



Making A Difference For Generations



Impact Guide

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Table of Contents

Introduction Letter from Senior Corps Director	3
What Is Senior Corps Week?	4
How to Tell Your Story	5
Telling Your Story through Photos and Videos	9
Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	11
Tips on Working with the Media	15
How to Conduct Media Outreach	17
Ideas to Generate Media Coverage	19
Using Social Media to Tell Your Story	22
Plan an Event to Reach Media	25
Action Guide: Send Letters and Care Packages to Our Troops	27
Action Guide: Train Your Neighbors to Prepare for Disasters	31
Action Guide: Plan a Book and School Supply Drive	34
Frequently Asked Questions	37

Introduction Letter from Senior Corps Director

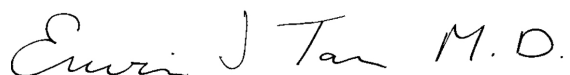
Dear Senior Corps Leader,

Senior Corps volunteers aged 55 and over are improving the lives of millions of our most vulnerable citizens by mentoring students, helping frail seniors stay independent, working on environmental projects, and helping Americans pick up the pieces following devastating natural disasters. Through RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program, Senior Corps is impacting our nation in substantive ways and making life better for those in need in our communities. This is a story you need to share with your community, now more than ever, during Senior Corps Week and throughout the year.

The *Making a Difference for Generations Impact Guide* provides you with information and templates to help communicate the good work you are doing in your community. You'll find information on how to tell your Senior Corps story, how to share public service announcements with your local media, and how to plan community events and activities. In addition, you'll find target Senior Corps Week tools such as template press materials.

We hope you will use the resources provided to organize activities that meet your program's needs and tell the important story of Senior Corps' impact in your community. All of the resources and information in this toolkit guide are available at www.GetInvolved.gov.

Sincerely,



Erwin J. Tan M.D.

Erwin Tan, M.D.
Director, Senior Corps

What is Senior Corps Week?

Senior Corps Week is a time for Senior Corps programs to celebrate the important impact more than 340,000 volunteers have on our nation. During this special week we recognize not just the durability and effectiveness of Senior Corps' legacy – but also the unique ability that Americans 55 and over possess to use their wisdom, professional skills, and experience as they cultivate and nurture the kind of change that makes a lasting generational impact.

Senior Corps Week is designed to create awareness and recognition of senior service as well as to thank community partners and volunteers for the contribution they are making in their communities. Across the country Senior Corps volunteers and adults aged 55 and over are mentoring and tutoring children, responding to natural disasters, and helping other seniors stay independent.

There so many stories to tell– from RSVP's work improving communities– to Foster Grandparents improving the lives of children, and Senior Companions helping those in need of a friend and advocate. To help you tell your story, there are several marketing materials available again this year that you can use as part of a local community event and for outreach during the Week:

- **Decals** to be used on car, home, or office windows
- **Stickers** for use on marketing materials, cars, bulletin boards, and giveaways
- **T-Shirts** for your Senior Corps Week events and projects.
- **T-shirt Artwork (PDF)** for creating t-shirts and other materials.
- **Postcards** to communicate details or to raise awareness at planned events
- **Bookmarks** to give away at events to promote Senior Corps and your local program
- **Get Involved public service announcements (PSAs)**, television and radio spots available for use with local media.

In addition to these materials, the resources available in this toolkit guide will help you share your story, spread the word through PSAs, and plan a local event or activity. All Senior Corps Week materials are available at www.GetInvolved.gov.

How to Tell Your Story

Senior Corps programs need to share the great work being done by their volunteers in communities across the country. Whether highlighting the significant bond between a senior volunteer mentor and a struggling young student or the life-saving rescue work of RSVP volunteers after a natural disaster, there are some key elements to keep in mind to tell your story. What are examples of the work seniors in your program are doing? For example:

- **Mentoring children**
- **Cleaning the community through environmental programs**
- **Helping seniors stay independent**
- **Lending a hand to communities devastated by natural disasters**
- **Serving the military, veterans, and military family community**

To get started, you may want to ask your volunteers to think of moments that have touched them or times their positive impact on the community was especially clear. Once you have an example in mind, compile the key elements of a compelling story:

- **Strong messages:** A strong message helps your audience stay focused and remember the story's impact. For most Senior Corps stories the main message will be: Senior volunteers in our community are making a difference for generations.
- **Supporting facts:** Supporting facts or statistics in your story provide evidence of your volunteers' impact and helps your audience remember the story. When looking for supporting facts, consider using facts that: clarify the problem that you are solving, illustrate the importance of your work, show evidence of success, and can be easily quoted and remembered by others. Try not to overload your story with numbers because too much data in one story can overwhelm your audience.
- **Anecdotes and inspirational content:** Making your story personal will help your audience emotionally connect to the content. Make sure you address the personal and emotional aspects of your story. How does the volunteer feel about the work he or she is doing? How has the impact the volunteer made improved the lives of those in the community?

We Want to Hear from You!

CNCS is looking for amazing volunteer stories for our websites and national media outlets. Submissions should include:

- **A 300- to 500-word**
- **City, state, and program in subject line**
- **Word format document**
- **Author contact (email & phone)**

Photo Submission Checklist

Whether you're pitching your story and photo to the local media or submitting a photo to CNCS, it's important to include the following information with your photo submission:

- ✓ **Title**
- ✓ **Byline**
- ✓ **Date**
- ✓ **City, State**
- ✓ **Program (RSVP, FGP, SCP)**
- ✓ **Grantee/Program Name**
- ✓ **Short quotes that support your main message**
- ✓ **Facts that support your main message**
- ✓ **Attach up to three digital photos to illustrate your story (JPEG format)**



Photo Caption Instruction: When possible include the program name, brief description of action in the photo, names, locations, and date (month/day/year).

Example Caption: Foster Grandparent, Suzy Smith, reads to Sally, one of her foster grandchildren at the Apples Preschool program, 10/06/11.



Additional Writing Tips

- **Use short paragraphs.** Shorter paragraphs are easier to read.
- **The first paragraph is the most important.** It should be brief, clear, and to the point to quickly engage the user. One-sentence paragraphs are encouraged.
- **Write in an inverted pyramid style.** Place the most important information at the top, extra info toward the bottom.
- **Use subheadings to clarify the subject of various sections on a page.** Users want to skim and scan for information. Headings help this process immensely.
- **Link related keywords instead of using “Click here”.** Example: Use “Find a volunteer opportunity near you” instead of “Click here to find a volunteer opportunity near you”.
- **Link to relevant information.** If you mention a program, link to it. If you include an email address, make it an email link. Don’t make people search for something that you mention if it already has its own page.
- **Use bold and italics sparingly.** Bold should be used for headings and then sparingly for emphasis. Too much bold makes text harder, not easier, to read.
- **Do not underline text.** On the web, underline = link.
- **Use all caps very sparingly.** Research shows all caps are harder to read.
- **Don’t try to emphasize too much.** If you use bolded headings, short paragraphs, and bulleted lists, you should not need to rely on italics, all caps, or underlining for emphasis. These styles look messy and compete for the user’s attention.



Writing Your Story: Questions to Get You Started

- How long has this program been in operation?
- What is your mission?
- What are some of the challenges?
- What constituency does this program serve?
- What are some of the most memorable moments?
- Have any special connections been made?
- Have any service recipients become volunteers themselves?
- Tell us about one (or a few) of your most colorful, dedicated, and unique volunteers.
- What makes seniors great volunteers? Why are seniors uniquely qualified to serve the group cared for by this program?

Interview Questions for Senior Corps Volunteers

- What is your name?
- How long have you been a volunteer with _____ program?
- How did you learn about this program and/or Senior Corps?
- What inspired you to volunteer with _____ program? What inspires you to keep volunteering?
- What does a regular day of volunteering look like for you?
- Had you been a volunteer before? Where?
- Has there been one experience or moment that has stood out in your time volunteering? Tell us about it.
- What have you learned from your time with _____ program?
- Do you feel you've made a difference in the lives of the people you serve? How?
- What would you say to encourage others to volunteer?

Telling Your Story through Photos and Videos

Nothing tells a story better than a compelling photo or video. Using photography to highlight the importance of their work is a fun and easy way to share the Senior Corps story. Use photos and videos to highlight activities by posting them on your organization's website, sharing them with the media, or submitting them to CNCS. If you have a camera, then you can get started! Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind while taking photos:


1. Use both the foreground and the background to tell the story. While your focus might be on a volunteer, be sure that the background provides context for where they are and why they are there. Fill the frame with relevant people and objects by moving closer, zooming in, or finding new ways to compose the photo.

2. You're the director! Generally, people having their photograph taken want to be helpful and for the photo to turn out well. Suggest that they stand in different places or take different positions based on what you are seeing through the lens.

3. Take lots of photos. Take a range of photos including close-ups, wide shots, new angles, varying layouts (horizontal and vertical), and different expressions (smiling, serious). Snap a few photos with the subject not looking directly at the camera. It's always better to have more options later than not enough. You can also try using the Rule of Thirds which means placing the subject of the photo off-center (either to the left or right, or to the top or bottom of the frame).

4. Encourage your subject throughout and explain the broader goal. Offering positive feedback (That looks great!) and talking through the process (Can we try from one more angle?) can make the experience more enjoyable for your subjects and result in better photos. Tell them how these photos will help to share the importance of service and volunteering with more people.

5. Plan your shots. Don't be afraid to walk (or drive) around the project area to see what shots might work best. Also, photos come out better in the morning and late afternoon (pre-dusk is called the golden hour) as the shadows can create depth and mood. Photos taken at midday when it's very bright can sometimes seem washed out. Always be aware of where the sun is – don't shoot into it or faces will appear in shadow, but also don't shoot with it directly behind you or your subjects will be squinting.



6. Capture high-resolution images. Set your digital camera to the highest resolution available. (Three to five megabytes or more for each image will deliver solid results.)

Most importantly, remember to take lots of photos, don't be afraid to try new things, and have fun! For tips on how to submit your photography story, please see "How to Tell Your Story" in this toolkit guide.

Video and Interview Tips

Capturing video footage of Senior Corps volunteers in action or taking the time to interview a volunteer is a great way to help tell the Senior Corps story. If you have access to a video camera, here are a few tips on how to take useful video footage:

- Try to find a place to film that's as quiet as possible while still ensuring that the background helps to tell the story by showing either the Senior Corps volunteers straight to camera or capturing footage of volunteers in action.
- A steady camera – ideally on a tripod – and an external microphone dramatically improve a video's quality.
- Give the interviewees a few moments to prepare by talking them through the types of questions you will ask.
- If only capturing footage of volunteers at work be sure to take video footage from various angles – try close-ups and wide shots. Do not zoom in and out but let the camera simply record each frame for roughly 30 seconds at a time.

Sample Prompts for Interview

- Please tell me your name and where you are from.
- What are you and the other [Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, RSVP] volunteers doing here today?
- How is your work helping the people and the community you are serving?
- Talk me through where you heard about [Senior Companion, Foster Grandparents, RSVP] and why you decided to get involved.
- Tell me the story of what the best or most rewarding part of this experience has been.
- How has service and volunteering affected your life and how you see things?

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Placing the Get Involved Public Service Announcements in your local media is another way to reach large groups of people. They offer a great way to work with local newspapers, radio, and television stations to communicate information about upcoming events, service opportunities, and other information of benefit to the community. PSAs are noncommercial ads or announcements designed to educate the public about a specific issue or cause. Radio, television, and print outlets run them free of charge on behalf of the public.

Visit www.tvaccessreports.com/getinvolved to learn how to get PSAs played in your area.

Steps to Follow before Pitching a PSA

Research Media Outlets: Before sharing a PSA with local broadcast and print outlets, find out about the media organization, its programming, and its audience, especially any public service efforts in which the outlet is currently involved.

Determine Appropriate Contacts: When seeking free time or space for PSAs, begin by building a relationship with the appropriate contact at each outlet with which you want to work. To determine the appropriate contact, call and ask for the name of the public service director or community affairs director. When compiling your list of contacts, be sure to collect the following information:

- Name and title
- Mailing address
- Email address
- Fax and phone numbers
- Specific instructions for submitting PSAs (e.g., what format the PSAs will need to be in). In the case of TV, call your local station first to see which format they require - Beta, Beta SP, 3/4 inch - making sure to send the correct format.

How to Pitch a PSA: Pitch memos are your first line of communication with a media outlet. They introduce the outlet to your program, promote the role of volunteers in your community, and suggest how the station or newspaper can inform the community about your program or event. These memos will be the key to capturing the attention of a public service director.



Share
your
success!

Preparing for a Pitch Call

- Check to see if your local station has received the PSA. You will find the list of TV stations that have received the PSAs here: <http://tvaccessreports.com/getinvolved/>.
- Once you know that your local TV or radio station has received it - or if you have a copy in hand - it's time to pitch it to the PSA director urging the media outlet to run it.
- If your local media are not included in the list, order copies of the PSAs by emailing <http://tvaccessreports.com/getinvolved/>. Copies can be sent either to you or directly to the media outlet. (Hand delivery has the benefit of adding a personal face to the campaign and thus increasing the chances that it will be used.)

Making a Pitch Call

- Call the media outlet and ask for the PSA director.
- Tell the PSA director that you work with [your program name] and that you need volunteers aged 55 and older.
- Provide the PSA director with information on your activities, including statistics on the number of people you've helped and amazing stories from your organization.
- Ask the PSA director to consider running the PSA.
- If the PSA director is unable to give you an immediate answer, let him or her know you will call back in the coming weeks.
- Remember to keep the conversation short and to the point.

Following Up a PSA Pitch

- After a week or so, a follow-up call is advisable. Ask the director if he or she needs any additional information. NOTE: Don't keep calling to ask when your PSA(s) will appear. Media outlets regard these calls as a nuisance, so they can be counterproductive.
- Send a thank-you note after your initial contact with the PSA director. This will serve as a reminder about your request.

- Be sure to monitor your local newspaper, radio, or television station and see if your PSA(s) has run. If the PSA(s) does not run within four weeks, follow up with a reminder phone call or postcard to see if there is something more that you can do.
- Track your PSA(s) once it begins airing so that you know whether your community is being exposed to your messages. This can be challenging because media outlets often use PSAs as filler content – running them when a paid spot is unexpectedly cancelled or during time periods that have not been claimed by advertisers. Do your best to keep track of where and when your PSA(s) is running.
- If your PSA(s) does run, call or write the local outlet and thank your contact at the outlet. Your personal thank you can go a very long way in getting a PSA director to continue to run your PSA(s). Remember, Public Service Directors have dozens of announcements sent to them, all of which are important to the organizations vying for time and space. Be professional and thorough in your approach and respect the director's time. If you can make him or her a part of your issue and make your story relevant to your community, you stand a good chance of getting your PSA(s) placed.





Sample Pitch Memo

Dear PSA Director:

Across the country and every day volunteers, aged 55 and older, are meeting real needs in their communities. They mentor and tutor children, respond to disasters, work on environmental projects, and help frail seniors stay independent. Even with millions of current volunteers serving, there is still great need in our communities. If we can tap into the skills and resources of our nation's baby boomers, we can solve many problems.

We need your help in engaging volunteers aged 55+. You can help by playing the enclosed Get Involved Public Service Announcement. Together, we can make a difference.

The Corporation for National and Community Service and its Senior Corps programs (RSVP, Senior Companions, and Foster Grandparents) encourage all Americans to serve so they may help solve our communities' most pressing problems.

For more information visit www.GetInvolved.gov. If you have any questions, please contact Anne Bentzel at abentzel@cns.gov.

Sample PSA Follow-Up Phone Call Script

Hi, my name is _____ and I am with _____ program. We help serve the community by _____, and we are part of the Senior Corps Program celebrating Senior Corps Week 2012 from May 7th through the 11th. I noticed that your station has received the PSA(s), and I want to ask you to please run it. I'd be happy to provide you with examples of how Americans can help by volunteering locally and even set up interviews with local 55+ volunteers who are making a tremendous difference in our community.

* If you prefer, you can also contact the media outlet by mail and include a fact sheet or brochure on your program.

*Suggest Co-Branding. Once you have garnered the interest of the PSA director, encourage the local station to its their logo and/or call letters to the PSA.

Tips on Working with the Media

Using the media is a great way to reach a large audience with your Senior Corps message. Below are some quick tips for generating media coverage during Senior Corps Week and throughout the year. If you'd like more help, see "How to Tell Your Story" on page 5.

Create a Media Plan: Plan how you will generate media to support your participation in Senior Corps Week or other event. Talk to other Senior Corps programs in your area to coordinate efforts and share ideas. Your plan should include:

- Timing of events and when you will conduct your media outreach
- Target media list
- List of Senior Corps media materials, including news releases and advisories that you will need to publicize your event or activity
- Main message for your program
- Primary spokesperson for your program
- Assigning responsibilities to specific individuals

Target Media as Soon as Possible: If you do not already have a good media list, create one. The list should include a phone number for each media outlet, direct lines to specific contacts, email addresses, and:

- Top editor, city editor, or community editor of local paper(s)
- News editor, assignment editor, station manager, public affairs producer of local TV stations
- News editor, station manager of local radio stations
- Producers of local public affairs shows on radio and TV stations
- Online editor/manager for locally focused websites and bloggers
- Editors of special interest weeklies or monthlies, such as business journals, regional publications, or special demographic (e.g., seniors, youth, college, minority)
- Know whom to pitch by reading the newspaper and watching the news to see who covers the issues your Senior Corps program addresses. If you can't find the contact, call the media outlet's assignment desk and ask who might be interested in covering a Senior Corps story.



Plan Your Events and Activities with the Media in Mind

For guidance, refer to “Plan an Event to Reach Media” and Action Guides, beginning on page 25 of this guide.

- Position your event as part of the national Senior Corps effort, using national statistics to tie your local efforts to national issues.
- Give local press enough lead time to plan their schedules to attend.
- Late morning and early afternoon are the best times to attract media
- Invite media to attend during the most interesting “newsworthy” time of your event.
- If calling broadcast media, make sure to call the morning of the event, as final coverage decisions are typically made on the same day.
- Designate a lead spokesperson who can be available to media onsite at the event. Provide contact information for that individual in case reporters have questions.
- Have logo identification for Senior Corps and/or your specific program(s) as a backdrop to the key photo opportunity.
- Have press kits available at the event giving specific details on who is participating and what’s on the agenda, including the Senior Corps fact sheet and information about your local program.
- If you have a website, put your press kit materials on your website too – reporters frequently go online to research stories and check facts.

Develop Story Ideas to Pitch to the Media: Focus on the successes your program and your Senior Corps volunteers have achieved in the last year. Put a face on the story. Tapping into individual stories can help you tell the larger story of the work Senior Corps volunteers are doing in your community. Remember to be creative and original when presenting your story to the media. Keep in mind visual aspects of stories that will interest TV stations.

Write Down Your Main Messages before Your Event: No matter how comfortable you are with talking about your program and Senior Corps, it is always helpful to prepare a short document (should fit on one page) summarizing the main points you want to convey. Share this with any staff or volunteers who could be approached by the media during your event to ensure that the organization communicates a consistent message.

How to Conduct Media Outreach

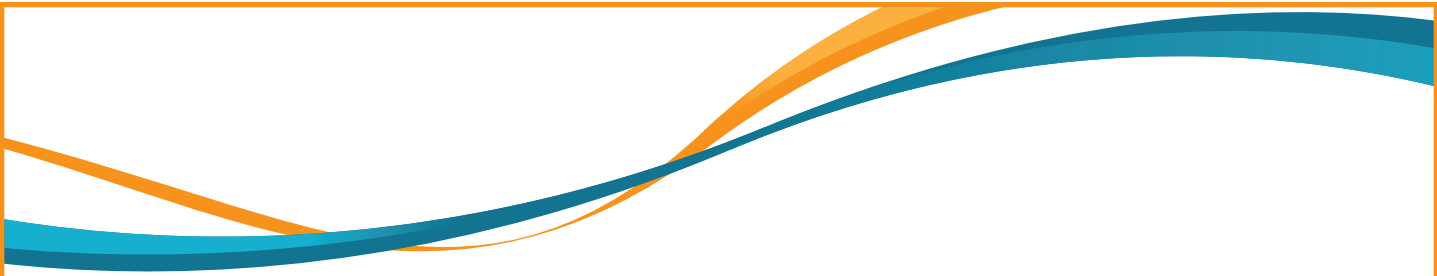
Step 1: Create Goals

The first step in conducting media outreach is to set your goals. These goals will help you determine your messages, as well as the media you'll want to target. When determining your goals, keep the following questions in mind:

- What are you trying to do? Recruit new volunteers? Increase program awareness?
- Who are your audiences?
- What are the main messages you want to communicate?
- If you could write the headlines, what would they be?
- What resources are needed to communicate with the media? Resources, including customizable templates, are included in this guide. The availability of resources like program staff and staff time is another factor to consider when thinking through your media outreach. Determining the resources you have available for media efforts will help you build on existing tools and opportunities and set realistic goals.
- What materials and tools do you already have from this toolkit guide or from previous media outreach opportunities?
- What media contacts and relationships do you already have?
- Which staff members are available and how much time can they devote to media-related activities?
- Can your partner organizations provide assistance, resources, or spokespeople?
- Do you have a list of volunteers, and alumni who could speak to the media?
- Are there community leaders or organizations that can speak for your program?

Step 2: Create a Timeline

Consider your program's calendar of events, the National Service calendar, and your local community calendar to determine what events and activities will provide the best media opportunities for your program. Be sure to include activities that all Senior Corps Programs take part in, such as 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, Senior Corps Week, Make a Difference Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Also consider the following questions to determine other newsworthy opportunities:

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- What activities and events are already planned to take place throughout the year?
 - Do certain activities traditionally attract more attention than others?
 - What activities or events best showcase your program’s strengths and contributions?
 - What activities are your volunteers most excited about?
 - Which activities involve collaboration with other organizations, businesses, or community members?
 - Will studies or results be released that you would like to promote?
 - What opportunities exist to collaborate with other programs?

Step 3: Implement Your Outreach

Once you have determined your goals, opportunities, and resources, you can set a strategy and adhere to a timeline. An outreach strategy will help you determine what, how, and when to communicate with the media. Keeping your overall media plan in mind, your strategy should:

- Identify who will be interested in the story.
- Identify which media outlets reach these audiences.
- Determine how to pitch or package the story as a newsworthy event .
- Identify key messages and spokespeople.
- Develop written materials to promote your program or event.
- Set a timeline for outreach.
- Determine a plan for tracking and follow-up.

The Corporation has *A Guide to Working with the Media* available on its website. This will provide you with more information about these steps. Read about ideas on how to get information to the media, identify and work with the right reporters, make the most of an interview, and communicate through Public Service Announcements.

Ideas to Generate Media Coverage

Getting the Television PSA Aired: The Corporation has released a new Public Service Announcement highlighting the Senior Corps programs and inviting other seniors to get involved. Volunteers can help get these spots aired by delivering them to local stations.

Become a Guest on Local Public Affairs Shows: Contact your local public radio or talk radio station and ask to be a guest on one of their shows. Offer them the new video or radio PSAs. Likewise, find the public affairs shows on your network affiliates and cable channels, including the public access channels.

Identify a Media Sponsor: One way to get media coverage is to secure a TV or radio station as a media partner. The partnership could include the station producing and airing promotional spots, having their on-air personalities speak at your event, engaging station employees in serving, or covering the project live. In researching potential partners, try to find the station with the broadest reach. The upside of a media partnership is that you can guarantee coverage; the downside is that it may cause other stations not to be interested.

Invite a Local VIP: To add to the media draw of your event, invite a local celebrity, elected official, or VIP. It can be the mayor, governor, your member of Congress, a local news anchor or weather reporter, or a business or community leader. Work with their communications staff on media outreach.

Pitch a Volunteer Feature Story or a Volunteer Profile: Tell a particularly compelling service story through the eyes of one volunteer. Newspapers are always looking for compelling human interest stories. Are any of your volunteers veterans of the Civil Rights movement or other historical events? How about someone who has overcome great odds to serve, or was helped by a mentor when he or she was younger and now wants to return the good deed? Senior Corps Week provides a great opportunity to highlight a story about a volunteer who has come out of retirement to test a part or full-time second career.

Show How Volunteers Are Tapping into Their Skills: Older Americans bring a lifetime of skills and experience as parents, workers, and citizens that can be tapped to meet challenges in communities across the country. As a way to fill critical voids in communities, Senior Corps volunteers offer valuable services. Highlight a story about a volunteer who was a former teacher, lawyer, or doctor and is now using those skills to change the lives of others.


Connect Your Project to Current News: Tell reporters how your project is related to current news. Show how your project is tackling tough problems that people in your area deeply care about – education, illiteracy, hunger, health, and crime. Find out who covers your issue beat and prepare a volunteer or beneficiary to be ready to tell his or her story.

Write a Letter to the Editor or Op-ed: Letters to the Editor are great ways to reach your target audience through the newspaper. They are also easy to write and get placed. Keep Letters to the Editor short and personal. Write about your Senior Corps experience, or thank volunteers for their service. Ask people or organizations that your Senior Corps volunteers have assisted to write letters relating their positive experiences. You can also submit a longer op-ed column. An op-ed can be written by a staff member, Senior Corps volunteer, or someone who has benefitted from the service of a Senior Corps volunteer. Check out the editorial pages of your local newspaper for information on the submission process.

Social Media: Expand how you share the Senior Corps story by participating in online networks; share pictures, videos, stories, and events; and tell your own story in long and short forms. Use your social media accounts to share the great work your program does year-round, whether it's through social networking, blogs, micro-blogs, picture sharing, event sharing, or video sharing. Using these communication vehicles can help spread the word of Senior Corps' success across multiple platforms.

Conduct a Forum or Community Discussion: Organize a forum or community discussion that is led by prominent people who can share the Senior Corps Program's story and its impact. Invite the public to listen to the experts and to respond by asking questions and commenting on what was presented. This is an opportunity to engage public officials, and the media, and to recognize the Senior Corps Program.





Highlight the Impact of Senior Service: Senior Corps volunteers make our communities safer, stronger, and healthier and improve the lives of millions of our citizens. Show the media how valuable Senior Corps services are in solving local community problems. Use facts and figures when possible to describe the impact Senior Corps volunteers are having.

Organize a Day of Recognition: Organize a day of recognition focused on the volunteers. Engage local VIPs, media, and public officials. Host a ceremony to share the story of Senior Corps and your program's work. Use the ceremony to recognize the volunteers and others

who are gathered for the day. Honor your volunteers with the President's Volunteer Service Award. The President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard – measured by the number of hours of service over a 12-month period or cumulative hours earned over the course of a lifetime. To learn more about this honor, visit: www.presidentialserviceawards.gov.

Showcase the Health Benefits of Service: Pitch your local media a story about a volunteer who has overcome significant health problems through service. There are considerable health benefits to volunteering. A report by the Corporation, *The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research*, found a significant connection between volunteering and good health. The report shows that volunteers have greater longevity, higher functional ability, lower rates of depression, and less incidence of heart disease. Research suggests that volunteering is particularly beneficial to the health of older adults and those serving 100 hours annually. According to the report:

- A study of adults aged 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities.
- Another study found volunteering led to lower rates of depression in individuals 65+.
- A Duke study found that individuals who volunteered after experiencing heart attacks reported reductions in despair and depression – two factors that have been linked to mortality in post-coronary artery disease patients.
- Two studies found that the volunteering threshold is about 100 hours per year, or two hours a week. Those who reached the threshold enjoyed significant health benefits.

Using Social Media to Tell Your Story

Your Website

If you have a website, use it to tell your story – the impact the program has had over the years in your community, especially how individuals have benefitted.

Facebook

A social networking service and website, Facebook has more than 750 million active users. After registering, users can create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics.

How to Create a Facebook Profile:

- 1 Go to <http://www.facebook.com>.
- 2 The home page Sign-Up box will prompt you for your name, email and password, sex, and your birthday. Click Sign-Up.
- 3 You will be asked to enter provided words for a Security Check. Retype the provided words in the Text in the Box field and click on Sign-Up.
- 4 You will be sent a confirmation email with a confirmation link and code. Click on the link to return to Facebook. You may be asked to enter the confirmation code, so keep it handy.
- 5 Click Complete Sign-Up.
- 6 Complete the three-step process to add friends that Facebook is suggesting, search for friends using your email address, enter profile information, and select a profile photo.

Editing Your Profile:

- 1 After these steps you will arrive at your home page. (Facebook calls this your News Feed.)
- 2 In the upper left-hand corner below your name is a link to Edit My Profile.
- 3 If you click this it will take you to a new page where you can enter more information about yourself. Please note: There is a navigation pane on the left side of the page that allows you to choose different parts of your profile to edit. You must click Save Changes at the bottom of the page before moving on to a new sections, otherwise all changes will be lost.
- 4 You now have an active profile on Facebook!

How to Create a Facebook Page

- 1** Go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>.
- 2** Select Company, Organization, or Institution and choose your category from the drop down menu (most likely a non-profit organization) then enter your organization's name.
- 3** Click Get Started.

Editing Your Page

In the upper right there is a link to Edit page. Click this to open a new page where you can enter more information. The navigation pane on the left allows you to choose areas of your profile to edit. Click Save Changes at the bottom before moving on to a new section. Once you have updated these sections you should see your updates reflected on the page.

Once You Have Created Your Page, "Like" the (National) Senior Corps Page

- 1** When logged onto Facebook, search for Senior Corps in the search box and click the first Senior Corps search result to open the Senior Corps Facebook page.
- 2** Click the Like! button.
- 3** You can also Like! the Senior Corps page as an individual from your personal profile page.

Posting Messages to Your Facebook Page

- 1** When logged in, type your status message into the What's on your mind? box and click the Share button when you are ready to post.
- 2** The post will be published on your Wall and in the News Feeds of your friends.
- 3** Add the @ symbol to link people to Senior Corps page!
- 4** Tagging Senior Corps with the @ symbol will link to the Senior Corps Facebook page.
- 5** Remember – you have to Like! the Senior Corps Facebook page first and select Senior Corps from the drop-down box that appears once you begin typing your post with the @ symbol.

Uploading Photos and Links to Your Facebook Page

- 1** Select Photos to post photos of you and your Senior Corps team on your profile or page.
- 2** Select Link to post links to websites or news articles that highlight you or Senior Corps volunteers from your program.
- 3** For further information on how to use the many features Facebook has to offer, Mashable's The Facebook Guide Book is an excellent resource.



Spread
the
word!

Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as “tweets.” Twitter has rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with 200 million users as of 2011, generating over 200 million tweets and handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day.

How to Sign Up:

- 1 Go to <http://www.twitter.com>
- 2 The homepage has a sign up box that will prompt you for your name, email and password. Be sure to enter your real name.
- 3 The next page will tell you whether or not your email address and password work and you will be able to create your Twitter Handle (the username you will go by on Twitter).
- 4 Once you have filled out the required fields click Create my account.
- 5 Twitter will give you some suggested people to follow, allow you to search for popular people to follow by interest and allow you to find your friends already on Twitter by utilizing your contacts on various email addresses.
- 6 You are all set to explore Twitter!

How to Tweet:

- 1 When logged into Twitter type a message, no longer than 140 characters into the Compose new Tweet box.
- 2 To link your message to other Twitter users simply add the @ symbol before their Twitter name.
- 3 To aggregate your Twitter messages with others users talking about the same topic (i.e., Senior Corps Week) use a hashtag
- 4 For example #SCweek will be used as the hashtag during Senior Corps Week.
- 5 Sample message using @ and #: Let’s celebrate @SeniorCorps Week and honor volunteers in our community #SCweek
- 6 For further information on how to use the many features Twitter has to offer, Mashable’s Twitter Guide Book is an excellent resource.

Plan an Event to Reach Media

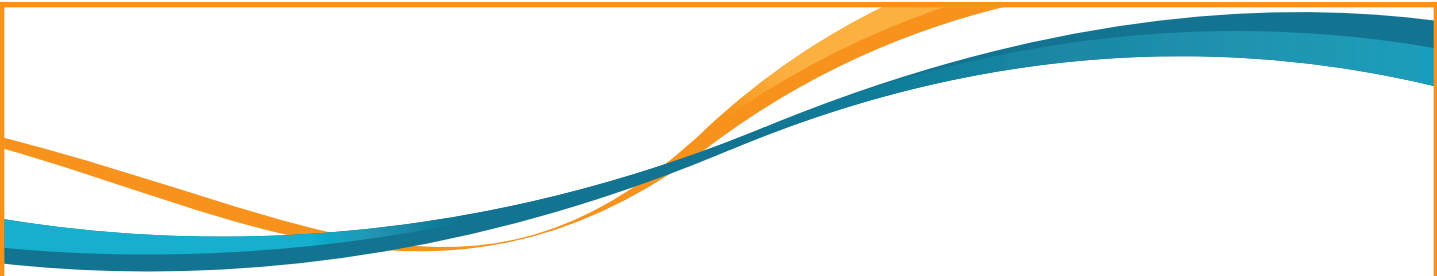
Hosting a local service event and inviting the media and stakeholders is a great way to get your program's mission and volunteers in the spotlight. This toolkit guide includes three ready-made service events called Action Guides (pages 27-36 of this guide). But whether you're planning your own event or following the Action Guide plans, there are a few essentials to planning any event including:

Identify Your Target Audience:

The first step to planning any event is determining your target audience – the person or group of people who can help meet the needs of your program and would benefit from learning more about Senior Corps programs. These could be elected officials, faith leaders, business leaders, or the media. If you don't already have a specific target audience in mind, brainstorm with a small group to create a list of influential people to invite to your event. Also ask if anyone in your program already has a relationship with any of the influential people on your list or members of their staff. Often the influential community leaders you will want to invite to your event will already have crowded schedules, so we encourage you to develop your target audience list and get in touch with key participants as soon as possible. Be flexible about the date and time of your event because you may need to build it around their schedules.

Helpful Tips for Scheduling an Event:

- Keep in mind that if you are interested in reaching out to members of Congress, they are usually in their districts during holidays and Congressional recesses, and often on Mondays and Fridays. You can find the congressional schedule by looking at the House or Senate websites (house.gov or senate.gov) or by calling the member's office. Schedules for governors, mayors, and state and local officials can generally be obtained by visiting their websites or calling their offices.
- Make sure that you are prepared before contacting the influential people's offices. Be ready to share information about your organization, the purpose of your event, and a range of dates when you would like to host it.
- Contact the appropriate office and ask for a scheduler or appointment secretary. Explain your purpose and the organization you represent. The staff will be more open to arranging participation if they know exactly what you wish to discuss, who else has been invited, and why you think their boss or supervisor would want to attend.

- 
- Be sure to follow up a few days later. These offices may process multiple requests per day, and the staff may not notice if your request goes unanswered.

Important Event Logistics to Keep in Mind:

- Identify a location that will be comfortable for the number of people that you anticipate will participate.
- Order any audiovisual equipment that will be needed if the event will be video recorded, audio recorded, or photographed, including microphones, if necessary.
- If providing refreshments, order them and make arrangements for their delivery.
- To build your audience, promote the event through your website, social media outlets, press releases, and word of mouth.
- Contact the media and invite them to attend [we will be providing template media materials soon that will help you to accomplish this task].

Preparing for the Event/Activity:

- Ensure that Senior Corps participants are prepared with information about their project and its impact in the community. Be clear on who will speak about what topic and what information you want to share.
- Have written materials available about your Senior Corps program and remember there are Senior Corps Week materials that are available for you to order and share with participants.
- Prepare press kits for the day of the event [see template press releases].

Event Day:

- Arrive early!
- Test audiovisual equipment before the event starts.
- Have materials for attendees to take with them afterward.
- Have a sign-in table for media with press kits.
- Within one week after the event, write thank-you letters and include any additional information that was requested by attendees. If possible, send a framed photo of the influential people who attended along with Senior Corps volunteers.

Action Guides: Letters and Care Packages to Our Troops

This Action Guide – Send Letters and Care Packages to Our Troops – provides you with the detailed planning tips you need to successfully host a service event.

Senior Corps volunteers have seen our nation through wars by serving as soldiers, nurses, doctors, factory workers, activists, entertainers, reporters, and in millions of other essential roles. There are still many opportunities to support our nation in battle by reaching out to those who stand on the frontlines of our current conflicts. One great way to do this is to organize Senior Corps volunteers to send letters and care packages to our military members.

Constructing Effective Letter and Care Package Campaigns

1. Discover

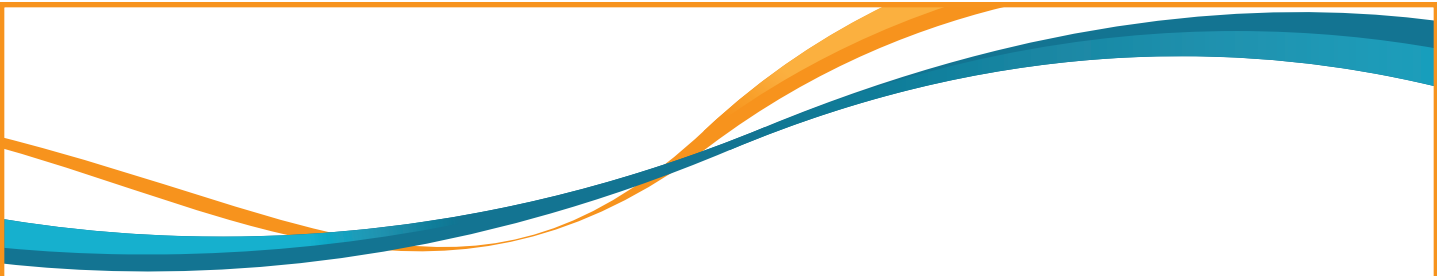
Whether you have service people close to your heart or no connection to them, you and your volunteers can get in touch with the troops and send them good wishes and tasty treats.

- First, you must find some recipients. Perhaps from among your family, friends, and neighbors, you can identify some soldiers stationed overseas. You can expand your list by writing to the entire battalion.
- Check out Operation Gratitude to get connected with soldiers. Or see if a local veterans organization such as the Veterans Administration Vet Center, American Legion, USO, or American Red Cross has a center in your area.
- Assemble an impressive list of men and women using these resources. Use these organizations to discover what kinds of supplies and goodies are most desirable.

2. Ready


Plan, prepare, and promote! The more people you have working together, the more soldiers you'll reach. And the more you seek out resources beforehand, the more you'll be able to include things like baked goods, mementos, dried fruits, or tea.

- Start off planning with folks you know, and ask them to tell others to join your efforts.
- Meet regularly, especially as the event approaches, and solicit input from everyone.
- Assign concrete tasks to keep everyone motivated and on track.
- Decide what you'll send soldiers based on recommendations from the organizations serving troops mentioned above.

- 
- Determine what kinds of shipping and packaging supplies you will need and how you will obtain them.
 - Brainstorm about the right kinds of greetings and topics to include in a letter.
 - Create a template for such a letter, and make copies for all of the team members.
 - Solicit funds from team members and/or others, as well as in-kind donations from businesses for the supplies you'll need.
 - If you're planning to include baked goods in your packages, decide what to make.
 - Purchase the necessary supplies and make sure to store any perishable goods.
 - Set goals for yourselves such as numbers of letters and/or care packages sent.
 - Record goals and make sure you can meet them. If your initial assessment turns out to be too ambitious or too meager, revise the goals so the whole team will feel great about what you accomplish.

Letter-Writing Tips

- Remain positive in your letters. Soldiers are under a lot of stress every day and like to hear positive stories that remind them of home.
- Remember that soldiers may be men or women, old or young, and of all ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- Do not discuss warfare or upsetting subjects. Remember, these letters are meant to brighten up their day.
- If you are writing a letter to an unknown soldier, start with "Dear Service Member."
- Be creative. Send photographs of your hometown, community activities, or favorite things from home.
- Let soldiers know why you think service is important and how much you appreciate their service abroad.
- Hand-written letters are more appreciated than typed. Just make sure they're legible.
- Write stories about your school and/or family, or share funny jokes.
- If you would like to hear back, make sure you include your return address. You may want to add your email address. Note that soldiers are not obligated to reply. Don't feel bad if they can't reply, as many of them are in challenging conditions.



Take
action as
a team!

3. Engage

It's time to act on that plan to reach out to our nation's servicemen and servicewomen.

- Make sure project leaders/coordinators are early, ready to greet arrivals.
- Provide clear instructions and constructive corrections as the service takes place.
- Hand out letter templates and set up comfortable writing stations.
- Set up areas to assemble care packages.
- Make any edible goods you intend to include.

Sending Letters

- Sending to soldiers you know: Individual letters only need a first class stamp on the envelope to reach deployed troops as they are sent to forwarding post offices within the US. Include the unit and APO/FPO (Air/Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office) address with the nine-digit ZIP code (if one is assigned). Click-N-Ship customers should be advised that the postal service and the military will continue to add and update valid APO/FPO addresses for your online labels.
- Include a return address: For packages, print on one side only with the recipient's address in the lower right portion or print a postage-paid label online with Click-N-Ship. (Please note that ZIP codes 093XX and 964XX are currently unavailable for electronic labels.)
- Examples:

SSGT Kevin Taylor	SGT Jane Doe
Unit 2050 Box 4190	CMR 1250
APO AP 96278-2050	APO AA 09045-1000
SGT Robert Smith	Seaman Joseph Doe
PSC 802 Box 74	USCGC Hamilton
APO AE 09499-0074	FPO AP 96667-3931
- Sending letters through Operation Gratitude: Individual letters do not have to be stamped or put into envelopes. Gather individual letters (You can put them in unsealed envelopes for privacy.) and place them in a larger mailing envelope or box. Send to: Operation Gratitude, 17330 Victory Blvd Van Nuys, CA 91406.

4. Assess

Step back and consider the great work you've done, the lives you've brightened, and the smiles you've generated. But you already know that no matter how large or dedicated your Senior Corps team is, our soldiers continue to be in harm's way and deserve our care.

- Consider this service a starting point. Apply the lessons you've learned to recreate what worked well and change what didn't quite cut it.
- Host an official debriefing meeting for team members after the event.
- Examine the goals you set for yourselves and consider which you met, exceeded, and didn't quite reach.
- Whom did your work impact? What did you accomplish? How did it feel?
- Ask everyone for their honest assessment of what went well and how to improve for next time.
- Consider what doing this work meant to you.
- If enough time has passed and any team members have received responses, ask them to share if the content isn't private.

5. Make It Last

We know you might not like to brag, but please do. You may inspire others to honor our troops once they hear what you accomplished. We're listening and want to know what you did and how you feel about it. Send your story to SeniorCorpsStories@CNS.gov.



Action Guide: Train Your Neighbors to Prepare for Disasters

This Action Guide – Train Your Neighbors to Prepare for Disasters – provides you with the detailed planning tips you need to successfully host a service event.

Unexpected events can turn an ordinary day into a life-threatening disaster, a familiar neighborhood into a dangerous and desolate space. We can't prevent all floods, tornados, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other weather-related problems. We can't even predict them with absolute certainty or accuracy. But we can ready ourselves and our neighbors so that emergency doesn't become tragedy. Being prepared to survive for three days, with adequate food, supplies, and shelter increases your chances of riding out whatever storm life throws at you. Copies of important documents and an evacuation plan are also musts for any disaster. Most of us know we should plan for the inevitable, but very few of us do. By educating yourself and modeling what needs to be done, your volunteer team can set a great example and pass information along to your neighbors. This way everyone will face the storm together, properly equipped to do so.

Complete a Disaster Preparation Project

1. Discover

Disasters are by nature unpredictable; that's part of what makes them so dangerous. However, past patterns do predict future events.

- Find out what kinds of weather-related events occur most where you live. Preparing for a flood requires a different approach than readying for an earthquake. If you know what to expect, you'll be better able to prepare adequately.
- Once you've understood your most likely sources of danger, investigate what you'll need beyond basic supplies to have on hand. Hurricanes may require evacuation - and with it a plan to get you and your neighbors away from the storm. Tornados generally call for waiting things out in specific, safer spaces. In addition to investigating location-specific perils, also consider the kinds of disasters that strike anywhere: house fires, sustained blackouts, or water-related emergencies.
- Nonprofit and government agencies such as the Red Cross and FEMA offer great information about what you need to have on hand for any and every disaster. Representatives from these or related organizations may even be available to speak to your group as part of your service event.



2. Ready

Once you've become a disaster preparedness expert yourself, you're ready to spread the knowledge and security that comes with it in service to your neighbors. To do it right, you need to plan, prepare, and promote. The more people you have working together, the more additional folks you'll be able to train. The more resources you are able to collect, the more supply kits you can assemble and provide to others.

- Start off planning with folks you know, and ask them to tell others to join your efforts.
- Meet regularly, especially as the event approaches, and solicit input from everyone.
- Assign concrete tasks to keep everyone motivated and on track.
- Scout out a location for your community training. Make sure it offers room for the crowd you anticipate and the assembled supplies you may choose to give away.
- Solicit funds from team members and/or others as well as in-kind donations from business for the supplies you'll need.
- Once you've completed your research on what you need, decide how you'll provide provisions. If it's impossible to obtain enough donations, you may need to give training and educational materials only so participants can purchase supplies.
- If you have the means to give away items, determine what supplies you will need and how you will obtain them. Typical supplies include nonperishable food, first aid kits, batteries, bottled water, access to photocopiers (for critical documents), flashlights, and hand tools.
- Purchase supplies prior to the service day so they're ready during the event.
- Set goals, such as number of people trained, kits supplied, and folks pledging to pass along what they've learned to others.
- Record these goals and make sure you can meet them. If your initial assessment turns out to be too ambitious or too meager, revise the goals so the whole team will feel great about what you accomplish.
- Publicize your training so the whole neighborhood can attend. Post flyers on telephone poles and community bulletin boards, place free ads in local papers, ask area businesses to spread the word, make announcements at school, church, or civic groups.



Go from
dreaming
to doing!

3. Engage

It's time to share what you've learned and to equip your community to weather any storm.

- Before conducting your community training, you'll need to make sure any handouts and/or supplies you intend to provide are ready. If the training is scheduled early in the day, this may require doing prep work the day before.
- Make sure project leaders or coordinators are at the site early, ready to greet arrivals.
- Provide instructions and corrections, if needed, as the service takes place.
- Set up your supplies in an orderly fashion, accessible to all.
- Provide information, allow time for questions, and create time and space for folks to meet and mingle.

4. Assess

Now that your event is happening, take a look (and a photo!) of the neighbors you've gathered and trained. This preparedness session is, as you know, only the beginning. Though you may have supplies and plans in place, you still need to make efforts to reach out to others who couldn't participate. Take the time to examine what worked well in this initial effort so you can apply lessons learned to the ongoing outreach to come.

- Host an official debriefing meeting for team members after the event.
- Examine the goals you set for yourselves and consider which you met, exceeded, and didn't quite reach.
- Whom did your work impact? What did you accomplish? How did it feel?
- Ask for assessments of what went well and how to improve for next time.
- Consider what doing this work meant to you.

5. Make It Last

We know you might not like to brag, but please do. You may inspire others to get themselves and others ready for disaster after they hear what you accomplished. Share your service story. We're listening and want to know what you did and how you feel about it. Email your story to SeniorCorpsStories@CNS.gov.

Action Guide: Plan a Book and School Supply Drive

It is vital that children learn to love reading and attending school. Years of life experience have taught you and your team that education is the key to a better life and that books and supplies are essential for helping children to love learning. As a parent, grandparent, or volunteer you know that excelling in education means going to school with the tools you need. Some are physical: pencils, pens, markers, notebooks, and in later years access to computers. Others are mental: a good night's sleep, a nourished body, a desire to learn.

No project can deliver to every student, but you can help meet the material needs of the students you're serving in your community. By sharing your own advice, encouragement, or words of wisdom in a short note you slip into the school supplies, your enthusiasm for education and service will spread to the person who receives your generosity.

Collecting Books and Supplies to Equip Schoolchildren to Excel

1. Discover

Decide whether you'll collect books or school supplies– or get ambitious and do both! Either way, you'll be donating essentials to children who lack access to them.

- Contact national book donation organizations for advice. Identify organizations in your community to find out about their book needs. Potential recipients include local libraries, preschools through high schools, and community organizations.
- Many pediatricians' offices or public assistance centers have children in their waiting rooms for long periods of time without any books. Once you've supplied these places with great literature, you can ask them to turn off the television so wait time is now learning time, transforming a mundane pastime into an engaging escape.
- Even if you aren't collecting books for a library, contact children's librarians in your area for advice. Most libraries have grade- or age-specific reading lists for patrons.
- Determine what grade level you seek to supply– lower grades require different materials than upper grades do. Contact schools for recommendations for students of the grade you've selected and ask if they have a summer reading list.
- Find appropriate recipients for the supplies and contact them about delivery. Candidates may include schools serving lower-income students, community centers catering to youth, family homeless shelters, or public assistance centers. Once you've decided what kind of drive you're doing and identified an exact recipient, you can pave the way for an incredible day of reaching out and making a difference.



Inspire
others
through
service!

2. Ready

- Start off planning with folks you know and ask them to tell others to join your efforts.
- Meet regularly and solicit input from everyone.
- Assign concrete tasks to keep everyone motivated and on track.
- Determine what kinds of supplies you will need for the activities you seek to do. This will depend, as detailed above, on the kind of drive you're conducting and the advice you've collected from librarians, teachers, or other experts.
- In addition to project-specific supplies, make sure to get materials for the notes you'll be including with the school supplies or in the books. This will include paper, pens, markers, crayons, or decorative elements.
- Solicit funds from team members or others and donations from businesses. Book publishers, for example, may have books they're happy to give away, book stores may provide goods, and local businesses may provide funds.
- Purchase needed supplies prior to the service day and have them ready to go.
- Set goals, such as the number of books or school supplies collected, number of kits or backpacks assembled, and/or number of organizations supplied.
- Record these goals and make sure you can meet them. If your initial assessment turns out to be too ambitious or too meager, revise the goals so the whole team will feel great about what you accomplish.

3. Engage

It's time to get together and assemble the school supplies and/or sort and deliver the books. Most importantly, stretch out your writing hand as you'll be crafting short notes to your gift recipients—encouraging them to read, write, think, question, listen, and explore.

- Make sure project leaders or coordinators are at the site early, ready to greet arrivals.
- Welcome everyone and discuss the purpose of the day—collecting books and supplies, encouraging reading, and serving as part of Senior Corps work.
- Sort school supplies into predetermined groupings, placing each in set containers.
- Group books according to their destinations.
- Craft short handwritten notes to put in with the school supplies or books.
- Deliver the supplies you've assembled.

4. Assess

You did it! You've not only provided educational tools, you've forged a connection, demonstrating to a stranger you care about learning not only in the abstract but as a critical advancement for him or her specifically. But this is only the beginning. Propelling students forward toward an enjoyable and fulfilling education will require ongoing effort. By considering what worked and didn't so far, you can take what you've learned about student needs, age-appropriate book choices, and organizing a team to make your future efforts an even greater success.

- Host an official debriefing meeting for team members after the event.
- Examine the goals you set for yourselves and consider which you met, exceeded, and didn't quite reach.
- Whom did your work impact? What did you accomplish? How did it feel?
- Ask everyone for their honest assessment of what went well and how to improve for next time.
- Consider what doing this work meant to you.

5. Make It Last

We know you don't like to brag but...please do! You may inspire others to do a book and school-supply drive once they hear what you accomplished. Share your service story. We're listening and want to know what you did and how you feel about it. Email your story to us at SeniorCorpsStories@CNS.gov.



Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a list of FAQs from Senior Corps programs across the country. CNCS' office of General Counsel carefully reviewed and prepared the following answers.

Our program's annual report shows the value of national and community service and is designed, in part, to persuade our community to support our program and other programs supported by the Corporation. Is this permitted?

The restrictions on legislative lobbying do not apply to efforts like this to educate the general public, provided that the materials are not specifically designed to generate lobbying activities.


What if I provide a factual, technical presentation to a legislator who is visiting our program and at the end the legislator makes an unexpected announcement that he or she has decided to co-sponsor legislation to support national service?

There is nothing wrong with hosting an informational site visit by an elected official. If your presentation is informational and focuses on a topic directly related to your organization's performance under a grant program, the fact that a legislator reaches and announces this conclusion spontaneously does not in itself make the presentation unallowable.

May a local program supervisor visit elected officials in Washington, D.C.?

The threshold question is whether the costs of such a trip would be a reasonable and necessary program expense given your approved budget and the specific purposes of your grant award. In addition, assuming this first criterion is met, the OMB Cost Principles for nonprofits and institutions of higher education have an additional requirement: travel, lodging, and meal costs may be allowed only if they are incurred to offer testimony at a regularly scheduled Congressional hearing pursuant to a written request for such presentation made by the hearing's convener. Because such costs are allowable under very limited circumstances, you should seek guidance from your program officer at the Corporation ahead of time.

As a program director, I periodically travel to Washington, D.C., to educate our elected officials about our program's achievements. What happens if the Corporation determines that the costs of my visits are not reasonable and necessary expenses of the program?



If the Corporation determines that the costs are not reasonable and necessary, the costs would be disallowed as a program expense and your organization would not be reimbursed for them.

An elected official who is running for re-election wants to have a campaign publicity event at our service site. Is this type of site visit permitted?

No. You should steer clear of any event that could appear to be partisan in nature.

While I am in Washington, D.C., attending a program director's conference, am I prohibited from visiting my elected officials during a break in the conference?

The restrictions would not apply to such activities as long as they are incidental to your primary purpose in traveling to Washington for a training event. But don't charge the cab fare to your grant!

I work for a national nonprofit organization that receives a grant to operate a Senior Corps program. My position is partially funded under the Senior Corps grant and partially funded by non-federal sources. Can I lobby on issues related to Senior Corps when I am not on Senior Corps time?

The restrictions apply only to the use of Federal grant funds (including matching funds) and to projects and programs supported by the Corporation. You should be careful to document that any lobbying is done during the time that is not charged to your Corporation grant and that your lobbying activities are not part of the Senior Corps program.

If a particular activity is not specifically disallowed under the applicable OMB Cost Principles or grant terms, does that mean it is allowed?

Not necessarily. OMB Cost Principles do not authorize costs or expenditures; they merely limit the allowability of costs or expenditures. The burden is on the grantee to demonstrate that a particular cost is consistent with the approved budget and properly chargeable to the grant as reasonable and necessary— not merely that it is not on the list of disallowed costs. This is ultimately a determination for the Corporation to make.

Doesn't the Domestic Volunteer Service Act give programs specific statutory authority to lobby concerning appropriations or authorization legislation?

You are right about the authority in the DVSA, but DVSA programs are currently subject to a superseding proviso in their annual appropriations statute which prohibits the use of appropriated



funds to engage in any activity that is designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the Congress or any State legislature.

May a Corporation-funded program sponsor or endorse an event, such as a debate between candidates, which itself is not partisan, but which likely will include advocacy for or against political parties, platforms, candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials?

Corporation-funded programs should avoid any connection with such political events, and individuals enrolled in a national service program who attend such events should avoid any appearance that they are doing so as part of the national service program.

Does that mean an organization receiving Corporation funds may not take part in the political process?

No, but an organization that receives Corporation funds may only sponsor or endorse political events if it does so without using Corporation support, and if it avoids the appearance that it is doing so in its capacity as a Corporation grantee or that the event has any connection to the Corporation-funded project.

May staff whose salary is fully or partially paid from Senior Corps or matching funds participate in advocacy or public policy efforts, including promotion of events?


Yes, but not during time charged to the grant, and not in such a way that suggests that they are doing so as part of their programmatic responsibilities.

May staff whose salary is not paid from Senior Corps or matching funds, but whose work supports the Senior Corps program on either a full- or part-time basis, participate in advocacy or public policy efforts?

This is outside of the scope of our grant, thus outside the scope of our authority. In other words, nothing in our rules would prohibit this.

How should a staff member record the time spent attending an advocacy event or other related activity during the normal workday?

They should not charge this time to the Senior Corps grant.



May an organization that receives Senior Corps funds use any of its organizational resources, such as phone, email, organizational contact lists, list-serves, or meeting space, to participate in such efforts? Are there restrictions that apply for resources belonging to organizations which only host Senior Corps members?

You should discuss your indirect cost rate with your grants officer for utilities and resources that are used both for Senior Corps and other activities to be sure that the Senior Corps grant is not being used to further these efforts.

May staff or Senior Corps members identify themselves as Senior Corps members or staff of a Senior Corps-funded organization, by means of service gear, logos, letters or online media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs), when participating in advocacy efforts or expressing an opinion about same? Is there specific disclaimer language that should be used?

No. Staff and Senior Corps members should NOT wear the Senior Corps logo or use the Senior Corps logo in connection with any type of advocacy effort, as doing so gives the appearance that the individual is engaging in advocacy on Senior Corps time. You could use your organization's logo, but not the Senior Corps logo.

How are efforts to educate and inform elected officials about the value of Senior Corps programs different and distinct from political advocacy?

Education about a program is presumably fact-based and position-neutral. However, if you are "educating" in a manner that takes a position, promotes a cause, or clearly demonstrates an attempt to persuade a political party to take a particular action, then you are advocating.

Do any of these restrictions apply to Senior Corps alumni, and, if so, under what circumstances?

This is outside of the scope of our grant, thus outside the scope of our authority. In other words, nothing in our rules would prohibit this.