AMERICORPS TELESERVICE:
A BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

October 2018
Teleservice Overview
Teleservice is a term used for AmeriCorps as it relates to “telework,” serving or working from home or off-site from the member’s normal service location where a supervisor is unable to physically be present to verify hours. CNCS strongly discourages teleservice, but there may be rare situations when it is appropriate.

CNCS Guidance
CNCS last issued guidance on teleservice on January 19, 2017 titled “2017.01: AmeriCorps State and National Interim Guidance – Teleservice”. This guidance can be found on the CNCS website and ASC Basecamp.

Highlights from the guidance:

- **Teleservice should be rare**, if ever, and involve appropriate documentation, supervision and oversight.
- In the unique situations in which a grantee determines that teleservice is appropriate the grantee should **establish a policy** addressing the following:
  - Written authorization for teleservice in advance
  - Expectations of the communication requirements between supervisors and teleserving members
  - Mitigation of the increased risk of time and attendance abuse
  - Appropriate supervisor including validation of the activities to be performed, and
  - Verification of hours claimed
- The grantee may need to update its insurance coverage to address legal liability attribution for incidents that occur during teleservice.

State Service Commission Policies
State service commissions may want to set their own state policies regarding teleservice to reflect CNCS guidance and any additional state-specific requirements they wish to impose. For example, some states may decide to never allow teleservice and/or only in unique circumstances, such as:
- Inclement weather (i.e. snowstorm preventing members from going into worksite due school cancellation)
- Service site is closed for unforeseen circumstances (i.e. school district site has a teacher strike)
- State or federal declared disaster impacting the member’s service site
- Reasonable accommodation request for a disability (in which case you would follow appropriate disability laws and seek guidance accordingly)

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If a state service commission does allow teleservice, the commission should work with its subgrantees to ensure they have a policy in place reflecting the requirements from CNCS and **proper documentation for any approved teleservice**. There is a risk of the grantee being accused of certifying false hours for members and severe consequences so state service commissions and subgrantees should strongly consider whether the benefits outweigh the risks to allowing teleservice.

It is encouraged state service commissions review the OIG report on teleservice for more information and context on teleservice issues:

With compliance-related questions, state service commissions should contact their CNCS Program Officer. For questions on this guide, please contact a staff member with ASC.