

**AmeriCorps Seniors Evaluation:
SDP Volunteers Interview Protocol**

Introduction

My name is _____ and I am a researcher at JBS International, and this is my colleague _____ at Education Northwest. Thank you so much for volunteering to take part in this interview with us. I know you are busy, and I appreciate you taking the time to join me for this conversation today. I also want to introduce my colleague _____ who will take notes during our conversation.

Introduction

To briefly introduce you to the purpose behind this discussion: Our conversation today is part of a national evaluation that AmeriCorps Seniors is doing to build a deeper understanding of efforts to scale and sustain the AmeriCorps Seniors Demonstration Program (SDP) to expand the impacts to reach more people. This evaluation will also examine outcomes of the SDP activities on volunteers. JBS International is an independent contractor. The information we gather is for the purpose of the evaluation. The report will not identify you or your volunteer program. The report may contain some quotes, but neither you or your organization will be identified with the quote. Our conversation will take about **30 minutes**.

Each of you received a consent form. Do you have any questions about the consent form? Could you please confirm that you are willing to participate in this conversation today?

Confidentiality

To help us focus on our conversation, I would like your permission to record the conversation to facilitate transcription and analysis. (if yes, switch on the recorder)

The recording is to help me focus on our conversation, and to be sure that I report your experiences accurately. The recording and our conversation today will be kept confidential. The notes from the interview will not include any personally identifiable information about you. Again, we will present the evaluation results in summary, and not for any specific grantee or organization. Please provide candid answers. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, you do not have to do so, but we would like to capture everyone's insights. It is important that only one person speaks at a time. In order for people to feel comfortable sharing information, we ask that you not share what your colleagues have shared with those not in the discussion today.

Section 1. Volunteer Experience and Satisfaction

There are no right or wrong responses to the questions. You can speak openly about your experiences. If you don't feel you can answer a question, that is okay, but please try to provide as much information as you are able. Do you have any questions before we start? OK, let's begin.

To start, please briefly introduce yourself – state your name, where you volunteer, and, if you wish to share, a reason that you decided to become a volunteer.

Now, we are going to ask you some questions about **your AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer experiences, and the support** you received to serve your community.

1. Could you please tell us about your volunteer experience? What are some typical things you do when you volunteer?
 - a. What **types of service activities do you do as a volunteer?** Are these new or different service activities to you (Moderator: examples could include tutoring using Zoom or using other technology, helping at vaccine locations, working with to distribute PPE during Covid)?
 - b. Could you briefly share with us how you provide services to your clients?
[Moderator: This question is asking how volunteers provide service activities to beneficiaries: in-person; remote – virtual, phone call, Zoom; hybrid – in-person and remote?]
 - c. Could you share **how your program keeps you engage with volunteering** (i.e., program staff check-ins or provides updates quarterly, staff trainings online or conference calls, in-person meetings or events, send newsletters/emails)?
 - a. How did staff keep you engaged **during the pandemic?** (i.e., program staff calls to check-in or provide updates, staff trainings online or conference calls, sent newsletters/emails)?
 - d. In which ways do you think your **service activities affected your clients?**
 - a. What made your service activities successful?
 - b. What are the lessons learned to maximize positive impacts on your clients?

We are interested in learning about how you benefit from your work as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer.

2. **[Moderator:** Listen and probe for programmatic components that affect volunteer satisfaction, health and psychosocial outcomes, such as physical and mental well-being.]

Using the chat function/whiteboard/etc., please write down 2 or 3 positive benefits you have experienced as a result of your volunteer work. [Could provide an example or two to get started, e.g., “making friends”, “feeling more physically fit/able to walk more”, or “feeling a sense of purpose”]

Now, let's discuss what you wrote.

- o Can you share more about how AmeriCorps Seniors currently helping you experience these benefits from volunteering?
 - o How might AmeriCorps Seniors increase or expand your experience of these benefits from volunteering?
3. What have you enjoyed about your current volunteer experience?
4. What has been challenging about your current volunteer experience?

5. We're curious to know how the Covid-19 pandemic may have affected your AmeriCorps volunteer experience. Could you please share how the pandemic affected your volunteer work?

Section 2. Volunteering During COVID

6. We know that the pandemic was a time of social isolation for many. How did your volunteer experience affect your sense of connection and belonging during the pandemic?
7. In which ways, if any, do you feel that your AmeriCorps volunteer experience benefitted you during the pandemic?
- How well do you feel your volunteer role fits your skills and interests?
 - Have you developed any new interests or skills as a result of being an AmeriCorps volunteer?

Section 3. Grantee + Staff Capacity, Training and Community Relational Care

8. What type of AmeriCorps Seniors trainings do you receive as a volunteer?
- Which trainings have been the most useful?
 - What additional training do you think you need to carry out your work?
9. What are some of the ways that your organization **supports you** as a volunteer? Examples might include, paying you back for certain volunteering expenses, flexibility in the volunteering schedule, flexibility in service delivery to clients (remote, in-person, hybrid), well-being check ins, personal development opportunities, etc.
- Which of these supports have been most helpful in doing your volunteer work?
 - Are there other ways that your organization could support you?

Section 4. Closing

10. Would you like to see **this program continue**? [*Moderator: Would you recommend volunteer work through the AmeriCorps program to your peers? Why or why not?*]
11. Of all the things we've discussed today, what would you say are the most important points you'd like to express?

[Moderator: Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this discussion! This has been very helpful. Your thoughts and opinions will form an important part of this study to understand the effects of COVID and its implications for AmeriCorps Seniors program.

If there is anything you would like to share with us or any concerns you have regarding this interview, you can call me at _____ or email _____.