accept donations, except from beneficiaries.
- Establishes a Silver Scholars program, under which individuals 55 and older who perform 350 hours of service receive a \$1,000 education award. The education awards are transferable to a child, foster child or grandchild to help them pay for college.
- Specific programmatic functions of Senior Corps programs may be assigned to State Commissions upon determination that it would increase efficiency in the operation or oversight of a program. Before this may occur, the Corporation must first seek input from and consult Corporation employees, State Commissions, State educational agencies, and other interested stakeholders. Not later than two years after the effective date of the Serve America Act, the Corporation must submit a report to the authorizing committees describing this consultation process, including the stakeholders consulted, the recommendation of stakeholders, and any related actions taken.

Once the bill is signed into law, the Administration will develop regulations which spell out how provisions of the bill affecting Senior Corps will be implemented. NSCA will continue our advocacy regarding how the provisions will be carried out.

Strengthening the Senior Corps Voice

Last month, hundreds of project directors and supporters responded to NSCA's call to educate members of Congress about issues affecting Senior Corps programs. With each phone call made to members of Congress, and with each day leading up to the passage of the Serve America Act, the importance of speaking with a unified voice for all Senior Corps programs became more and more apparent.

To be heard, Senior Corps programs must speak with a unified voice and in large numbers. NSCA ensures that our united voice will be heard. Join or maintain membership with NSCA - the association that works for ALL Senior Corps programs and speaks with one UNITED voice!

Please watch your email next week for information on becoming a new member of NSCA or on renewing your membership.

Appropriations: Funding for Senior Corps

If you have seen the Power Point presentation on the NSCA website (Members-Only section) prepared by NSCA Washington Representative, Priscilla Chatman, there are two types of bills, authorizing and appropriations. Authorizing bills start or continue a federal government program. Appropriations bills provide federal dollars to run the program. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act is an authorizing bill. It reauthorizes the existing national service programs and authorizes new programs as well.

The next step is to provide federal dollars to run these programs. This is the appropriations process that happens every year. That process is beginning now. If a program is authorized, but no money is appropriated to run it, nothing will happen. NSCA has requested significantly increased funding for each of the existing Senior Corps Programs, including the stipend increases for FGP and SCP authorized in the Serve America Act. See 2010 Congressional Budget Request in the Members-Only section of the NSCA website ([click here](#)).

Big Thanks to California Project Directors

THANK YOU to the dozens of California project directors from FGP, RSVP and SCP who provided stories about the impact their volunteers make in their communities. Their stories were requested by and forwarded to Chairman George Miller, Chair of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor sponsoring the GIVE Act.

Congressional District Work Period April 6-17

Visit Your Members of Congress

In February, NSCA announced a campaign to encourage every project director to schedule a visit with their elected officials before or during the Congressional Spring District Work Period April 6-17. Information on how to schedule and prepare for the visit is on the NSCA website. NSCA members are provided with expanded materials to help you with your visits in the Members-Only section. Please remember to enter the information following your visit ([click here](#)). Our NSCA Washington Representative, Priscilla Chatman, is hoping to have information entered from every state. She will then follow-up with Washington staff. Please do not hesitate to email us at info@nscatogether.org if you have questions about visiting your Members of Congress.

The importance of forming relationships with our elected officials cannot be emphasized enough. Many project directors shared with us that NSCA's recent call-in days prior to passage of the national service bills were the first times they called their Representative's and Senator's Washington office. We applaud those who made this important first step! Please continue to develop these relationships. Look over the helpful document on the NSCA website: "It's All in The Relationships" to determine where you are in the relationship-building process ([click here](#)). As we all learned through our recent advocacy efforts, those relationships are absolutely vital to our programs. Our advocacy on the issues related to The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act continues even after the President signs the bill! We have a great deal more to accomplish! NSCA will be relying on the relationships you are building with your Members of Congress and the information you provide to them on an on-going basis about how your program impacts their constituents.

If your representative voted in favor of The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (H.R. 1388), please remember to thank them for their vote. See how representatives voted on the Senate's amendments to H.R. 1388 ([click here](#)).

South Carolina SCP Director Joins NSCA Board

NSCA welcomes Rebecca Smith, Senior Companion Program Director of the Midlands, in Columbia, South Carolina, as the SCP representative from the Southern Cluster. She is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and has worked in the non-profit arena for 27 years, 15 of which have been in her current position with her sponsoring agency, Senior Resources, Inc. Affiliations include South Carolina Senior Service Association, Board Member of South Carolina Respite Coalition and formerly the Senior Corps representative for the South Carolina Commission for National and Community Service.

Rebecca and husband, Roy, a project director for the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, live on their pine tree farm with golden retrievers, Jezebel and Jack.

NSCA Invited to Present at Annual Civic Engagement and Aging Conference

NSCA Board Member Sue Conner will present a workshop at the Annual Civic Engagement and Aging Conference at Rhode Island College, Providence, RI, on April 22. The conference will examine civic engagement in older adults.

Along with representatives from AARP, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Whels, and the Rhode Island SPCA, Sue will participate in a panel presentation and then offer a workshop: "National Service Volunteer Programs for Older Adults: Exploring an organizational framework that engages older adults in addressing community needs." You can get more information about the conference by calling Rachel Filinson, at 401-456-8732.

NSCA to Host Events at National Conference

NSCA will host several events during the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in San Francisco, CA, June 22-24. NSCA events will include the NSCA Annual Meeting, the NSCA Hospitality Reception, and the NSCA Booth in the Exhibit Hall. The specific times and dates will be announced next month. We hope to see you at these events, as well as all Senior Corps events occurring during the conference. If you haven't registered yet, you can do so at www.VolunteeringAndService.org.

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