

ASN 07-003

Policy on Special Condition for Timekeeping for Professional Corps Programs

Background

Section 122 (a) (8) of the National and Community Service Act defines a Professional Corps program as a “program that recruits and places qualified participants in positions—

(A) as teachers, nurses and other health care providers, police officers, early childhood development staff, engineers, or other professionals providing service to meet educational, human, environmental, or public safety needs in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals;

(B) that may include a salary in excess of the maximum living allowance authorized in subsection (a)(3) of section 12594 of this title, as provided in subsection (c) of such section; and

(C) that are sponsored by public or private nonprofit employers who agree to pay 100 percent of the salaries and benefits (other than any national service educational award under subtitle D of this subchapter) of the participants.”

Representatives from these programs have requested relief from the AmeriCorps policy that defines timekeeping requirements. In particular, they have requested relief from the requirement that members’ hours be documented with weekly timesheets. This requirement is burdensome and in many cases leads to programs having to maintain two time and attendance systems.

In addition, this requirement results in AmeriCorps Professional Corps members being treated differently than their non-AmeriCorps professional colleagues who are only required to comply with timekeeping rules of the profession and the employer. Finally, generally the time commitment for Professional Corps, which might consist of preparation time, classroom time, and professional development activities for a teacher corps for example, meets or exceeds the minimum number of hours required to earn an education award.

What is the purpose of the new policy?

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the administrative burden for certain Professional Corps programs and members. This policy recognizes that the timekeeping systems used by some Professional Corps organizations and operating sites would satisfy the time and activity standards required of grantees under OMB cost principles, thereby obviating the need for additional time sheets.

What is the new policy?

A Professional Corps operating site will not be required to maintain the member timesheets that are required of AmeriCorps grantees, if the Professional Corps legal applicant’s request and rationale for using an alternative professional timekeeping system

is approved by the Corporation as consistent with the requirements under the applicable OMB cost principles.

What is the new procedure?

A Professional Corps legal applicant will be given the option, after this policy is implemented and then at the start of each grant cycle, to request a special condition that will release the program from maintaining separate weekly timesheets for their Professional Corps AmeriCorps members. In order to qualify, the legal applicant must demonstrate and document that its members will meet the minimum number of hours required to earn the applicable education award by fulfilling the normal duties of the profession, or by a combination of normal duties and other professional opportunities sponsored by the program. The legal applicant must also describe how its service sites will certify total hours served at the completion of each member's term.

The Professional Corps program must submit its request for this special condition to the designated Corporation program officer who will review and make a recommendation to the Deputy Director. If the request is recommended for further consideration by the Deputy Director, the Office of Grants Management will carry out final review. The Office of Grants Management will determine if the Professional Corps request adequately documents that the program design and the planned professional activities will result in sufficient hours to earn the applicable education award, and describes an adequate method of certification. Upon approval, the Office of Grants Management will add the special condition to the grant award.

If the request for this special condition is approved, the Professional Corps program will require that its members follow the time and attendance practices as approved in the request. At the end of each member's term of service, the program must certify that the member has completed all professional obligations and has served at least the minimum required number of hours to earn the applicable education award.

Professional Corps grantees that do not apply for the special condition, or that apply and are not approved, will be required to meet the timekeeping requirements in the grant provisions applicable to grantees that do not qualify for the special condition.

When does this policy go into effect?

July 16, 2007.