

## Discussion Guide for Grantee Staff

Thank you for agreeing to speak with us today. As (program staff) may have told you, we work for a research company called ICF, and Senior Corps leadership has asked us to help them better understand how their programs are working. To that end, we are talking with Senior Corps volunteers, program sponsors, and other partners to learn about their experiences and perspectives. In particular, we're interested in hearing your thoughts on (name of the new SC project), including why you adopted this program, how it has affected your organizations operations, and what effect it has had on the community you serve. We prepared a number of discussion questions, but please feel free to offer any additional thoughts you have about your experience, even if they're not a direct response to our question. We anticipate that these questions will take no more than 20 minutes of your time.

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

#### *Motivation for Applying to New Program*

Why did your program initially decide to apply for a Senior Corps program grant?

- How did you hear of the competition for the grant program?
- When did that process take place? How long did it take to decide to apply?
- Who was involved in this decision? Were there different opinions about whether or not to apply to a Senior Corps program?
- Did you consult with your other community partners about the decision to apply to a Senior Corps program? What were their reactions?
- What were the needs of the community that led you to want to apply for a Senior Corps program grant?
- Were you familiar with CNCS when you decided to apply for a Senior Corps grant?
- For FGP, SCP Programs, or RSVP grantees serving same service area as former grantee) To what extent did your Senior Corps program retain the structure of the Senior Corps grantee that had previously served in that location?
- What was the gap between former grantee relinquishment and the implementation of your new grant program? Did this service gap result in any community or organizational challenges?

How did you choose to apply for (*Senior Corps program*)?

- Why did you choose to implement a program related to (*insert Senior Corps program name*)?
- In what ways is your Senior Corps program aligned with your organizational mission? How does the program fit into your organization as a whole?
- Did you experience any challenges in the planning phase? If so, please describe them and how you addressed them.
- Did you consult with any experts or other Senior Corps grantees or CNCS State Office personnel when designing your program? If so, with whom did you consult?

### PROJECT MANAGER

### *Program Implementation*

When you introduced your Senior Corps program, how did you recruit new staff specifically for helping to implement your new program?

- How many new staff did you recruit? In what roles?
- What do you look for in these staff, and has it been easy or challenging to find such people?
- Please tell me about how you trained your staff to implement the Senior Corps program. Who conducted the training? Did you develop your own training materials?
- What has worked well with developing staff in your Senior Corps program? What has been challenging?

To what extent is your Senior Corps grant program integrated in your organization's broader mission?

- Did your organization encounter any challenges in meeting the administrative requirements of being a Senior Corps Grantee?
- What was your perception of readiness to administer the grant before starting compared to now?
- Have you had any challenges with compliance or submission of data?
- Please describe your interactions with your local CNCS State Office. What State Office support is useful as you implement your program?

### *Motivation for Applying to New Program*

Do you have experience managing any other CNCS grant funded programs or different (non-CNCS) national service programs? If so, how did this knowledge/experience affect the design/implementation of your new SC program? How is managing a CNCS grant different from other national service grants?

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

### *Program Implementation*

How have you recruited volunteers to implement your Senior Corps grant program?

- What attributes do you look for in volunteers to implement your Senior Corps program?
- Has implementing a new Senior Corps program made it easier or more difficult to recruit volunteers? How so?
- Were any of the volunteers involved with the former Senior Corps grantee that had previously served in that location? Did you intentionally target volunteers from the former grantee? If so, how did you work with the former grantee to make the connection with these volunteers?
  - (If yes) What have they had to say about the transition between sponsor organizations?
- Do you think you are looking for Senior Corps volunteers with a similar profile as those who volunteered with the previous grantee? In what ways are they similar or different?
- How do you keep track of volunteer retention?
- Do you gather information from volunteers about what they like/dislike about the program? Why they leave?

FINANCIAL MANAGER

### *Effects of Adopting a new Senior Corps Program*

How has the sponsor organization implemented the new program more or less successfully than the previous grantees?

- Has implementing this new program brought in any additional funding beyond your Senior Corps grant? If yes, what aspect of Senior Corps attracted the new funder to your organization? Are any of these funders associated with the former grantee?
- (For Sector 1 grantees [smaller grant sizes]) How do you operate with a comparatively small grant size? Do you rely on non-CNCS resources to operate your new SC program? Why did you elect to pursue a grant of this size?

## SENIOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER

### *Effects of Adopting a new Senior Corps Program*

What “big-picture” insight do you have on your experience with Senior Corps?

- What benefits have you experienced as an organization from implementing a new Senior Corps program?
- Who are the main community beneficiaries of your Senior Corps project?
- Looking specifically at direct beneficiaries of the Senior Corps project, what are the positive outcomes as a result of your program? How do you measure these benefits?
- What has been the most challenging part about implementing a Senior Corps project? How have you been addressing or dealing with this challenge?
- What would happen in your community if you decided not to continue as a sponsor?

### *Future Plans/Final Comments*

- Are you planning to make any changes to your Senior Corps program in the near future? If so, what changes and why?
- How viable do you think the program is? Do you have any plans to scale up your Senior Corps program? How do you plan to do so? Do you have a sustainability plan in place?
- Given what you know now, is there anything you would do differently in the way you have implemented your Senior Corps project?

