

# VOLUNTEER STATION

## CHAPTER 6

### VOLUNTEER STATIONS (7 pages)

#### 22. INTRODUCTION

##### a. Characteristics of Volunteer Stations

A volunteer station is a public agency, private non-profit organization, or proprietary health-care agency or organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of Foster Grandparents in health, education, welfare, or related settings. Each facility serving as a volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government.

- (1) Individual private homes are not volunteer stations. In-home assignments are made only through a volunteer station.
- (2) Volunteer stations are located within the project's service area as defined in the approved grant application.
- (3) As noted above, licensed proprietary health-care organizations or facilities may be volunteer stations. All such placements must limit volunteer assignments to those, which provide direct and traditional assistance to patients, such as visiting, teaching, counseling, entertaining, etc. Placements must not displace paid employees and must avoid other staff or clerical assignments, which would accrue to the profitability of the proprietary health-care organization.

##### b. Types of Volunteer Stations

Types of agencies or organizations serving children as defined the FGP Regulations, which may be volunteer stations, include but are not limited to:

Clinics	Shelters
Hospices	Before/After School Programs
Hospitals/ Medical Center	Head Start Centers
Developmental Disability Centers	Educational Pre-Schools
Long Term Care Facilities	Native American Schools
Rehabilitation Centers	Public/Private Schools
Mental Health Facilities	Sheltered Workshops
Home Health Care Providers	Courts
Teen Pregnancy Programs	Juvenile Corrections Programs
Day Care Centers	

##### c. Sponsors as Volunteer Stations

- (1) Normally, the volunteer station is an organization other than the sponsoring organization. The sponsor may function as a Foster Grandparent volunteer station if the sponsor is:
  - a. a state organization administering a statewide Foster Grandparent project where the volunteer station is part of the state organization;

b. a federal- or state-recognized Indian tribal government.

(2) Other sponsors can serve as a volunteer station provided that no more than 20 percent of its budgeted VSYS can be placed in programs administered by such sponsors. In special circumstances, the Corporation may grant a waiver to increase this percentage.

d. Volunteer Station Cash or In-Kind Support of Volunteers

In accordance with the Regulations, Section 2552.121(c), a Foster Grandparent volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the Foster Grandparent Program. However, this support cannot be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain Foster Grandparent service. If a volunteer station agrees to provide funds to support additional Foster Grandparents or pay for other Foster Grandparent support costs, the agreement shall be stated in the Memorandum of Understanding with the station. The sponsor shall withdraw services if the station's inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the project under the Memorandum of Understanding diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligations.

### **23. VOLUNTEER STATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. Volunteer Assignment Plans

The Regulations, Section 2552.72, require individual volunteer assignment plans for all volunteers (see Appendix 9 for sample assignment plan). These plans, in effect, constitute the Foster Grandparent's "job description."

(1) Development of Volunteer Assignment Plans

The following steps are recommended to develop volunteer assignment plans:

- (a) Identify prospective children;
- (b) Document the specific need(s) of the child;
- (c) Describe the activities the Foster Grandparent will perform, the schedule for their performance, and the supervisory relationship between the volunteer and the volunteer station;
- (d) Describe the desired results of the Foster Grandparent's activities;
- (e) Describe the expected impact on the child of attaining the desired results.

(2) Management of Assignment Plans

- (a) Volunteer assignment plans should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain current and appropriate for the Foster Grandparents and their clients.
- (b) Annually, a review of each Foster Grandparent's impact should be performed, which examines:
  - (c) Client needs;
  - (d) The service activities performed, adjustments made, and potential areas for improvement;
  - (e) Adherence to planned schedule and adjustments made;
  - (f) Results or accomplishments achieved; and
  - (g) Impact on the child.

NOTE: Consult the Senior Corps' Programming for Impact National Toolkit for examples of statements of needs, activities, results and impact, planning forms, and impact review forms.

b. Development of Letters of Agreement

- 1) According to the Regulations, Section 2552.62, volunteer stations managing in-home placements shall develop a Letter of Agreement authorizing and describing the Foster Grandparent's activities in each home. (See Appendix 7 for a sample letter of agreement.) The requirement for Letters of Agreement is incorporated in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station. This agreement constitutes an individual volunteer assignment plan and contains a statement authorizing a Foster Grandparent assignment in the child's home and designating the activities to be performed. The statement also defines arrangements for days and hours of service and specifies the plan for supervision of the Foster Grandparent. The child's parent or person legally responsible for the child, the sponsor, and the volunteer station representative sign the statement.
- 2) Projects working with organizations, such as hospices, which have obtained Letters of Agreement, or equivalent written agreements with their individual home-based clients, may sign general letters of agreement covering all of the organization's clients, rather than obtaining individual agreements for each child. The Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer stations must reference any such agreements.

c. Volunteer Station Participation in Training Events

- 1) During the orientation of volunteers, project staff explains their services and programs to Foster Grandparents and are encouraged to involve volunteer station staff. This may be accomplished through group presentations in formal classroom exercises and station site visits.
- 2) Project staff is also encouraged to utilize volunteer station staff and other community resource professionals to cooperatively plan and implement monthly in-service training events.
- 3) Foster Grandparent assignments at some volunteer stations will necessitate training over and above the 40-hour orientation and average four hours of monthly in-service training.

d. Volunteer Station Supervision of Foster Grandparents

Volunteer stations are responsible for the daily supervision of Foster Grandparents on assignment. The quality of supervision or support is the most critical factor, after the assignment itself, in contributing to the success of the Foster Grandparent experience. Supervision should be on going and constructive. Supervision includes:

- (1) developing individual volunteer assignment plans;
- (2) providing regular and on-site supervision of Foster Grandparent performance on assignments;
- (3) monitoring of volunteer activities regularly to assure that Foster Grandparents and children are satisfied with the assignment and to determine the continued appropriateness of the assignment;
- (4) helping Foster Grandparents arrange for services that benefit children;

- (5) annually completing written volunteer performance appraisals;
  - (6) referring Foster Grandparents to project staff for possible reassignment, transfer, or termination;
  - (7) carrying out other responsibilities identified in Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Agreement, and individual plans.
- e. Volunteer Station Responsibilities Concerning Transportation
    - 1. Volunteer stations bear the responsibility for arrangement and costs of Foster Grandparent travel between assignments with or through the same station.
    - 2. Volunteer stations pay all transportation costs for any Foster Grandparent outreach activities with children. The project may not assume these costs.
  - f. Other Volunteer Station Responsibilities
    - 1. Assisting in the provision of appropriate volunteer recognition activities;
    - 2. Providing for volunteer safety;
    - 3. Monitoring the volunteers' well being and providing support during stressful assignments.
    - 4. Keeping records and preparing reports required by the sponsor, including:
      - a. volunteer timesheets;
      - b. updates and accomplishments relating to the written volunteer assignment plans;
      - c. data and information to document and report accomplishments and impacts for the children;
      - d. volunteer performance reports; and
      - e. testimonials and examples of how Foster Grandparents meet the needs and improve the lives of children served as well as of impact on the capabilities of the volunteer station and its staff to carry out the station's mission and/or achieve its goals, objectives, responsibilities to clients, etc.

## **24. PREPARATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

- a. The Memorandum of Understanding, which must be negotiated prior to placement, describes program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities of the station and the sponsor. It includes general conditions applicable to all projects and volunteer stations and special conditions applicable to the local volunteer station. The basic requirements for the Memorandum of Understanding are found in the Regulations, Section 2552.23(c)(2). (See Appendix 5 for a sample Memorandum of Understanding.)
- b. The Memorandum of Understanding is to be reviewed and renegotiated at least every three years. The Memorandum may be amended at any time by mutual agreement. Projects are encouraged to require volunteer stations to notify them as soon as any circumstances arise which could affect or require changing the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, such as the volunteer station's ability to meet commitments for providing specified contributions toward project costs, changes in the sites where volunteers serve, or other conditions which have a bearing on Foster Grandparent assignments.
- c. A current list of volunteer stations will be included with each grant renewal application showing the name of the station and city where located, number of Foster Grandparents placed at the station, types of activities, and the date of the current Memorandum of Understanding. Project staff should maintain

a close relationship with each volunteer station to ensure adherence to the Memorandum of Understanding.

d. The Memorandum of Understanding includes:

1. type, name, street and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of the volunteer station and a brief description of Foster Grandparent assignments;
2. the projected number of Foster Grandparents to be placed with the volunteer station;
3. the number of children to be assisted by Foster Grandparents;
4. the volunteer station's agreement to provide specific written individual volunteer assignment plans for each volunteer prior to assignment;
5. name of the primary volunteer station professional responsible for day-to-day supervision of Foster Grandparents and a description of supervisory arrangements;
6. volunteer station and sponsor contributions to Foster Grandparent cost reimbursements (stipends, meals, insurance, transportation, recognition, physicals, and uniforms) and/or other project costs;
7. the volunteer station's agreement to periodically review each child's continued need for a Foster Grandparent and to recommend phase-out or reassignment of a Foster Grandparent as necessary;
8. the volunteer station agreement to submit required reports;
9. provisions for the safety of the Foster Grandparents while on assignment;
10. special local conditions which have a bearing on Foster Grandparent assignments;
11. a listing of all geographic locations/sites, other than private homes, where Foster Grandparents will serve through the volunteer station and the number of volunteers placed at each site;
12. provisions for Letters of Agreement for in-home assignments (See Appendix 7 for sample Letter of Agreement.);
13. The volunteer station's responsibilities in relation to implementing Programming for Impact; and
14. Assurance that the station will not discriminate against FGP volunteers, or in the operation of its program, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, political affiliation, religion, or on the basis of disability if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.
15. Assurance that the station provides reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

## **25. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEER STATIONS**

- a. Foster Grandparents may be placed with more than one volunteer station, depending on the need for service and individual Foster Grandparents' capabilities.
- b. It is strongly recommended that each volunteer station have a minimum of three Foster Grandparents. This facilitates plan development, supervision, transportation arrangements, and other management activities.
- c. The sponsor should appraise all volunteer stations regularly to determine continued viability. Assessments should include types of clients served, supervision and training provided Foster Grandparents, and other support provided.

## **EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPING STRONG VOLUNTEER STATIONS**

### **I. Effective Practices for Developing Appropriate Volunteer Stations The sponsor develops a system of volunteer stations that:**

- A. Addresses significant needs of the children as validated by community accepted studies and reports prepared by government, community groups, or educational institutions;
- B. Provides a sufficient number of stations that are accessible to individuals with disabilities;
- C. Is manageable in terms of size and complexity to ensure that ongoing interaction, communication, and monitoring of stations are realistic.
- D. Incorporates the abilities, experience, and needs of senior volunteers in their programs and operations.

### **II. Effective Practices for Communicating between the Project and Volunteer Stations The sponsor establishes clear and effective systems of communication between the project and volunteer stations by:**

- A. Conducting an orientation to the Senior Corps, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the project prior to the placement of volunteers;
- B. Communicating to the volunteer stations its policies on the terms and conditions of Foster Grandparent Program volunteer service, volunteer service termination, and procedures for volunteers to appeal adverse decisions to its volunteer stations;
- C. Providing volunteer stations with ongoing information and/or training about the project, its programming for impact goals, and the role of the volunteer station in meeting those goals.
- D. Developing a checklist, guidance, and/or criteria that identifies factors in selecting volunteer stations; and
- E. Developing criteria for the optimal number of volunteers serving at each station.

### **III. Effective Practices for Working with Volunteer Stations to Achieve Accomplishments and Impact for Children Served by Foster Grandparents**

The sponsor and project staff make informed decisions about the children to be served and the volunteer stations that provide placement opportunities for Foster Grandparents. The project:

- A. Identifies the needs and priorities that the project will address and the agencies that serve them;
- B. Uses data to document the nature and scope of the needs and why they have been selected, and works with volunteer stations on data collection methods;
- C. Consults staff, Foster Grandparents, the volunteer stations, and the Community Advisory Group (or other vehicle for community participation) in determining priority community needs on which the project will focus;
- D. Identifies volunteer stations based on well-defined criteria that ensure the project focuses on most important community needs;
- E. Works with each volunteer station to determine the service efforts to which Foster Grandparents will be assigned; and
- F. Identifies and communicates its anticipated accomplishment and impact goals for the children to the volunteer station supervisors.

The project works with volunteer stations to collect data that measures progress in achieving the anticipated accomplishments and impacts on the clients. The project and volunteer stations:

- A. Work together to determine the types of data needed to measure progress in achieving its accomplishments and impact goals;
- B. Use the written volunteer assignment plans as an important source of data on service provision to each client assigned to a Foster Grandparent and the impact of the assignment on the client's achievement and maintenance of independence;
- C. Determine, prior to initiating service efforts, the benchmarks it will use as the standards for measuring progress;
- D. Collaborate to develop and implement an information system that utilizes existing data whenever possible, produces the information needed to demonstrate project accomplishments and impact; and allows information to be easily retrieved;
- E. Consistently and accurately provide the needed data; and
- F. Use the assessment to adjust Foster Grandparent service assignments and the project's portfolio of volunteer stations.

The project:

- A. Works with the volunteer stations to use the information related to accomplishments and impact to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project's programming and to develop specific steps to strengthen volunteer services provided in the community; and
- B. Works with the volunteer stations to modify volunteer assignments to more effectively meet the identified needs.