

THE SENIOR CITIZENS COUNCIL OF GREATER AUGUSTA AND  
THE CSRA, GEORGIA, INC. INVITES YOU TO

# ***GET CONNECTED IN SERVICE TO GEORGIA***



Foster Grandparent  
Program

Senior Companion  
Program

Retired and Senior  
Volunteer Program

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Programs of The  
Corporation for National  
and Community Service



## **SENIOR CORPS VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

NATIONAL SENIOR SERVICE CORPS  
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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## Section 1.0 HISTORY



### **1.1 History of The Senior Citizens Council**

The Senior Citizens Council was chartered in 1968 as a private, non-profit agency. Its mission is to enrich the quality of life for senior adults and their families.

The Senior Citizens Council uses funds from federal, state, and local government, as well as from United Way and other local sources, to offer a variety of programs throughout the CSRA.

Current programs and the year they began are:

Transportation Services (TOTE)	1976
Casework Services	1980
Meals-On-Wheels Program	1980
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program	1981
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	1981
The Senior Center	1984
Foster Grandparent Program	1985
Senior Companion Program	1985
CSRA Senior Centers Program	1987
Hephzibah Senior Center Program	1988
McBean Senior Center Program	1988
Blythe Senior Center Program	1989
Savannah Place Senior Center Program	1989
Belle Terrace Senior Center Program	1990
The Center for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation	1991
Community Care Services Home-Delivered Meals Program	1994
Health Insurance Counseling, Assistance and Referral for the Elderly (HICARE)	1995
Managing Business Affairs that Are Personal (MAP) Program	1996



## **1.2 History of The Senior Corps**

The National Senior Service Corps (or Senior Corps, for short) is the name given to three distinct programs grouped together: The Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

### **Foster Grandparent program**

The **Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)** was authorized by Congress in 1965 as a way to enable low-income persons 60 and older to receive benefits while serving children with special needs.

The Foster Grandparent Program came to Augusta in 1972 as a program of the Georgia Association for Retarded Citizens (GARC). GARC was headquartered in Atlanta, but operated a satellite office on the campus of Gracewood State School and Hospital.

During the early years, Foster Grandparents served children at Gracewood exclusively. As time passed, fewer children were institutionalized at Gracewood; so in the late 70s, Foster Grandparents were moved into other community organizations.

In 1985, sponsorship of the Foster Grandparent Program was moved to The Senior Citizens Council.

### **Senior Companion program**

In 1974, the **Senior Companion Program (SCP)** was also funded by Congress, modeled after the successful Foster Grandparent Program. The purpose of the Senior Companion Program was to provide companionship for seniors who might otherwise risk premature institutionalization.

The Senior Companion Program was introduced in Augusta by GARC, funded by the State of Georgia to provide Senior Companions to serve Gracewood clients over the age of twenty-one.

In 1985, sponsorship of the Senior Companion Program was also moved to The Senior Citizens Council, and with additional federal funding the program was expanded into other community organizations.

## RSVP

The **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** was launched in 1971, and made its debut in Augusta in 1981 as a program of The Senior Citizens Council.

Through RSVP, senior volunteers aged 55 and older provide volunteer assistance to non-profit and health care organizations throughout the community.

In 1996, the Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program were joined administratively within The Senior Citizens Council into one **Senior Corps Department**.



## Section 2.0 ENROLLMENT POLICIES



### **2.1 Eligibility to be Enrolled**

To be enrolled as Foster Grandparents or Senior Companions, individuals must be

- ✓ 60 years of age or older
- ✓ No longer in the regular work force
- ✓ Medically qualified (based on a physical examination) to serve without detriment to themselves or others
- ✓ Willing to accept supervision, and
- ✓ Have an annual income, from all sources, not to exceed 125% of the poverty level. Unreimbursed medical expenses may be subtracted from gross income for the purpose of determining eligibility.

RSVP volunteers must be

- ✓ 55 years of age or older
- ✓ Willing to serve without compensation
- ✓ Willing to accept supervision as required, and
- ✓ Living within the RSVP service area, or an area not served by another RSVP.

Eligibility to be a Senior Corps volunteer may not be restricted on the basis of formal education, experience, citizenship, race, creed, belief, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or political affiliation.

### **2.2 Eligibility to Remain Enrolled**

Once enrolled, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions can earn additional income without affecting their eligibility, since the income guideline for enrolled applicants is increased by 20% over the initial entry guideline.

### **2.3 Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

Applications for enrollment in the Senior Corps are accepted at all times.

Applicants for the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs may be placed on a waiting list until positions are available. All applicants waiting for FGP/SCP are encouraged to become active with RSVP immediately; RSVP volunteers will be given priority consideration when FGP/SCP positions open.

Although there may be applicants waiting for placement, additional applicants may be recruited when:

- ✓ Assignments require skills or abilities not possessed by persons awaiting placement
- ✓ Persons awaiting placement do not have access to private automobiles, and the volunteer assignments are inaccessible by public transportation
- ✓ Volunteers awaiting placement are inflexible in accepting assignments, or
- ✓ The Corporation for National Service mandates recruitment of special groups to achieve a better balance.

Priority in FGP/SCP enrollment will also be given to highly-motivated persons with the greatest economic need.

## Section 3.0 VOLUNTEER TRAINING



### **3.1 Pre-Service Orientation**

New Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions will receive forty hours of orientation, twenty of which will be pre-service orientation. This orientation will introduce volunteers to all the programs of the Corporation for National Service, as well as other programs of The Senior Citizens Council. It will provide information on project policies and procedures, and teach volunteers to complete timesheets.

Pre-Service orientation is mandatory for all Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions. RSVP volunteers are welcome, but not required, to attend.

### **3.2 Confidentiality Training**

Volunteers, particularly Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions, may learn personal or sensitive information about the clients with whom they work. This information, as well as the identification of the clients, is to be held in strict confidence. A breach thereof will result in separation from the program.

### **3.3 On-the-Job Orientation**

Whenever possible, the first week of a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion's assignment will be spent with an experienced volunteer as a mentor to assist in on-the-job orientation. Volunteer stations will also use this week to familiarize new volunteers with their own policies and procedures.

### **3.4 In-Service Training**

In-service training is held one day each month, and is mandatory for all Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Volunteers. RSVP volunteers are welcome to attend. In-service sessions keep volunteers up to date on program news, community services, and methods of working with clients.

In-service training is considered a work day, and will be paid as such. Non-emergency doctor's appointments should never be made on in-service days, and a volunteer regularly using sick leave on that day may be asked to bring in a doctor's statement. A volunteer who works at his/her volunteer assignment instead of attending in-service training will not be paid for the day.

### **3.5 Volunteer Station Training**

Occasionally a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion may be invited to participate in special training offered by the volunteer station. This training will be considered a work day, and the volunteer will be paid for the hours normally worked that day.

Any hours spent in training beyond the normal workday should be documented as RSVP volunteer hours, and a stipend will not be paid for those additional hours. The volunteer will be covered by program insurance and transportation policies as long as an RSVP timesheet is completed and turned into the Senior Corps office.

### **3.6 Volunteer Work Test Following Training**

Every Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion will complete a three-month work test before earning permanent volunteer status. During this period, a volunteer may be dismissed without prejudice of either party if it appears to be in the best interest of the Senior Corps programs.

During the work test period, volunteers will receive the same benefits as other volunteers, including medical leave and holidays. However, vacation leave earned during the period may not be taken until after the three months. (Exception: If a volunteer is enrolled during the last quarter of the grant year (April-June), he/she may take vacation in June to avoid losing it on July 1. See Section 4.0 for more detailed information regarding leave policies.)

Toward the end of the work test period, the volunteer station supervisor will be asked to evaluate each volunteer's ability to perform his/her duty. This will include his/her ability to understand and follow directions as well as his/her ability to get along with the clients, volunteer station staff, and other volunteers. Upon successful passing of the work test evaluation, a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion will be granted permanent status.

## Section 4.0 DIRECT BENEFITS

### 4.1 *Stipend*



Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions serve twenty hours each week, and receive a monetary stipend in an amount determined by Congress. The stipend is paid for time spent with the clients, for earned leave, and for special activities such as training and volunteer recognition.

Volunteers are paid for travel time between client assignments, but cannot be paid for travel time to and from home. Meals, if taken with a client as part of the volunteer's assignment, are included in the twenty hours. Meals not eaten with a client will not be included as part of the paid work time.

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions *are not employees* of The Senior Citizens Council, and the hourly stipend *is not a wage*. By law, the stipend is not subject to tax, nor can it be counted as income for the purpose of any government benefit such as public housing, SSI, or food stamps.

### 4.2 *Transportation*

Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP Volunteers are all reimbursed for travel to and from volunteer stations.



In Augusta, most volunteers depend upon private automobiles. Those who do not drive are often able to work because of the generosity of other volunteers who transport them.

Drivers will be reimbursed at the rate of \$.10 per mile directly to work and back home, not to exceed \$2 per day.

Those drivers who transport another volunteer will be reimbursed at the rate of \$.10 per mile for the entire route from their home, to the rider's, to work, and back, not to exceed \$4 per day. Riders are not expected to pay the driver, and will not be reimbursed for doing so. Drivers accepting payment from their riders in addition to their Senior Corps reimbursement will put their own reimbursement in jeopardy.

Drivers who transport a next-door neighbor or someone who lives on their direct route to work will not be paid extra mileage. However, they will be granted \$.50 extra every day the rider goes to work. Spouses riding together will be reimbursed for actual mileage only.

Travel to program activities, including training, recognition events, and Advisory Council meetings, will be reimbursed the same way.



Volunteers who use public transportation will be reimbursed the actual cost of their transportation, not to exceed \$2 per day.

Volunteers who contract with someone not on the program to provide transportation should talk with a Senior Corps staff member regarding a reimbursement plan.

Volunteers who walk or ride with a spouse who is already being reimbursed will not receive travel reimbursement.

### **4.3 Meals**



Many volunteer stations provide meals as a donation to the Senior Corps programs. Volunteers who eat at a station should remember that they are guests, and should conduct themselves as such.

Remember, meals are to be eaten on the premises—never “doggie-bagged” and taken home. Also, *never* take food from another’s plate or from the garbage, even if it still looks good! This is against Health Department regulations, and does not present a desirable image for the Senior Corps.

Some volunteer stations cannot provide meals. In this case, volunteers will either be reassigned so that their service does not span a mealtime, or volunteers may elect to forego the meal as a benefit of service.

### **4.4 Holidays**



The following holidays will be paid for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions:

- ✓ New Year’s Day and an adjacent work day
- ✓ Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday
- ✓ Spring Holiday (date to be announced)
- ✓ Memorial Day
- ✓ Independence Day
- ✓ Labor Day
- ✓ Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- ✓ Christmas Day and an adjacent work day

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions will be paid for four hours on a holiday, regardless of the number of hours they usually work each day. This means that the volunteers who usually work five hours each day, four days per week, will need to adjust their work schedules during the week of a holiday.

*REMEMBER: When a holiday falls during the week, ALL volunteers will work four hours each day for the other four days that week.*

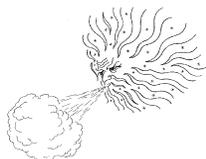
A volunteer who works five hours for three days and takes one day with holiday pay will only be paid for nineteen, not twenty hours, that week ( $5 + 5 + 5 + 4 = 19$ ). Likewise, a volunteer who works five hours each of the other four days will be paid for twenty hours only, even though he/she has “earned” twenty-four ( $5 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 4 = 24$ ).

Some volunteer stations observe holidays not authorized by The Senior Citizens Council. The station offices will be closed for a holiday, but the Foster Grandparents or Senior Companions should report to work as usual if clients are present (example: hospitals). In the event clients are not present (example: schools), volunteers have four choices:

- ✓ They may stay home and take a personal vacation day.
- ✓ They may ask the Senior Corps staff for reassignment to another station during that time.
- ✓ They may opt to go without pay to save their vacation for a time of their choosing.

A volunteer may not work during a holiday and take off another day in exchange. A volunteer who works on a holiday will not be reimbursed for transportation, nor will he/she be covered by program insurance on that day.

#### **4.5 Inclement Weather Pay**



The Senior Corps programs will be closed because of bad weather conditions when The Senior Citizens Council is closed because of such conditions. Stipended volunteers will be paid for the day just as though they had worked.

The Senior Citizens Council’s closing will be announced on Channel 6 by 7:00 a.m.

If there is a question as to whether or not the agency is closed, volunteers should use the school closings as a guide. Volunteers in surrounding counties should go by school closings in their counties, regardless of the conditions in Richmond County.

After The Senior Citizens Council and schools have re-opened, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions must use vacation leave for extended absences due to icy driveways or back roads.

#### **4.6 Vacation**



Vacation for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions is earned at the rate of *approximately* six hours per month, if the volunteer has been paid all month. (The actual rate of accrual is .075 hours per every hour paid.) If a volunteer is not paid for the entire month, vacation leave will be earned *pro rata*.

Vacation may be accumulated for the fiscal year, which runs July through June. Any unused vacation will be forfeited each year on June 30.

No more than two weeks' vacation may be taken in any calendar month.

Vacation may be taken in one-hour units, and must be approved orally by a volunteer's immediate supervisor. *Leave of more than three days must also be approved in advance by the Senior Corps staff.*

Absence beyond available vacation leave will be construed as *absence without leave*, and may result in a volunteer's dismissal from the program. It is the volunteer's responsibility to notify Senior Corps staff directly if he/she has a need for extended leave. *Do not assume that the volunteer station staff or another volunteer will inform the Senior Corps office.*

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions begin earning vacation immediately upon enrollment, but may not use it until after their three-months' work test. Exception: Volunteers who are enrolled near the end of the fiscal year may use their leave to avoid losing it on June 30. Vacation earned by these volunteers after June 30 cannot be used until the end of their work test period.

Volunteers should make themselves aware of their volunteer station's holiday closings and scheduled breaks, and attempt to schedule their own vacation during that time. However, if a volunteer wants to save his/her leave for later use, he/she may opt to go without pay during this period. Volunteers should always consult Senior Corps staff before making this decision.

Retiring volunteers will be paid for any unused vacation when they leave the program. Vacation will not be paid if a volunteer does not successfully complete his/her work test period.

A volunteer who is ill and has exhausted his/her sick leave will automatically be paid with any vacation leave remaining on the books.

#### **4.7 Medical Leave**



Medical leave for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions is earned at the rate of *approximately* four hours per month, if the volunteer has been paid all month. (The actual rate of accrual is .05 hours per every hour paid.) If a volunteer is not paid for the entire month, medical leave will be earned on a *pro rata* basis.

Medical leave may be used for illness or doctor's appointments of the volunteer, or for illness in the volunteer's immediate family.

For the purpose of this handbook, immediate family is defined as:

- ✓ Parents (including step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, and parents-in-law)
- ✓ Spouse

- ✓ Children (including step-children, foster children, daughter/son-in-law)
- ✓ Sibling (including half-brother/sister and brother/sister-in-law)
- ✓ Aunt
- ✓ Uncle
- ✓ First Cousin

Medical leave may also be used if the volunteer has been exposed to a contagious disease and his/her presence on the job could endanger others.

*Medical leave may not be used for vacations. Neither may it be used when a volunteer is without transportation due to another volunteer's illness or doctor's appointment.*

Medical leave may be used in one-hour units, and must be reported immediately to the volunteer station supervisor. Leave of more than three days must be reported to the Senior Corps staff. *This is each volunteer's responsibility; do not depend on the volunteer station or another volunteer to call.*

When a volunteer exhausts his/her medical leave, he/she will automatically be paid with any vacation on the books. When all vacation is paid, the volunteer will be *absent without leave*, ultimately resulting in dismissal from the program. *To avoid dismissal, volunteers must contact the Senior Corps staff and produce a doctor's written request for extended leave of absence up to six months.*

Following an extended absence, a volunteer must not report back to work without clearance from the Senior Corps and volunteer station. A doctor's certificate may be required.

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions begin earning medical leave immediately upon enrollment, and may use it as it is earned. There is no limit to the medical leave a volunteer can accrue. The unused balance is forfeited when a volunteer leaves the program.

#### **4.8 Other Leave**



*Bereavement Leave:* A Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion may take up to three days leave with pay in the case of death in the immediate family. Volunteers must notify Senior Corps staff before taking bereavement leave.

*Court Attendance Under Subpoena:* A volunteer in court under a subpoena will be paid as though he/she is working, provided that the volunteer or his/her relatives do not have a personal interest in the case. Senior Corps staff must be notified, and time sheets should be marked as though the volunteer worked.

*Jury Duty:* A volunteer on jury duty will be paid as though he/she is working. Senior Corps staff must be notified, and time sheets should be marked as though the volunteer worked. A copy of the jury summons should be attached to the time sheet.

Leave of Absence: A leave of absence without pay may be granted by the Senior Corps staff for up to six months under unusual circumstances or extended illness.

Example of administrative leave of absence: A volunteer loses transportation due to the retirement of the volunteer with whom he was riding. He has used all his vacation leave, but it may take several months to find another ride.

Example of medical leave of absence: A volunteer breaks a hip and exhausts all her medical and vacation leave. However, her doctor believes she will be able to return to work within a few months.

Before being granted a medical leave of absence, a volunteer must use all his/her leave, and then bring in a doctor's written request stating the nature of the illness and an estimated date when he/she is expected to return. The doctor's written permission will be required before the volunteer returns to work.

For a volunteer absent without leave, failure to submit a doctor's request for medical leave of absence will result in dismissal from the program.

Before taking a leave of absence, a volunteer should return program smocks to the Senior Corps staff. They will be re-issued when the volunteer returns.

Although every effort will be made to maintain a volunteer's placement while on leave of absence, changes may occur during his/her absence. Therefore, Senior Corps staff cannot guarantee that the volunteer will always return to the assignment he/she left.

## **4.9 Insurance**



Every Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP Volunteer is covered by excess accident insurance (up to \$25,000 per accident, with \$2,500 for loss of life) and personal liability insurance (up to \$1,000,000 per incident) under Corporate Insurance Management (CIMA). Drivers are also covered by excess automobile liability (up to \$500,000 per accident). This coverage is in effect during volunteer hours and while traveling directly to and from the volunteer station.

All volunteer-related accidents (major and minor) should be reported promptly to the volunteer's immediate supervisor, who will complete a report and send it to the Senior Corps staff. In case of an automobile accident, the volunteer must also supply a copy of the accident report to the program staff. After the volunteer's primary health insurance has paid, a claim will be filed to CIMA to reimburse the deductible and any remaining balance.

Eyeglasses broken on the job are also covered, up to \$50 each on the frame and lenses. Denture repair is covered to \$250, and treatment to natural teeth up to \$500.

#### **4.10 Physical Examinations**



Physical examinations are required before a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion can be placed on assignment, and once a year thereafter. Many volunteers see their doctors on a regular basis, and the doctors will complete the exam forms at no cost. For those volunteers who don't have personal physicians, or whose physicians would charge for the exam, the Senior Corps staff will arrange for an exam through a volunteer station or clinic.

Through the exam, a doctor must determine whether or not a volunteer has any condition (physical or mental) that would be a barrier to his/her successful performance as a Senior Corps volunteer. Failure to pass a physical examination is just cause for dismissal from the Senior Corps programs.

A volunteer who fails to report to work after receiving a physical exam provided by the program will be asked to reimburse the program for the cost of the exam. Similarly, a new volunteer who fails to complete his/her three months' work test may be asked to reimburse the program for this expense.

A volunteer whose physical examination is more than a year old will not be allowed to work until a new exam has been received in the Senior Corps office.

#### **4.11 Smocks**



Foster Grandparents will be issued two red smocks by the Senior Corps staff to protect their clothing and to distinguish them as Foster Grandparents. Senior Companions will be issued two blue smocks. Volunteers should wear their smocks while on duty, and should keep them washed and clean at all times.

Some RSVP volunteers may be asked to wear smocks by their volunteer stations. If the volunteer station does not provide these, the Senior Corps department will purchase the smocks for the volunteers' use.

When a volunteer leaves the program, he/she must either return the smocks to the Senior Corps office, or pay to replace them.

#### **4.12 Volunteer Recognition**



The Senior Citizens Council holds two Senior Corps volunteer recognition events each year. A volunteer appreciation picnic is traditionally held in the spring. In the fall, volunteers are recognized for years of service in a more formal ceremony. Volunteers are also recognized for outstanding service in the project's quarterly newsletter, and many volunteer stations hold annual volunteer recognition events to which Senior Corps volunteers are invited.



## Section 5.0 VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS

### 5.1 **Volunteer Stations**

All Senior Corps volunteers are assigned to work through volunteer stations. These are either private, non-profit organizations; government agencies; or proprietary health-care facilities in partnership with the Senior Corps.

Volunteer station staff will assign Senior Corps volunteers to their duties, and in some cases will serve as the on-going, immediate supervisors of the volunteers. In the case of Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions, volunteer station supervisors will assign clients to the volunteers and periodically evaluate the impact of the volunteers' work.

Volunteer station staff should be familiar with Senior Corps regulations. In the event a station supervisor asks a volunteer to do something not in keeping with the guidelines in this handbook, the volunteer should contact the Senior Corps staff immediately.

### 5.2 **Foster Grandparent Assignments**



A Foster Grandparent should generally be assigned to two-four children with special needs. In Augusta, grandparents serve mentally/physically disabled children, juvenile offenders, at-risk youth, acutely ill children, special-needs military dependents, and children who need assistance with reading/literacy preparedness.

A Foster Grandparent's clients must be under the age of 21. (Exception: A mentally retarded child assigned to a grandparent before his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday may remain with the grandparent after turning 21.)

Assignments must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the children. *They may not include administrative support to the volunteer station.*

Client assignment plans will be prepared by the volunteer station supervisor and reviewed with the Foster Grandparent when a child is assigned. The assignment plans will state the child's need, the grandparent's assigned duties, and the desired impact of the grandparent's assistance on the child. The volunteer will sign the plan to indicate that he/she understands the duties assigned, and will be held responsible for fulfilling the tasks.

The role of a Foster Grandparent is limited to protect the integrity of the program and the kinship relationship which has been the key to its nationwide success. Depending upon the child's age, need, and setting, appropriate activities might include:

- ✓ Reading, playing, rocking, singing, cuddling children
- ✓ Going on trips with children
- ✓ Encouraging children in therapy activities
- ✓ Tending to personal needs
- ✓ Encouraging good health and social habits
- ✓ Being a good listener

Foster Grandparents do not:

- ✓ Substitute for or replace staff in routine duties
- ✓ Serve as babysitters
- ✓ Act as staff aides (teaching, housekeeping, etc.)
- ✓ Assume responsibility for groups of children
- ✓ Watch TV, take naps, or sit around idle
- ✓ Work at the station when no children are present
- ✓ Give religious instruction
- ✓ Supervise other grandparents
- ✓ Perform household or custodial functions
- ✓ Take part in any political activity while serving as a Foster Grandparent

A Foster Grandparent must not discuss any personal details (names, families, treatment, opinions) of a child's life with anyone. Instead, the Foster Grandparent should talk about what he/she is doing with the child.

### 5.3 Senior Companion Assignments



Senior Companions will generally be assigned to two-four adults with special needs.

In Augusta, most of the Senior Companions will be assigned to assist mentally or emotionally disabled clients at Gracewood State School and Hospital or the VA Medical Center. However, some companions will be assigned to frail elderly or terminally ill individuals in their homes.

Client assignment plans will be prepared by the volunteer station supervisor and reviewed with the Senior Companion when a client is assigned. The assignment plans will state the client's need, the companion's assigned duties, and the desired impact of the companion's assistance on the client. The volunteer will sign the plan to indicate that he/she understands the duties assigned, and will be held responsible for fulfilling the tasks.

Senior Companion assignments must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with special-needs adults. *They may not include administrative support to the volunteer station.*

Senior Companions assigned to clients in one of the hospitals may find the following activities as part of their assignments:

- ✓ Assisting with personal care (feeding, grooming)

- ✓ Assisting with physical therapy
- ✓ Assisting in reality orientation/awareness
- ✓ Encouraging exercise; taking walks with client
- ✓ Providing companionship, talking, listening, cheering up
- ✓ Playing games or cards
- ✓ Accompanying client to a recreational or social event

Those companions serving in private homes may also assist with the following:

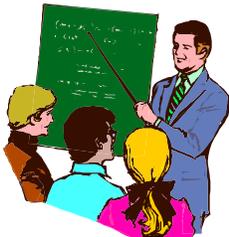
- ✓ Preparing food, planning meals
- ✓ Shopping, doing errands
- ✓ Monitoring medication
- ✓ Writing letters, reading the newspaper, filling out forms
- ✓ Doing light housekeeping or gardening
- ✓ Helping clients receive a needed service (food stamps, SSI, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.)

Senior Companions do not:

- ✓ Substitute for or replace staff or household members in routine duties
- ✓ Sign legal papers
- ✓ Assume responsibility for groups of adults
- ✓ Lend or borrow money to/from a client; deposit the client's money in the bank
- ✓ Prepare food for or clean up after guests
- ✓ Move large pieces of furniture, do heavy housecleaning
- ✓ Perform duties usually performed by a doctor or nurse
- ✓ Supervise other companions
- ✓ Perform any service for which the volunteer station is receiving compensation from any source
- ✓ Take part in any political activity while serving as a Senior Companion

A Senior Companion must not discuss any personal details (names, families, treatment, opinions) of a client's life with anyone. Instead, the Senior Companion should talk about what he/she is doing with the client.

## 5.4 *RSVP Volunteer Assignments*



RSVP volunteer assignments are matched to the interests and abilities of the volunteers. In Augusta, the largest groups of RSVP volunteers work at Fort Discovery, with the arts (theatre, symphony, ballet) or in one of the multi-purpose senior centers.

Inappropriate RSVP activities are those that displace paid workers or duplicate normal volunteer responsibilities of an organization's members. (For example, individuals who volunteer as a part of their church or club activities cannot also count those hours as RSVP volunteer hours.) RSVP volunteers may not perform any duty that identifies the program with any political activity, including voter registration and driving voters to the polls.



## Section 6.0 DRESS CODE



### **6.1 Name Badges**

Many volunteer stations require that volunteers wear picture name badges, and will provide these for the volunteers. At other times, the Senior Corps office will prepare name badges for volunteers. These badges identify individuals with the program, and volunteers are encouraged to wear them at all times while volunteering.

### **6.2 Dress Standards**

Senior Corps volunteers represent not only the programs to which they belong, but The Senior Citizens Council as well. To promote a positive image, the following dress standards are required:

- ✓ Volunteers should dress appropriately for the assignment, in neat, clean, non-restrictive clothing.
- ✓ Shoes should be comfortable, and in good repair.
- ✓ During extreme heat, shorts are acceptable if the volunteer station staff wear shorts and they are approved by the immediate supervisor. Volunteers should keep shorts age-appropriate, of moderate length, and not too tight!

### **6.3 Grooming Standards**

In order to promote a positive and sanitary volunteer environment, the following grooming standards are required:

- ✓ Hands should be washed frequently as an aid to good health.
- ✓ Hair should be clean and neat.
- ✓ Makeup should be modest.
- ✓ A daily bath is a must, and will help prevent body odors.
- ✓ Volunteers must use a deoderant.
- ✓ An attractive smile is a great asset. Volunteers must practice good dental and oral hygiene.
- ✓ Be sure to observe the volunteer stations' rules, including the use of tobacco products. No snuff, chewing tobacco, or smoking are allowed while working with assigned clients.



## Section 7.0 VOLUNTEER IMPACT



### 7.1 *Impact Programming*

Every volunteer station has a mission—a reason for existing, and a goal it wants to accomplish in the community. To the extent that Senior Corps volunteers help further the volunteer stations' goals, they are helping to make an impact in the community.

It is not enough for a volunteer to say he/she spends time volunteering. The question is: What difference does it make in the community?

To help measure the impact of volunteer assignments, Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Assignment Forms will be prepared by the volunteer stations which:

- ✓ State the client's problem that merits the assignment of a Senior Corps volunteer
- ✓ Spell out exactly what the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion is to do with the client
- ✓ Give the desired results of the volunteer's activities, and
- ✓ State the anticipated impact of those results.

For example, a child's *problem* may be that he is falling behind his class because he can't read on grade level. A Foster Grandparent may be asked to spend twenty minutes a day with this child, listening to him read and showing him flash cards. The desired *results* will be that the child will learn to read on grade level by the end of the year, and the *impact* will be that he is promoted with the rest of his class.

Another example: A *problem* is that an elderly homebound client cannot see well enough to prepare meals, and she is becoming malnourished. As a part of her job description, a Senior Companion may be asked to prepare a noon meal for the client. The *results* may be that the client now eats a hot meal daily, and the *impact* can be measured by the client's weight gain and improved health.

An RSVP volunteer's job assignment may or may not include a specific impact plan, but the Senior Corps staff will have an overall Impact Plan for most volunteer stations. An RSVP volunteer can talk with staff to determine the anticipated impact of his/her assignment.

## **7.2 Impact Evaluation**

It has been said that everything that's measurable isn't necessarily worthwhile, and everything that's worthwhile isn't measurable. Who can measure the value of a child's love for his Foster Grandparent, or the way his face lights up when his "granny" enters the room?

Nevertheless, whenever possible, the volunteer station staff and Senior Corps staff will attempt to *measure* the impact a volunteer makes in his/her assignment. This is done annually by comparing the *planned* impact set forth in the Assignment Form to the *actual* impact as measured at the end of the volunteer's first year, and once a year thereafter.

For example, by placing a grandparent to work with a child who is behind in reading, the *planned* impact is that the child will learn to read and therefore be promoted with the others in his grade. At the end of the year, it's simple enough to test the child's reading ability.

If, following the Impact Evaluation, there seems to be little or no change in the client assigned to a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion, the assignment will be reconsidered. Was the planned impact impossible to achieve? Should it be revised to reflect the child's abilities? Did the grandparent work as instructed, or does he/she need additional training? Should the volunteer continue to work with the client, be reassigned to another client, or be removed from the volunteer station?

If continued Impact Evaluations indicate that a volunteer is making no impact through his/her assignments, the volunteer may be dismissed from the program.

## Section 8.0 DISCIPLINARY ACTION



### **8.1 Progressive Discipline**

The Senior Corps programs provide uniformly consistent discipline when a volunteer's work performance or actions are detrimental to the program, volunteer station, or clients served. Progressive discipline will be performed as follows:

- Step 1: Oral reprimand, with note placed in volunteer's personnel folder
- Step 2: Note of warning, signed by volunteer and placed in volunteer's folder, with copy to the Project Director
- Step 3: Dismissal

### **8.2 Violations Subject to Disciplinary Action**

The following is a list of causes constituting a basis for disciplinary action.

- ✓ Consistent inefficiency, incompetence, or negligence in the performance of volunteer assignment.
- ✓ Insubordination; refusal to accept reasonable and proper assignment from an authorized supervisor.
- ✓ Uncooperative attitude which lowers discipline and morale.
- ✓ Absence without leave; excessive abuse of leave privileges.
- ✓ Failure to report change in economic status after enrollment.
- ✓ Sleeping on the job.
- ✓ Failure to attend required orientation or in-service training sessions.
- ✓ Any other action that is deemed unlawful or inappropriate, and discredits the program's service.

The additional causes will result in immediate dismissal from the Senior Corps programs:

- ✓ Hitting or hurting a client deliberately or through negligence.
- ✓ Misrepresentation or falsification of application for enrollment, time sheets, travel reimbursements, or other records.
- ✓ Unauthorized possession or use of drugs; bringing liquor or other intoxicants to work; reporting to work in an intoxicated condition.

- ✓ Stealing or unauthorized possession of property belonging to others; destroying or damaging property of others.
- ✓ Use of abusive, profane, or threatening language toward a client, staff, volunteer, or others.
- ✓ Possession of firearms or other weapons while at the volunteer station.
- ✓ Discussing confidential information about the assigned client.

### **8.3 Results of Disciplinary Action**

**Reassignment.** Although an offense may not warrant dismissal from the program, volunteer station staff may request a volunteer's removal from their station. The Senior Corps staff will try to find another placement. If no other placement is available or appropriate, the volunteer may have to take a leave of absence until an assignment can be made.

**Probation.** A volunteer on permanent status may be placed on probation if his/her job performance or personal actions discredit the Senior Corps programs. Such actions may be deliberate, or they may be a result of negligence or disability (physical or mental).

**Suspension.** When an offense is questioned (example: alleged child abuse, pending a hearing), a volunteer may be placed on suspension. The volunteer will not work or participate in program events, and will not be paid. If the volunteer is acquitted, he or she will return to active status, and will be paid for time missed. Also, all leave earned during his or her absence will be granted.

**Dismissal.** If the disciplinary action does not result in improved performance, or if the offense is so serious that immediate action must be taken to protect the client or ensure the integrity of the program, a volunteer may be dismissed.

### **8.4 Grievance Following Disciplinary Action**

If a volunteer feels that he or she has been disciplined or dismissed without just cause, a grievance may be filed according to the following procedure:

**Informal Grievance.** A volunteer should appeal to the project Coordinator within three working days after an action he or she feels is unjust.

If no agreement is reached within two working days, the volunteer may then contact the Project Director, who will schedule a conference within five working days. If the volunteer and Project Director cannot reach an agreement within two working days of their meeting, the Project Director will provide the name and address of the Advisory Council Chairperson in case the volunteer wants to proceed with a formal grievance.

**Formal Grievance.** To file a formal grievance, a volunteer must contact the Advisory Council Chairperson within five working days of his or her meeting with the Project Director. A committee of the Advisory Council will meet with the volunteer within five working days to hear the volunteer's grievance, and will forward its recommendation to the Executive Director of The Senior Citizens Council.

The Executive Director will schedule a conference with the volunteer within five working days from the receipt of the Advisory Council's recommendation. The Executive Director will consider the volunteer's testimony, the staff's statement, and the Advisory Council's recommendation, and give the volunteer his or her decision in writing within three working days of the conference.

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, he or she may request a hearing by the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors of The Senior Citizens Council. This request must be made in writing within five working days of receipt of the Executive Director's decision. The Personnel Committee will convene within ten working days of receipt of the request to examine evidence from all concerned parties. The Committee will inform the volunteer in writing of its decision within three working days from the receipt of the hearing.

If the Personnel Committee's finding is unsatisfactory to the volunteer, he or she may forward a written appeal, within seven working days of receipt of the Personnel Committee's decision, to the entire Board of Directors. The full Board, or its empowered Executive Committee, will inform the volunteer in writing of its decision within fifteen working days from the receipt of the volunteer's request.

The decision of the full Board of Directors of The Senior Citizens Council will be the agency's final action on the matter.

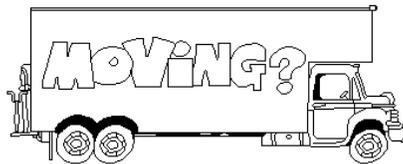
Volunteers who, through a grievance procedure, are found to have been dismissed without just cause, will be reinstated. Every effort will be made to continue the same volunteer placement; however, this cannot be guaranteed due to changes in client need and/or volunteer station approval.

## **8.5 *Destruction of Records of Disciplinary Action***

If no additional counsel or disciplinary measures are required, the record of action will be removed from a volunteer's personnel file and destroyed after one year.



## Section 9.0 VOLUNTEER SEPARATION



### **9.1 Resignation**

Senior Corps volunteers should give at least two weeks' notice when resigning, unless it is due to emergency or illness. This gives volunteer stations an opportunity to say good-bye to the volunteer and bring closure to the assignment.

Since a personal relationship exists between a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion and his/her clients, the volunteer should make every effort to let the clients know that his/her leaving is not their fault. If appropriate, the volunteer should continue the relationship through visits, cards, or phone calls.

### **9.2 Dismissal**

A volunteer may be dismissed during his/her initial work test period, or later following any disciplinary action. Although the staff will ordinarily work with a volunteer to correct work performance deficiencies, some actions may result in immediate dismissal (see Section 8.2). A volunteer may also be dismissed for failure to pass the required physical exam. A volunteer who feels his/her dismissal is unjustified may file a grievance as set forth in Section 8.4 of this handbook.

### **9.3 Loss of Funding**

In the event of an unexpected loss of funding, Senior Corps staff may find it necessary to reduce the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion work force. (RSVP will not be so affected, since there is no stipend involved.) Program staff will make every effort to find other funds or transfer the volunteers to other programs. Volunteers dismissed for lack of funds will be reinstated as soon as funds are restored.

### **9.4 Death**

In the event of a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion's death, his/her balance of vacation leave will be paid monthly until the leave is paid in full. Checks will be released to the volunteer's designated beneficiary upon presentation of proof of death and a picture ID to the Senior Corps staff.

## **9.5 Termination Benefits**

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions will be paid for their balance of vacation when they leave the program. This leave will be paid monthly until it is paid in full, and the volunteer will be officially enrolled in the program until the last leave is paid.

## **9.6 Responsibilities of Volunteers Upon Termination**

Senior Corps volunteers who have project-owned smocks must return or pay for the smocks when they leave the program. Smocks should be returned clean and in good repair.

Program handbooks should also be returned so that they can be issued to new volunteers.

Any volunteer who has been issued a key by the volunteer station should return the key to the Senior Corps staff.

## APPENDIX



# VOLUNTEER TIME SHEETS



It is the responsibility of every volunteer to complete and sign a time sheet, and to see that it is delivered to the Senior Corps office monthly. *It is not the responsibility of the volunteer station, or of any other volunteer.*

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions who do not submit time sheets will not be paid.



ON TIME

RSVP volunteers should submit time sheets by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month for the previous month's work.

Local Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions should hand-deliver time sheets to the Senior Corps office the last workday of each month.

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions working outside Richmond County may call in their time on the last workday of the month, then mail the sheets so that they are received within two days.



SIGNATURES

Before submitting a time sheet, make certain that *every* day is accounted for and that the sheet has been signed by all the volunteers listed on the sheet, as well as by the volunteer station supervisor.

An incomplete time sheet will be returned for completion, thus slowing the payroll process.



TRAVEL

Make sure that your request for travel reimbursement is on the back, and is signed. (Instructions for this will be included in the following paragraphs.)

A Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion on leave should not assume that someone will complete and submit a time sheet for him/her. The volunteer should call and ask his/her immediate supervisor to complete the time sheet with an “M” (for Medical Leave) or “V” (for Vacation) for every workday, and a “X” on days not normally worked.



In addition to the number of hours worked daily, the following symbols should be used in completing the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion volunteer time sheets.

SYMBOLS

A volunteer should never write the word “off” on a time sheet.

- “X” This does *not* mean that a volunteer was absent on a workday. This means that the day marked with an “X” is a day the volunteer is not scheduled to work. Volunteers always work twenty hours each week. Those who work five hours daily for four days during the week should show an “X” on the weekday they are never scheduled to work.
- “M” This stands for medical leave, to be used when a volunteer is absent due to illness, a doctor’s appointment, or to care for a member of his/her immediate family who is ill. An “M” should *not* be used when a volunteer is absent due to a death in the family.
- “B” This stands for bereavement leave, and should be used when a volunteer is absent due to a death in the immediate family. A volunteer may take three days of bereavement leave, and must provide proof of the relative’s death. Any absence for bereavement beyond three days must be covered with vacation leave.
- “V” This stands for vacation. Vacation must be used any time a volunteer is not working, but cannot legitimately use medical or bereavement leave. A volunteer who has exhausted all medical or bereavement leave, but still has not returned to work, will automatically be paid with his/her vacation leave as long as it lasts.
- “H” This stands for holiday, and will be pre-recorded on the time sheets. Only the holidays authorized by The Senior Citizens Council will be paid. Holidays will be paid for four hours. During the week of a holiday, all Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions should work four hours daily, each of the other days during that week—regardless of their normal schedules.
- “W” This is used to indicate that a volunteer chooses to go without pay for the day. It must only be used under special conditions, and never without prior approval from the Senior Corps staff.
- “O” The “O” is used rarely, and indicates that the volunteer worked on a given day, but that the hours are not being shown on the present time sheet. An “O” alerts staff to look for the volunteer’s name a time sheet from another work area as well.



DO NOT!

DO NOT use the symbol “I” for in-service. Training days, like volunteer recognition events, are workdays, and should be shown on the time sheet as such.

DO NOT leave a day blank. The staff will not know whether to pay for medical leave or vacation, and will likely not pay for the day.

DO NOT write “out” by a day. A volunteer not at work must either be on medical leave, vacation, bereavement leave, or attending a program event such as training or volunteer recognition.

DO NOT sign the time sheet until it is completed. A volunteer’s signature certifies that the information reported is correct, and signing before it is completed is like signing a blank check!

A Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion should NEVER depend upon the volunteer station supervisor to complete his/her time sheet. Volunteers must learn to complete their own time sheets as a condition of participating in the programs.

# VOLUNTEER TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT



Travel directly to and from a volunteer's work assignment, as well as travel between assignments, will be reimbursed through the following procedures:

## Drivers

Drivers must submit three things in order to be reimbursed for mileage.

- ✓ A copy of the driver's current Drivers License and insurance card must be on file in the Senior Corps office.
- ✓ Mileage to each destination for which reimbursement is requested must be documented by an odometer reading on file in the Senior Corps office.
- ✓ A signed statement of the number of days driven to each destination must be included on the back of the volunteer's time sheet.

Without all three of these, a driver will not be reimbursed.



ODOMETER

To record an odometer reading, a driver must report the actual mileage on his/her car before leaving home. When he/she reaches his destination (by the most direct route), he/she then records the mileage again. *This must be signed and submitted to the Senior Corps office only once, since the distance between those two points will not change.* The Senior Corps staff will determine the miles driven, double it (for the round trip), and reimburse the driver at \$.10 per mile each day that trip is made (up to the daily cap; see Section 4.2.)

A driver who transports another volunteer to work will be paid for actual mileage, and should record the odometer reading before leaving home and again when he/she reaches his destination. This will reflect the miles driven out of his/her way to pick up the other volunteer. The rider should not be asked to pay, since the mileage to his/her house is already being paid to the driver.

A driver who transports other volunteers living at the same address (as in the case of high-rise apartments) will be reimbursed \$.50 per day per volunteer transported. The payment will be made directly to the driver, not to the rider, based upon the driver's statement on his/her time sheet. Spouses riding together will be reimbursed for actual mileage only.

A driver who insists that a rider pay him/her (in addition to being reimbursed for travel by the Senior Corps programs) not only puts his/her own reimbursement in jeopardy, but may risk his/her position in the Senior Corps as well.

An odometer reading must be on file for every destination in order for the driver to be reimbursed. For example, he/she may work at one volunteer station, travel to another destination for in-service meeting, and drive to a third spot for a volunteer recognition event.

In order to be paid for driving to all three destinations, the volunteer must submit odometer readings for each destination.



STATEMENT

Once a signed odometer reading is on file in the Senior Corps office, a volunteer may be reimbursed for each trip to that destination merely by stating *on the back of the time sheet*:

*I drove to work (number) days this month. --John Doe*

If Mr. Doe drove to his volunteer station 15 days and to in-service training 1 day, he would state:

*I drove to work 15 days , and to in-service 1 day this month. --John Doe*

Based on the odometer readings already on file, Senior Corps staff would know how much to reimburse him for each destination.

If Mr. Doe transports another volunteer living at the same address, he should state:

*I drove to work 15 days , and to in-service 1 day this month. I transported Mary Jones, of this address, 16 days. --John Doe*

Drivers must be careful to request reimbursement only for the actual number of days they worked, as reflected on the time sheets. If they usually are paid mileage for picking up a rider, they must make sure the rider worked before claiming that transportation. On days the rider does not work, the driver will be paid from his house directly to the volunteer station, based on an odometer reading which must be submitted.

### Bus Riders

Volunteers who ride a city bus will be reimbursed for the actual amount they paid. On the back of his time sheet, John Doe should state:

*I rode a city bus (number) days this month, for (cost) each day. --John Doe*

City bus riders who are transported to in-service by another volunteer should not pay the rider, nor should they ask for reimbursement.

Persons riding with another volunteer should not pay the driver, nor should they ask for travel reimbursement. Drivers will be paid directly for transporting these volunteers, based on actual mileage.

