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**& Foster Grandparent Programs**

Logo, company name

Description automatically generated

**Volunteer Policy Handbook**

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Missoula, MT 59801

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**Missoula Aging Services**

**Senior Companion & Foster Grandparent Programs Volunteer Policy Handbook**

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**Missoula Aging Services**

**Senior Companion & Foster Grandparent Programs Volunteer Policy Handbook**

# **[Introduction](#_Introduction)**

## [Welcome to Missoula Aging Services (MAS)](#_Welcome_to_Missoula)

Welcome to Missoula’s Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs.

Volunteer Policy Handbook:

Service Policies are generally broad statements of principle and purpose and are intended to serve as a framework for decision making and administrative action. However, policies establish specific substantive standards and requirements, including standards of personal and professional conduct.

The Handbook covers a brief history of the program, service policies, mission and goals, and requirements of the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs.

The policies in this handbook replace any others that preceded them. Since it’s impossible to anticipate every situation, special circumstances that aren't covered in the handbook will be addressed by the Missoula AmeriCorps staff and Advisory Council. Changes in these policies may occur as the program evolves and as the AmeriCorps makes new regulations. Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Volunteers will periodically receive updated pages of the handbook, to reflect these changes.

If you have questions about the information in this handbook, or would like to speak with program staff about specific issues, please call:

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**Foster Grandparent Program**

**Senior Companion Program**

**(406) 728-7682**

[**fgpscp@missoulaagingservices.org**](mailto:fgpscp@missoulaagingservices.org)

We sincerely wish your experience with the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs will be a positive and rewarding one. Please let us know how we may assist you in achieving that experience.

## [About the Programs](#_About_the_Programs)

Who Are We?

The Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent and RSVP Programs are national AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer programs, funded in part by AmeriCorps. Together, these programs involve over one-half million seniors serving in tens of thousands of stations across the country.

AmeriCorps Seniors programs in Missoula County are sponsored by Missoula Aging Services (MAS). MAS also pursues and receives grant funding from additional sources to support these volunteer programs.

The Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors Program is an alliance of volunteers who are improving our community serving as Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions and/or RSVP. Whether volunteering a few hours or 40 hours a week, these dynamic volunteers use their skill, creativity and a lifetime of experience to improve communities across Missoula County.

A Letter from MAS’ Chief Executive Officer

Dear AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer,

Thank you for your commitment to becoming an AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer through Missoula Aging Services. We recognize that your time is valuable and that you have many choices to volunteer in Missoula. We welcome your enthusiasm and are honored that you have chosen Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors for your volunteer service.

There are a number of Volunteer Station partners that exist within the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs. We hope you will find exciting and educational opportunities that match your volunteer goals. Please let us know how we can help make your service in the community more enjoyable.

I look forward to meeting you. Again, thank you for joining the AmeriCorps Seniors team at Missoula Aging Services. You are a valued volunteer!

Sincerely,

Susan Kohler

Chief Executive Officer

Missoula Aging Services

## [Missoula Aging Services: Mission, Vision, Values](#_Missoula_Aging_Services:)

Missoula Aging Services (MAS) is a county-wide, not-for-profit agency responsible for planning, coordinating and delivering services which support the aging process. As the Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors sponsor, MAS is responsible for the management of the AmeriCorps Seniors Programs and receives grants, contributions and donations for its operation.

Mission: Missoula Aging Services promotes the independence, dignity and health of older adults and those who care for them.

Vision:Missoula Aging Services celebrates people of all abilities as they age, striving to make Missoula County a wonderful place to live.

Values:

* We are the leader in building a community that values and supports people of all ages and abilities.
* We provide opportunities to serve and remain healthy through an active community life.
* We engage the wisdom and talents of people of all ages and abilities in the enrichment of the community we share.
* We make complex services more easily accessible through education, referrals and personal individualized services.
* We educate and engage those who are preparing to retire.
* We support those who care for family members and loved ones.
* We honor the dignity of all individuals by equipping them, and their families, to make choices that meet their specific needs.
* We encourage the option for people to remain in their own homes with appropriate supportive services.
* We provide vital information, assistance and civic engagement for people of all income levels.

# **[Becoming a Volunteer](#_Becoming_a_Volunteer)**

## [Volunteer Definitions and Implications](#_Volunteer_Definitions_and)

Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents are volunteers, not employees, of the Senior Companion Program, Foster Grandparent Program, Missoula Aging Services, the federal government, or the Volunteer Station.

Volunteers are not paid a wage, and are not eligible for federal or state worker’s compensation in the event of an accident.

## [Eligibility](#_Eligibility)

Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents must meet eligibility guidelines in order to serve as volunteers through these programs. In accordance with these guidelines, volunteers must:

* Be age 55 or older
* Meet income guidelines set by AmeriCorps, including gross income from all sources, which is reviewed annually
* Pass required Background Checks
* Serve at a Volunteer Station which has a current memorandum of understanding with Missoula Aging Services

The MAS Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs are inclusive projects.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for placement without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability or other legally protected status.

It is unlawful to retaliate against any person who, or organization that, files a complaint about such discrimination. In addition to filing a complaint against local and state agencies that are responsible for resolving discrimination complaints, you may bring a complaint to the attention of AmeriCorps

Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness

AmeriCorps

1201 New York Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20525

(800) 833-3722 (TDD and reasonable accommodation line)

(202) 565 (FAX); [eo@cns.gov](mailto:eo@cns.gov) (email)

## [Background Checks and Fingerprinting](#_Background_Checks_and)

### [New Applicant](#_New_Applicant)

Applicants to the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs must pass a three-part National Service Criminal History check. Those three elements include:

1. A National Sex Offender Public Website check.
2. A statewide criminal history check of the Montana State Repository through the Montana Department of Justice. Applicants who apply while residing in another state will also require a name or fingerprint-based search of the criminal history repository of the state they reside in at the time they apply.
3. A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check. The applicant will complete an application. The completed application is reviewed and approved by the AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager. An incomplete application will not be processed until all missing information is provided. Applicants will be interviewed and references checked.

Volunteers may not begin training or serving clients or children until Step 1 & 2 of the NATIONAL SERVICE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK (NSCHC) process are completed, Step 3 is initiated and they have received the Conditional Letter.

Applicants are automatically ineligible to serve as Foster Grandparents or Senior Companions if they:

* Refuse to participate in any part of the National Service Criminal History check
* Are listed, or are required to be listed, on the National Sex Offender Public Registry
* Make false statements regarding their criminal history
* Have been convicted of murder

### [Existing or Former Volunteers](#_Existing_or_Former)

Volunteers who began serving prior to April 21, 2011, without a break in service, do not need to undergo fingerprinting. A break in service is defined as resigning or terminating from service as a volunteer for more than 120 days. A leave of absence is considered a temporary interruption in service, not a break in service. Anytime there is a break in service for more than 120 days, the volunteer must re-apply and undergo the National Service Criminal History check again.

If there are positions available, volunteers may switch between the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs sponsored by the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors without filling out a new application. Volunteers may switch programs on a case by case basis upon review by AmeriCorps Seniors staff.

[Refer to Appendix 8.2](#_MAS_Procedure_Background)- If a background check reveals convictions.

## [Training](#_Training)

All Volunteers are required to participate in training related to their duties as Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers.

### [Pre-Service Orientation Training](#_Pre-Service_Orientation_Training)

Pre-service orientation training will orient the volunteer to the Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent Program, the roles and activities of a volunteer, the volunteer policy handbook, administrative procedures, project staff, community resources, and partner agencies and assignments.

New volunteers and former volunteers with a break in service of two years or more are required to participate in 40 hours of orientation and training, of which 20 hours must be pre-service orientation. Monthly mandatory in-service training can be counted as part of the required 40 hours of orientation.

### [Monthly Mandatory in-service training](#_Monthly_In-Service_Training)

Volunteers are required to participate in monthly mandatory in-service training trainings. These trainings are held by the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff. On occasion and as circumstances allow, volunteers may participate in monthly mandatory in-service training through the partner agencies with the approval of the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff.

Volunteers should inform their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff in advance if they will be absent from a mandatory in-service training.

### [Driver Policies](#_Driver_Policies)

Senior Companion volunteers may drive their clients as part of their volunteer service.

Driving policies for volunteers who drive clients can be found in the AmeriCorps Seniors Handbook Appendices at the back of the Handbook.

Appendix 8.7 Driving Agreement

## [Probationary Period](#_Probationary_Period)

All applicants to the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs will be on probationary status for six months beginning on the date of their background check approval. During this probationary period, the new volunteer may be dismissed at the discretion of the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Program staff. A volunteer serving the initial probationary period is not entitled to grievance rights ([see section 6.2.4](#_Grievance_Process)) in the event that the volunteer is dismissed.

# **[Volunteer Benefits](#_Volunteer_Benefits)**

## [Hourly Stipend](#_Hourly_Stipend)

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers receive an hourly stipend of $3.00 per hour for direct service, training, holiday, leave time, and any other official program projects (e.g. recognition). Time spent commuting to and from assignments is not considered service time and is not stipend. The stipend rate is set by the federal government, and is subject to change. The hourly stipend and any mileage reimbursements are paid once per month, for the previous month’s hours and mileage.

The hourly stipend is considered a cost reimbursement, and is not subject to any tax or charge. Under the provisions of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, stipend payments may not be treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment insurance, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, worker’s compensation, or similar benefit payments or minimum wage laws. In cases where authorities are not familiar with the provisions of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, the “income disregard” statement is in the Appendix in the back of the handbook to provide to those authorities. This memo provides specific citations and explains that the stipend provided to Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers is not considered income.

Appendix 8.8 Income Disregard Letter

Any misrepresentation of hours served may be cause for dismissal.

### [Timesheet Procedures](#_Timesheet_Procedures)

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers must have the completed timesheet into the MAS office by the first day of the month. The mail may take several days so it is important to plan ahead. Hand delivered, faxed or scanned are acceptable delivery methods.

Timesheets must be signed by the Partner Station supervisor or designated employee. This is a legal requirement that cannot be ignored.

If a completed timesheet is not in the office when the stipend checks are processed:

* A stipend check will be written based on the monthly hours reported and paid on the previous month’s timesheet. The stipend check will not include any reimbursement for mileage or bus.
* When a signed timesheet is later presented to the MAS office, any adjustment in hours or travel reimbursement will be added or subtracted on the next month’s stipend. MAS can only issue one stipend check per month.

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers should contact Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff with any questions or concerns about the timesheet. Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors’ intent is to comply with the legal requirements of the program and ensure that the MAS accounting department will be able to continue to meet the stipend delivery date of the 10th each month.

### [Stipend Pay Schedule](#_Stipend_Pay_Schedule)

Either the stipend check or the direct deposited stipend amount will be available on the 10th of each month. Stipend checks not picked up at the MAS office by noon on the 10th will be mailed. The amount includes transportation reimbursement if applicable. When the 10th of the month occurs on a Sunday, the check will be available on the next working day. When the 10th of the month occurs on a Saturday, the check will be available one working day prior. When the 10th of the month occurs on a scheduled holiday during the work week, the check will be available one working day prior.

### [Stipend Rate](#_Stipend_Rate)

Volunteers serve a required 15 – 40 hours per week. Serving anything less than 15 hours per week is not compliant with the regulations of the Foster Grandparent Program or the Senior Companion Program. Volunteers commit to serve an agreed-upon schedule. Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff, in conjunction with the Volunteer and Volunteer Station staff, will create individual schedules on a case-by-case basis. The stipend amount is determined by Congress.

[Refer to Appendix 8.3](#_Stipend_Hour_Commitment)- Stipend Hour Commitment Form

## [Transportation Reimbursement](#_Transportation_Reimbursement)

As funding for each program allows, Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers are provided reimbursement for commute mileage driven to and from their volunteer assignment and for official program activities such as orientation, mandatory in-service training meetings, advisory board meetings, and recognition events.

* Volunteers are encouraged to use the least expensive means of transportation and to carpool if possible
* Volunteers who drive their own vehicles will be reimbursed at the current rate, for a maximum number of commute miles (driving to/from assignment) per month
* The reimbursement rate and maximum mileage for reimbursement is subject to change based on funding availability
* MAS reserves the right to place a maximum on numbers of miles reimbursed
* Please contact Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff to find out the current reimbursement rate and maximum miles
* Senior Companions are allowed to transport their clients to and from doctor’s appointments, shopping, social events, and other outings
* Volunteers MAY NOT accept money from clients, clients’ families, or clients’ friends for transportation or other costs. Accepting or asking a client or family member of a client for reimbursement may be cause for corrective action or dismissal from the program(s)
* Foster Grandparents are prohibited from allowing children from the Volunteer Station in their vehicle at any time
* When carpooling in a personal vehicle, only the driver of the vehicle will be reimbursed for mileage driven to and from the volunteer site or program activity. Volunteers MUST NOT pay one another for transportation expenses. Carpool drivers who are reimbursed by the program CANNOT ask for or accept money from others in the carpool. This may be cause for corrective action or dismissal.
* Volunteers who use the bus or other approved forms of transportation will be reimbursed for the actual fare paid per trip or for a weekly/monthly pass, whichever is most cost effective
* Additional driving policies may be found in 4.11 and 4.11.5

Any misrepresentation of transportation expense may be cause for dismissal.

## [Time Off](#_Time_Off)

### [Paid Time off (PTO)](#_Paid_Time_Off(PTO))

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers accrue Paid Time Off (PTO) at 30 hours per quarter. PTO will be credited on the stipend checks listed:

* July 1- Sept 30: credited on stipend check - August 10
* October 1 – December 31: credited on stipend check - November 10
* January 1 – March 31: credited on stipend check - February 10
* April 1 – June 30: credited on stipend check - May 10

PTO that is not used in a quarter will accumulate each quarter until the cap of 90 hours is reached.

Accrued PTO will be capped at 90 hours. Accrued Leave will never exceed 90 hours. In order to avoid the 90 hour cap, please use your leave on an on-going basis throughout the year.

PTO hours must be used by June 30 each year. Any leave not used by June 30 will be forfeited.

All accrued PTO will be paid out to the Volunteer in the event of leave or dismissal of service.

Volunteers on Leave of Absence are not eligible for accrued PTO until they return to service - see Prorated PTO

PTO can be used in 1 to 8 hour increments. PTO can be used in combination with hours served, but may not exceed 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week. It is important to use your accrued PTO responsibly – ensuring that you have it available when needed. REMINDER: a minimum of 15 hours per week must be served.

Any month that a FGP/SCP serves at least one 15 hour week – holiday pay can be utilized the same month it is earned.

PTO may be used at the volunteer’s discretion, for sickness, illness, injury, the illness or injury of an immediate family member, vacation, or other personal time.

Illness/injury: If a volunteer is unable to serve during their regularly scheduled service time, it is the volunteer’s responsibility to contact their Volunteer Station supervisor, clients, and AmeriCorps Seniors staff to inform them of their absence.

Vacation or planned PTO: It is the volunteer’s responsibility to contact their Volunteer Station supervisor, clients, and program coordinator to inform them of their planned absence at least one week in advance.

Prorating PTO:

New volunteers who begin serving in the middle of a PTO period will have their PTO hours prorated at the amount of 10 hours per month they serve. Example: A new volunteer begins in November, he/she will earn 10 hours for November and 10 hours for December. The total of 20 ours will reflect on the stipend stub received in January.

For absences because of illness, injury, or other disability, the volunteer may be required to furnish a written statement from a physician certifying that the volunteer is able to return to service. Should the supervisor (site supervisor or AmeriCorps Seniors Staff) exercise this option, the volunteer will not be permitted to return to service without the physician’s statement).

### [Holiday Leave](#_Holiday_Leave)

Volunteers do not serve, but receive a 4 hour stipend for the following 10 holidays:

New Year’s Day January 1

Martin Luther King Day 3rd Monday in January

President’s Day 3rd Monday in February

Memorial Day Last Monday in May

Independence Day July 4th

Labor Day 1st Monday in September

Thanksgiving Day 4th Thursday in November

Day after Thanksgiving 4th Friday in November

Christmas Day December 25th

Volunteer’s Birthday: If your birthday falls on a day you are not scheduled to serve, you may take an alternative day within the month.

Holidays that occur on Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Those that occur on Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

Transportation reimbursements will not be paid on observed holidays.

If a holiday falls on a day that a volunteer does not normally serve or a volunteer chooses to serve during a scheduled holiday, the volunteer should arrange to take a different day as a holiday within the calendar month. If a volunteer does not make a substitution for the holiday within the calendar month in which the holiday occurred, the volunteer forfeits their holiday stipend.

### [Compensatory Time](#_Compensatory_Time)

Senior Corps Volunteers will receive their stipends:

1. Upon assignment to a Volunteer Station and while waiting for clients or students to be assigned, for a maximum of 80 hours.
2. Up to four hours per day if the assigned Volunteer Station is closed. For example: emergencies, holidays or breaks not observed or covered by Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors holiday schedule. This policy excludes summer school closure. Stipend is not paid during summer school closures.
3. Up to 40 hours (maximum of four hours each day) when AmeriCorps Seniors service cannot commence or continue due to threats to Volunteers or property or when recommended by civil authorities. Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff has the authority to extend this benefit. For example:

* Public utilities fail to supply electricity, water, gas, or sewer services
* The interruption of work is caused by an Act of God or other cause not within Missoula Aging Service’s control. For example: unsafe weather conditions, emergencies, etc.

1. Four hours when a Senior Companion client cancels a scheduled visit. The Senior Companion shall visit with the client on the phone and report any extenuating circumstances to their Volunteer Station supervisor. There is no mileage reimbursement when a shift has been cancelled.
2. Four hours when a Foster Grandparent Volunteer Station cancels a scheduled shift on a regularly scheduled day. There is no mileage reimbursement when a shift has been cancelled.

### [Jury Duty](#_Jury_Duty)

Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors grants Leave of Absence without Pay for a Volunteer summoned for jury duty or who is being subpoenaed. The Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent is expected to keep the Volunteer Station manager and Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff informed as to the court schedule.

### [Bereavement Leave](#_Bereavement_Leave)

Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions may take up to 12 hours leave in the event of a death of a family member or assigned client or student. Immediate family member is defined as: spouse, common-law spouse, significant other with shared accommodations, parents, step-parents, siblings, step-siblings, step-children, grandchildren and step–grandchildren. A surrogate parent who raised the volunteer as his or her own child or any other person who is a permanent member of the volunteer’s established household.

Bereavement Leave will be paid up to 12 hours of stipend. Additional time off can be taken with the use of available Personal Leave or may be taken without pay (see Leave of Absence without Pay).

### [Leave of Absence](#_Leave_of_Absence)

Once all PTO has been used, Volunteers may take Leave of Absence without pay for up to six (6) months on a case by case basis. Volunteers who want to take a leave of absence must request a leave of absence from Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff. Any accrued PTO will be paid to the volunteer at the beginning of the Leave of Absence with a completed timesheet requesting PTO. Once all accrued PTO has been paid out the volunteer will be put on leave without pay status.

While on leave, volunteers will not be reimbursed for any program activities. Volunteers on leave who chose to attend mandatory in-service training meetings, recognition events, or other official program activities do so at their own discretion and will not be reimbursed for their time, or transportation, until they return to active service for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Volunteers who want to return from leave must give their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff at least one week’s notice, so appropriate arrangements can be made. Volunteers will not be allowed to return from leave until all program requirements are met and documentation is up to date. For example, a volunteer who has been on leave may be due to have an updated income verification or physical examination. The volunteer will not be allowed to return to active service until all outdated documentation is updated. Volunteers who have taken a leave due to medical reasons will be required to have a letter by a medical professional that certifies that the volunteer can return to active service for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Volunteers who take a Leave of Absence without Pay and do not give notice beyond the six months will be considered a voluntary dismissal. Re-admission to the program will be as a new applicant.

Past position will not be held and may not be available.

## [Secondary Insurance Coverage](#_Secondary_Insurance_Coverage)

Volunteers are not covered under federal or state workers’ compensation as they are NOT employees.

Missoula Aging Services Senior Corps provides Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents with three kinds of insurance: excess accident, excess personal liability, and excess automobile liability. Remember that this is an excess policy – which means that it covers what remains after all other insurances have paid. This insurance does not duplicate benefits payable under Medicare or any other valid and collectible insurance coverage. Because it pays after all others have paid, this process can take time. Be assured that we will work with you each step of the process.

Any insurance that the volunteer has will be billed first, and the volunteer will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses, including co-pays (although there are exceptions to this rule).

This insurance does **NOT** cover your personal vehicle.

These are NOT substitutes for personal insurance and only apply when the volunteer is engaged in official program activities. Coverage does not include traveling to or from official program activities.

Information about reporting accidents can be found in [section 4.7.2](#_Accident_Reporting).

# **[Volunteer Service](#_Volunteer_Service)**

## [Hours of Service](#_Hours_of_Service)

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers are required to serve a minimum of 15 hours per week, and may not serve more than 40 hours per week, including direct service, training, holiday, and PTO. The Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent Program director may lower the maximum hours a volunteer may serve, based on grant funding. When hours are restricted, volunteers may not serve above and beyond the maximum hours. Volunteers who continue to serve more than the maximum hours may be subject to dismissal from the program.

Volunteers should perform regular service hours, preferably on the same days per week and during the same timeframes.

* Senior Companions are not to serve their clients on an “as-needed” basis or for “as-needed” transportation only. Senior Companions should serve each client for a minimum of four hours per week per visit or as defined in the Client Care Plan and letter of agreement.
* Foster Grandparents should establish regular schedules with teachers and Volunteer Station supervisors to tutor and mentor specific children. Foster Grandparents should not be serving in any capacity other than direct service with children.

Commute time, defined as travel time from the volunteer’s home to the place of assignment, is not counted as service time. Travel time between individual assignments is counted as service time.

Meal time may be counted as service time if:

* Senior Companions take their meal with the client and it is listed on the Care Plan & Letter of Agreement form and deemed by the Volunteer Station to be beneficial to the client.
* Foster Grandparents take their meal with the children they serve and deemed by the Volunteer Station to be beneficial to the children.

Attendance at pre-service orientation, mandatory in-service training, advisory council meetings, and recognition is counted as service hours.

Any misrepresentation of hours served may be cause for dismissal.

## [Code of Conduct](#_Code_of_Conduct)

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers must conduct themselves with integrity and treat others with respect. While serving, volunteers must:

* Participate in the activities outlined on the Care Plan & Letter of Agreement or Child Assignment Plan (see also appropriate and inappropriate activities in section 4.3.2)
* Show respect for clients, children, teachers, Volunteer Station supervisors, Volunteer Station staff and volunteers, other Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers, the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff, and any other individuals or groups with whom the volunteer may come in contact
* Behave in a non-threatening manner. Threatening activity may include verbal threats, physical threats, or displaying weapons. Behaving in a threatening manner may be cause for dismissal
* Possession of lethal weapons (including but not limited to handguns, shotguns and knives ), or explosive materials on your person and/or within any property that may accompany you while performing MAS duties (i.e. purse, briefcase, automobile) while serving as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, RSVP Volunteers), is prohibited. Even if an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is licensed to carry a concealed weapon, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may not bring the weapon while volunteering for AmeriCorps Seniors. Possession of a lethal weapon while on duty may be cause for dismissal
* In an effort to address potential health, safety and liability issues, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions may not bring an animal with them for any shifts, meetings, trainings or any activity in which the stipend is paid. Requests for accommodation that fall under the American’s with Disabilities Act may be made to a AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Coordinator and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis
* Follow the directions provided by their Volunteer Station supervisor, except when it conflicts with Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent Program policies
* Arrive to volunteer assignment in a timely fashion, and call if running more than 15 minutes late when possible
* Keep appointments with the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff, clients, and Volunteer Station supervisors, or give 24 hours of advance notice if cancelling when possible
* Stay in contact with the Volunteer Station supervisor and Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff, and inform them of changes in address and phone number, and respond to their calls or letters within 24 hours whenever possible
* Maintain confidentiality of client information at all times (see confidentiality policy in [section 4.4.4](#_Confidentiality)
* Perform service while not under the influence of any drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter) or alcohol (see drugs & alcohol policy in section 4.8)
* Refrain from participating in political activity or proselytizing while volunteering (see political and religious activity policy in section 4.12)
* Dress in a professional manner and maintain a professional appearance, appropriate for the activities scheduled during service hours (see dress code and appearance policy in section 4.13)
* Refrain from discriminating against program staff, volunteers, Volunteer Station staff, or clients based on religion, race, sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other legally protected status
* Refrain from loaning funds to or soliciting funds from clients, family of clients, Volunteer Station staff, or program staff
* Refrain from maligning or undermining Missoula Aging Services, its programs or Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors, mission, values, personnel, partner agencies, or other volunteers
* Any volunteers who are arrested, charged with a crime or named in a law suit are required to inform their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff of this event within 48 hours. The volunteer will be suspended from serving until an investigation can be conducted and the volunteer is either cleared of charges or the volunteer is dismissed.

Volunteers who do not comply with the codes of conduct listed above, as observed by the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff, Volunteer Station supervisor or staff, or other volunteers, may be subject to corrective action or dismissal from the program.

## [Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities](#_Appropriate_and_Inappropriate)

### [Senior Companions](#_Senior_Companions)

Senior Companions serve adults (age 21 or older), primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitation and are in need of assistance to maintain their dignity and independence.

Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person relationships with the individuals served. Senior Companions must be assigned to individual clients to in order to develop a personal relationship with each client. One Senior Companion working with many clients at one time does not provide the degree of support needed to foster meaningful relationships.

**Appropriate Activities**

The following are appropriate activities for Senior Companions:

Personal Care

* Encourage activities per the Client Care
* Picking up prescriptions from the pharmacy when requested
* Reminding clients to take medicine. (Volunteers are not allowed to give, prepare, or touch a client’s medicine. The client must make his/her own decision to take medication. Report any suspected irregularities to the Volunteer Station.)
* Accompanying to medical appointments
* Encouraging exercise (for example, taking walks with clients)

Nutrition

* Assisting in meal planning and light meal preparation
* Providing health or nutrition information
* Sharing a meal
* Encouraging client to eat a regular, well-balanced diet with adequate fluids
* Reviewing and supporting the following of special diets (report irregularities or observations to partner agencies)
* Accompanying client grocery shopping
* Assisting in organizing food supplies and planning use of leftovers

Social/Recreation

* Providing companionship, listening, cheering up, playing cards or games, assisting with crafts
* Accompanying to social or recreational events
* Writing letters, reading
* Fostering client contact with family or friends
* Linking clients to appropriate community services.

Home Management

* Assisting with shopping or errands
* A limit of $30.00 cash for buying items for the client with the client’s money. If you desire you can buy the client items with your money it cannot be for more than $10.00. Give the client the receipt and they should reimburse you. Checks must be made out to the business and the receipt returned to the client. Do not have checks made out in your name.
* Gifts: A $50.00 cash limit or a $50.00 value limit on any gift (birthday or Christmas) given to the Senior Companion from the client or the client’s family is allowed.
* Selling: If the client wants to sell the Senior Companion an item, or if the Senior Companion wants to sell the client an item, it must be advertised to the general public.
* Assisting with filling out forms
* Assisting with money management correspondence
* Assisting with light housekeeping (make beds, dishes, dust, sweep, take out trash)
* Assuring client has phone numbers of workable means of obtaining emergency help
* Helping clients receive a needed service (food stamps, visiting nurse, supplemental security income, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.)
* Bringing unmet needs to the attention of Volunteer Station staff, and other care providers

Respite Care

* Assisting homebound clients who are served by caregivers in need of respite care

**Inappropriate Activities**

Inappropriate activities for Senior Companions include but are not limited to the following:

* Activities usually performed by doctors or nurses (for example, giving medication or insulin, clipping nails, changing dressing)
* Brief, casual contact with many clients
* Give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any other religious activity as part of their service or duties
* Engage in partisan or non-partisan political activity during work hours
* Providing voter registration or transportation to vote
* Advancing funds to clients
* Depositing clients’ cash or checks in the bank, or withdrawing client funds from the bank
* Accepting money at any time, or gifts worth more than $50 (see gift policy in section 4.4.6), or payments from a client
* Performing household repairs
* Mowing the lawn or heavy gardening
* Shoveling snow
* Performing extensive, heavy housework, such as washing windows, scrubbing floors, laundry, ironing, vacuuming, cleaning bathroom, defrosting refrigerator, cleaning stove, etc.
* Heavy lifting (including clients), heavy objects, or large pieces of furniture
* Extensive shopping
* Preparing food for persons other than the client
* Preparing for or cleaning up after guests
* Caring for or training pets
* Any service for which the Volunteer Station is receiving compensation from any source
* Leading group recreational or social activities
* Signing legal papers or receiving legal papers on behalf of the client
* Driving a client’s vehicle without client signing a waiver provided by AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager
* Eating a client’s food, unless invited to share a meal by the client
* Purchasing alcohol for a client, unless the client is present in the store at the time of purchase
* Staying overnight at a client’s home or on a client’s property
* Inviting a client to the companion’s home, unless prior approval is obtained by the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff. Client never stays overnight. (The client is not covered under the CIMA insurance so the volunteer’s own homeowners or renters insurance would apply should something happen to the client while at the volunteer’s home.)
* Bringing guests or family members on a client shift without the permission of the Volunteer station supervisor
* Touching a client on areas of their bodies which would be covered by a one-piece bathing suit
* Assisting a client while in the bathroom or changing adult diapers
* Sleeping during volunteer service or official program activities
* Talking, texting, emailing, or otherwise using a cell phone while serving clients or participating in official program activities such as mandatory in-service training meetings, except during emergencies
* Possession of lethal weapons (including but not limited to handguns, shotguns and knives), or explosive materials on your person and/or within any property that may accompany you while performing MAS duties (i.e. purse, briefcase, automobile) while serving as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, RSVP Volunteers), is prohibited. Even if an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is licensed to carry a concealed weapon, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may not bring the weapon while volunteering for AmeriCorps Seniors. Possession of a lethal weapon while on duty may be cause for dismissal.
* In an effort to address potential health, safety and liability issues, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions may not bring an animal with them for any shifts, meetings, trainings or any activity in which the stipend is paid. Requests for accommodation that fall under the American’s with Disabilities Act may be made to a AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Coordinator and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Volunteers who participate in inappropriate activities may be subject to corrective action or dismissal from the program.

### [Foster Grandparents](#_Foster_Grandparents)

The Foster Grandparent Program provides one-on-one attention to at risk children and youth in schools, early childhood centers and after-school programs. Through a caring, nurturing, mentoring role, Foster Grandparents provide assistance and encouragement to help improve reading skills, school attendance, behavior and the well-being of children in their care. Foster Grandparents serve children with special or exceptional needs who are under 21 years of age. Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the children served. Each Foster Grandparent must be assigned to individual children in order to develop a personal relationship with each child.

**Appropriate Activities**

The following are appropriate activities for Foster Grandparents:

* Tutoring activities as designated by Assignment Plans
* Providing children in public/state/private schools, Head Start Centers, or day care centers with emotional support, assistance in developing basic learning skills
* Helping children who are abused or neglected to regain stability through contact with older adults and providing these children with emotional support and empathy
* Serve as mentors to students
* Talking (offering encouragement and support)
* Listening
* Academic assistance in reading, language, spelling, pre-literacy, science, math, life skills and/or social skills
* Arranging for social interaction with other students; singing, playing games, participation in crafts
* Encouraging appropriate behavior
* Acting as an example by reinforcing and modeling good manners
* Support and assistance in learning situations or therapy
* Work with the teacher on teacher-assigned tasks
* Read to or with the students
* Sing, tell stories, play games with the students
* Eat with the students
* Help students with their school work
* Encourage, praise, and support the students
* Provide support and assistance in learning situations or therapy
* Rock babies and feed them if in a daycare – according to Volunteer station policies
* Escort students to the office or another location if it’s on the Volunteer Station property and in plain view/public space
* Teach students a skill they have with the teacher’s permission. Example: knitting, languages, making paper airplanes, etc.
* Going out for recess and going on field trips is an option for the Volunteer if their health permits it
* Listen and learn along with the class so the FG can reinforce the class lessons the way the teacher wants it done
* Teach students to tie shoes, zip zippers, etc.
* Attend band, choir, orchestra or seasonal performances of assigned students at the Volunteer Station

**Appropriate physical contact with youth:**

Everyone has a different comfort level with physical contact and touch, and it’s no different with students. Here are some safe-touch guidelines from the “Working with Kids Training”, available in its full form online at www.mcpsmt.org.

Safe touch: Child has control of the touch. Limit touching to avoid confusion.

**Appropriate:**

• Shoulder-to-shoulder or side hugs

• Handshakes, high fives

• Get permission before touching

**Inappropriate:**

• Stroking the hair, head

• Piggyback rides

• Sitting on laps

• Full-frontal hugs

• Tickling, wrestling or any action that immobilizes or compromises the child’s movements

• Contact with the child’s private areas

• Any other action that could be construed to be sexual (massage, etc.).

**Things to keep in mind**

• No exchange of phone numbers or emails without parental permission.

• No exchange of gifts without permission from teacher and parent/ legal guardian.

Some students may be comfortable with touch and want to sit in your lap or give you a full frontal hug. As the adult and role model, you can direct that affection into a physically appropriate action like a side hug or sitting without frontal contact. By modeling appropriate touch, you are building trust with the student and helping them understand the ways it is safe and appropriate for a non-relative adult to touch them.

**Inappropriate Activities**

Inappropriate activities for Foster Grandparents include but are not limited to the following:

* Serving in staff roles
* Performing clerical, household, or custodial functions
* Serving as babysitters
* Acting as substitute teachers or teachers’ aides, group leaders, or other similar positions that would detract from the person-to- person relationship
* Assist with toiletry
* Providing respite care for parents or guardians
* Supervising children or staff
* Being left alone with children (another staff person should be present at all times)
* Give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any other religious activity as part of their service or duties
* Engage in partisan or non-partisan political activity during work hours
* Be assigned the primary role of correcting school papers, collating work or providing clerical assistance for the Volunteer Station
* Be assigned the primary role of meal time preparation and clean up
* Disciplining or punishing children in any way. Volunteers are not to assign consequences or punishments to children for their negative behavior. This is the teacher’s responsibility.
* Releasing a child to another person to be taken home from the Volunteer Station (this is the teacher’s responsibility)
* Discussing the children with parents (all parent inquiries should be directed to the teacher)
* Assisting children in the bathroom (Foster Grandparents can escort children TO the bathroom)
* Providing medical services
* Giving food, candy, or gifts to the children without prior approval from the teacher or staff member
* Teasing a child
* Sleeping during volunteer service or official program activities
* Disagreeing with other adults in front of the children they serve
* Interfere with the teach or substitute teacher’s role as the primary leader of the classroom
* Talking, texting, emailing, or otherwise using a cell phone in the classroom, while working with children, or during official program activities except during emergencies (emergency calls only should be taken outside the classroom)
* Transporting a child from the Volunteer Station in your personal vehicle
* Giving your or another Foster Grandparent’s phone number or address to a child or their family from the Volunteer Station (except children or family related to you) via social media, email, or via other online medium (see social media policy in section 4.6.2)
* Students inevitably look to volunteers as mentors, role models and even friends. Volunteers must keep the “mentor” and “role model” aspect of any friendship with a student at the forefront. Students will take guidance from a volunteer’s speech, behavior and opinions, so be conscious of what is said and what is shared in conversation.
* Inviting any child from the Volunteer Station into your home (except children related to you)
* Making home visits or phone calls to the children or their family from the Volunteer Station (except children or family related to you)
* Contacting or maintaining a relationship with a child or their family from the Volunteer Station (except children or family related to you)
* Possession of lethal weapons (including but not limited to handguns, shotguns and knives), or explosive materials on your person and/or within any property that may accompany you while performing MAS duties (ex. purse, briefcase, automobile) while serving as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, RSVP Volunteers), is prohibited. Even if an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is licensed to carry a concealed weapon, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may not bring the weapon while volunteering for AmeriCorps Seniors. Possession of a lethal weapon while on duty may be cause for dismissal.
* In an effort to address potential health, safety and liability issues, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions may not bring an animal with them for any shifts, meetings, trainings or any activity in which the stipend is paid. Requests for accommodation that fall under the American’s with Disabilities Act may be made to an AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Coordinator and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Volunteers who participate in inappropriate activities may be subject to corrective action or dismissal from the program.

## [Client Relations](#_Client_Relations)

### [Discrimination](#_Discrimination)

Volunteers are prohibited from discriminating against program staff, Volunteer Station staff, clients, clients’ families, children, children’s families, other volunteers, or anyone else with whom the volunteer may come in contact as part of their service duties on the grounds of race, creed, belief, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or political affiliation, or other legally protected status. Volunteers who violate the discrimination policy may be subject to corrective action, including dismissal.

### [Clients Served](#_Clients_Served)

**Senior Companions**

Senior Companions serve adults (age 21 or older), primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitation.

Priority is given to clients who have the greatest potential to achieve and maintain independence. One Senior Companion may simultaneously serve more than one client (for example, one client may assist a married couple); however, each client needs an individual Care Plan & Letter of Agreement form completed by the Volunteer Station supervisor.

Not every client referral from a Volunteer Station may be served. Clients with special circumstances may be matched with a Senior Companion volunteer when one becomes available who is equipped to handle such circumstances as:

* Clients who smoke
* Clients who have pets
* Clients with large wheelchairs, walkers, other mobility or medical devices

Senior Companions must sign a Care Plan & Letter of Agreement form for each client they regularly serve.

Clients will not be served if they or their homes provide an unsafe environment for the Senior Companion volunteer. Examples of unsafe conditions include but are not limited to:

* Clients with contagious diseases
* Bed bugs
* Unsanitary conditions such as clutter or accumulated garbage
* Presence of animals, insects, or rodents
* Inadequate heat or ventilation
* Extreme temperatures in home (too hot/cold)
* Presence of noxious fumes
* Presence of drugs, paraphernalia, or weapons
* Lack of safe parking facilities
* Improperly sealed or stored hazardous materials like gasoline, solvents, or paints
* Absence of or improperly placed/working smoke detectors
* Lack of a suitable emergency escape due to cluttered living area, lack or poorly maintained elevator and/or stairwell, or other barriers to exit
* Ice or snow on client’s sidewalk or driveway

A client whose home or person creates unsafe conditions that may harm the health of the volunteer will not be served until the condition has been addressed and remedied. Clients may be required to provide certification that they no longer provide a health threat for visitors.

A Senior Companion’s assignment to a client may be terminated if:

* The client develops acute functional difficulties
* The client improves to the point that the Senior Companion’s services are no longer needed
* The client’s family or friends assumes the Senior Companion’s care-giving role
* The relationship is no longer meaningful or satisfying to the Senior Companion or the client
* The Senior Companion’s physical or mental condition is detrimental to himself or the client served

Senior Companions seeking to terminate an assignment to a client should discuss the issue with the Volunteer Station supervisor and the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff.

**Foster Grandparents**

The Foster Grandparent Program provides one-on-one attention to children and youth most at risk in schools, early childhood centers and after-school programs. Through a caring, nurturing, mentoring role, Foster Grandparents provide assistance and encouragement to help improve reading skills, school attendance, behavior and the well-being of children in their care. Foster Grandparents serve children with special or exceptional needs who are under 21 years of age. Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the children served. Each Foster Grandparent must be assigned to individual children in order to develop a personal relationship with each child

Foster Grandparents may serve a child beyond the child’s 21st birthday if:

* The child has an intellectual disability
* The Foster Grandparent was assigned to the child before the child reached 21 years of age
* The continued assignment is in the best interest of the child and the Foster Grandparent (as determined by Volunteer Station staff)
* The Foster Grandparent, program staff, Volunteer Station staff, and the child’s parent or legal guardian agree to the assignment

Foster Grandparents must sign the Assignment Plan to track the progress of the children they serve.

A Foster Grandparent’s assignment to a child may be terminated if:

* The child’s need for individual attention through person-to-person relationship diminishes
* The relationship is no longer satisfying to the Foster Grandparent
* The child becomes unmanageable in terms of size, strength, or behavior
* The child reaches 21 years of age (see exception above)
* The Foster Grandparent and the child’s parent have a conflict
* The Foster Grandparent’s physical or mental condition is detrimental to himself or the child served

Foster Grandparents seeking to terminate an assignment to a child should discuss the issue with the Volunteer Station supervisor or teacher and the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff.

### [Relationships with Clients and Clients’ Families](#_Relationships_with_Clients)

Volunteers are prohibited from accepting money from clients or clients’ families at any time. Senior Companion clients or clients’ families may not hire the Senior Companion for respite care, gaps in in-home care, or for any other purpose at any time. Families of children served by the Foster Grandparent may not hire the volunteer for babysitting, respite care, or any other purpose at any time.

Senior Companions may not maintain romantic relationships with their clients. If a Senior Companion and their client develop a romantic relationship, the volunteer should immediately inform the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff so that they may be reassigned.

At all times volunteers should treat the clients, children, family members of those they serve, Volunteer Station staff, and program staff with respect. Questions about what may or may not be appropriate and respectful behavior can be directed to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff.

### [Confidentiality](#_Confidentiality)

As part of their service, Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers will know and have access to information concerning children, clients and other matters that must be held in the strictest confidence.

Missoula Aging Services (MAS) values the protection of confidential information. Volunteers will not discuss or otherwise divulge any information concerning a client/client family, student/student family, caregiver, peers, Volunteer Station staff and others whom they interact with as a Volunteer except on a need-to-know basis for the benefit of the client/student or Volunteer Station staff. Examples of the need-to-know basis are:

• When the client/student is in a life-threatening situation

• When the Volunteer suspects a client/student is being abused or neglected (Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions are designated mandatory reporters by law and are required to report suspected abuse)

Volunteers are responsible for holding this trust, as we believe everyone has the right to his or her own privacy. This is a moral and legal obligation.

Volunteers are allowed to discuss children or clients only with supervisors (the Volunteer Station supervisor/teacher and the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff) and at the appropriate time and place. Volunteers are prohibited from divulging information which may cause embarrassment to the person served or their family. When discussing children or clients, volunteers are not allowed to use last names. Volunteers are prohibited from giving out a client or child’s name, address, or phone number.

If MAS or your Volunteer Station has site meetings, much information is exchanged and overheard that all Volunteers are expected to keep confidential. This includes monthly mandatory in-service trainings. As Volunteers, you must use a common sense approach to deciding what needs to be shared in the group versus a private meeting. If you are ever in doubt, please ask the Volunteer Station or call Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff and we will direct you as to how to proceed.

Any breach of confidentiality may result in corrective action or dismissal.

[Refer to Appendix 8.5](#_Confidentiality_Form) for Confidentiality Form.

### [Suspected Abuse or Neglect](#_Suspected_Abuse_or)

**Mandatory Reporting - Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of any individual who receives services from any Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors program must be reported. All Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions are defined by Montana State law as Mandatory Reporters. Volunteers are required to report any actual or suspected instances immediately to their partnering agency supervisor and proper authorities. Contact Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff for assistance on reporting if desired.

[Refer to Appendix 8.6](#_Abuse,_Neglect_and/or) for Reporting Directions

Any employee, Volunteer or contract personnel alleged to have abused, neglected and/or exploited a person receiving services may be reassigned or suspended during the course of the investigation if there is any concern by Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff for the well-being of the alleged victim. Services of stipend Volunteer staff will also be suspended.

If a volunteer is accused of abuse, the volunteer should contact Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff immediately. The program director will contact appropriate authorities, which may include AmeriCorps, CIMA insurance, law enforcement, and the sponsoring agencies to make sure that proper procedures are followed. Whenever possible, a Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors staff member will be present to support the volunteer throughout the investigation. The volunteer will be suspended until the investigation is complete and the volunteer has been cleared. If the investigation reveals that the volunteer has abused or neglected a child or client, the volunteer will be dismissed from the program and is subject to all federal, state, and local laws.

Disregard for Mandatory Reporting Abuse and Neglect may be cause for dismissal from service.

### [Gifts](#_Gifts)

At certain times throughout the year, clients, clients’ families, children, children’s families, teachers, and Volunteer Station supervisors may desire to give gifts to the volunteer. Volunteers may not accept gifts that exceed a value of $50 on any single occasion or cumulatively from any single person or entity throughout the calendar year.

The MAS AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager may grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis for reasonable gifts offered in recognition of special occurrences like National Volunteer Appreciation Week, birthdays or other events celebrating Volunteer service. Requests for exceptions must be made in writing.

Volunteers are not to ask nor expect clients, clients’ families, children, children’s families, teachers, and Volunteer Station supervisors for gifts.

Volunteers who accept gifts exceeding a value of $50 on any single occasion or cumulatively from any single person or entity throughout the fiscal year or request gifts may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## [Volunteer Station Relations](#_Partner_Agency_Relations)

### [Placements and Assignments](#_Placements_and_Assignments)

The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff will assign Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers to partner agencies that have a current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors. MOUs must be renewed every three years. Volunteers may not serve as a Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent at a Volunteer Station that does not have a current MOU. The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors makes every effort to secure signatures on MOU renewals in a timely manner, to prevent any gaps in volunteer service. Volunteers will be given a two week notice if the MOU at the Volunteer Station where they are serving is set to expire within two weeks, and the MOU renewal has not been signed.

Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff work hard to ensure that volunteer placements and assignments are a good fit. However, volunteers may find that a placement or assignment is not a good fit for any number of reasons. Volunteers who wish to be reassigned to serve different clients or children should contact their Volunteer Station supervisor. Volunteers who wish to be placed with a different Volunteer Station should contact their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff. Requests will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

### [Relationships with Volunteer Station Supervisors](#_Relationships_with_Partner)

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers may not serve in a capacity where they will be under the supervision of or evaluated by family members or people with whom the volunteer has a personal relationship. These supervisory roles may include Volunteer Station supervisors, school principals, or teachers to which the volunteer is assigned. This policy may be applied in situations where a conflict of interest could occur in relationships which are not legally recognized, for example, when volunteers maintain a relationship similar to the relationships described above, or in the case of romantic relationships. If a volunteer and a Volunteer Station supervisor, teacher, or other person who supervises or evaluates a volunteer develops a romantic relationship, the volunteer should immediately contact the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff for direction.

### AmeriCorps requirements:

Per AmeriCorps requirements, it is important that volunteers understand the following regulations:

* Non-Discrimination: The Volunteer Station will not discriminate against Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers or in the operation of its program on the basis of race; color; national origin; limited English language proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.
* Religious and Political Activities: The Volunteer Station will not request, assign, or permit Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers to conduct or engage in religious, sectarian, or political activities.
* Displacement of Employees: The Volunteer Station will not assign Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers to any assignment which would displace employed workers or impair existing contracts for service.
* Compensation for service: The Volunteer Station shall not request or receive any compensation from FGP volunteers or from beneficiaries for services of FGP volunteers.
* Grant funds are not to be used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.

## [Technology](#_Technology)

### [Devices](#_Devices)

As part of their volunteer service, Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents may have access to computers, cell phones, or other devices belonging to their clients or Volunteer Station. Volunteers are not allowed to use devices belonging to clients or partner agencies for personal use, and should only use with permission from and in the presence of the client or Volunteer Station supervisor. Volunteers are prohibited from removing items from the presence of their owner; thus borrowing items from clients or partner agencies is prohibited.

Volunteers who do not comply with the Devices policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

### [Social Media](#_Social_Media)

Foster Grandparents are prohibited from contacting or maintaining a relationship with a child from the Volunteer Station or the child’s family via social media, email, or via other online medium. However, volunteers may maintain such relationships via online medium with family members or others with whom the volunteer had a prior relationship if they attend or work at the Volunteer Station. (For example, a volunteer may maintain a Facebook relationship with their own grandchildren if they attend the school where the volunteer serves.)

Senior Companions may maintain relationships with their clients via social media, email, and other online medium. Required to comply with confidentially policies. (See confidentiality policy in section 4.4.4)

Volunteers who do not comply with the Social Media policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

### [Photography](#_Photography)

Foster Grandparents may not take pictures of any children from the Volunteer Station where they serve at any time, except for school-related business where there has been a written consent form signed by the child’s parent or guardian. However, Foster Grandparents may take pictures of their own family members who attend or work at the Volunteer Station. Senior Companions may take pictures of their clients only if the client provides written permission for the Senior Companion volunteer to take a picture, and the original document providing permission is turned in to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors office. Client pictures are not to be displayed on Social Media for the protection and confidentiality of the client. Volunteers who do not comply with the Photography policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers are required to fill out a photo release form as part of the volunteer application. Volunteers who do not want to not have their photo taken must step out of pictures taken at official program events.

**4.7.4** Media Relations

Missoula Aging Services (MAS) staff works with the media to publicize and promote our programs.  In your role as a Volunteer, MAS staff may occasionally ask you to participate in an interview or photo shoot.  These opportunities are arranged through MAS staff. Your participation and statements are appreciated, but never mandatory.

If you are contacted directly by the media and asked for your photo, opinion or statement **as a Volunteer of Missoula Aging Services** regarding an event, program or service of MAS, please decline the opportunity and direct the media to contact MAS.

Employees and Volunteers of Missoula Aging Services should not speak with the media as an official or unofficial spokesperson of MAS without prior authorization.

## [Safety](#_Safety)

### [Safety Guidelines](#_Safety_Guidelines)

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining a safe working environment through their service and actions. Volunteers are required to:

* Observe all rules and regulations from their Volunteer Station as it relates to the safe and efficient performance of their volunteer service
* Report or correct any hazards, unsafe equipment, or unsafe practices as appropriate
* Report to the Volunteer Station supervisor and Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff any accidents or injuries that occur to themselves or others while volunteering or participating in official program activities within 24 hours
* Report to law enforcement, the Volunteer Station supervisor, and the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff any crimes, acts of violence, or threats of violence
* Refrain from coming in contact with infectious or hazardous materials, blood or bodily fluid, or any substance or equipment which may be hazardous or carry infectious diseases or viruses
* Wash hands before and after handling food
* Wash hands after using the restroom, nose-blowing, or grooming

Volunteers who do not practice proper safety procedures while volunteering or participating in official program activities may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

Senior Companion clients will not be served if they or their homes provide an unsafe environment for the Senior Companion volunteer, and will not be served until the condition has been addressed and remedied. Clients may be required to provide certification that they no longer pose a health threat for visitors. Volunteers who feel threatened or unsafe at their Volunteer Station or their client’s home should leave immediately and call their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff as soon as possible.

### [Accident Reporting](#_Accident_Reporting)

Any volunteer who is involved in an accident- including a car accident- involving personal injury or damage to someone’s belongings should immediately contact their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff, no more than 24 hours after the incident. The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff will interview the volunteer, and any other witnesses or participants as necessary. The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff will report the accident to the program director, who will take the appropriate action, which may involve contacting or coordinating with AmeriCorps, CIMA insurance, law enforcement, and the sponsoring agencies to make sure that proper procedures are followed. Volunteers who are physically capable but fail to report an accident to their Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff within 24 hours of the incident may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## [Drugs and Alcohol](#_Drugs_and_Alcohol)

Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent volunteers should report to their volunteer service and official program activities in a condition to perform their service and participate in program activities safely, efficiently, and professionally. Any volunteer who is found to be using controlled substances (or alcohol) improperly while serving as a volunteer or participating in official program activities may be dismissed from the program. Volunteers are prohibited from serving or consuming alcohol or being intoxicated while driving, volunteering, or participating in official program activities. Volunteers are prohibited from using illegal drugs or misusing prescription drugs. Volunteers are prohibited from possessing paraphernalia for illegal drug use while on duty. Volunteers are prohibited from driving if they have taken any prescription, over-the-counter medication, or other substance that is labeled as causing drowsiness as a side effect within four (4) hours prior to or at any time during their volunteer shift.

Volunteers are prohibited from purchasing or procuring illegal drugs for any client or child.

Senior Companions are prohibited from purchasing alcohol for clients, unless the client is present in the store at the time of the purchase, and would like to purchase alcohol legally for their personal consumption. Senior Companions who note or suspect an excessive use of alcohol or drugs by the assigned client should address these concerns with the Volunteer Station supervisor.

Any volunteer found to be in violation of the drugs and alcohol policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal, and if appropriate, reported to local law enforcement agencies.

## [Smoking](#_Smoking)

Foster Grandparents may not smoke or possess cigarettes, tobacco, E-cigarettes, Vapor or similar tobacco replacement products or smoking devices on school grounds or off campus at school events. Foster Grandparents may not purchase cigarettes, tobacco, E-cigarettes, Vapor or similar tobacco replacement products or smoking devices for students.

Senior Companions may not smoke in a client’s home, unless the client smokes in their own home and gives the volunteer permission to do so. However, if the client is on oxygen, smoking is not allowed in the home, even if the client gives permission to the volunteer. Smoking around oxygen is a severe fire hazard.

Volunteers must follow all federal, state, and local legislation as it pertains to designated smoking areas.

Volunteers found in violation of the smoking policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## [Weapons and Violent Behavior](#_Weapons_and_Violent)

Possession of lethal weapons (including but not limited to handguns, shotguns and knives), or explosive materials on your person and/or within any property that may accompany you while performing MAS duties (i.e. purse, briefcase, automobile) while serving as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, RSVP Volunteers), is prohibited. Even if an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is licensed to carry a concealed weapon, the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer may not bring the weapon while volunteering for AmeriCorps Seniors. Possession of a lethal weapon while on duty may be cause for dismissal. Intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm to any person while volunteering or during an official program activity, or causing reasonable apprehension of such harm, is prohibited. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from initiating or participating in any violent behavior.

Volunteers who participate in any acts of violent behavior or do not comply with the weapons policy will be subject to corrective action or dismissal, and may be reported to local law enforcement agencies.

## [Driving](#_Driving)

Volunteers may provide transportation to other volunteers in the program for official program events and trainings. Senior Companions may also provide transportation to their clients. Senior Companions cannot drive the client’s friends or family members as part of their volunteer service nor can the volunteer bring their own friend or family member on a transportation trip/outing with the client.

All volunteers who drive to/from their volunteer site, or transport clients must maintain their vehicle in safe operating condition. Volunteers must abide by the state and local driving laws.

Volunteers must practice safe driving practices while commuting to or from volunteer service or official program activities or while transporting clients. Any volunteer or client who gives a Volunteer Station supervisor or Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff reason to believe that a volunteer who drives clients is an unsafe driver may be asked to discontinue driving clients until the situation is reviewed and resolved.

[Refer to Appendix 8.7](#_Driving_Agreement) Driving Agreement

### [License and Insurance](#_License_and_Insurance)

All volunteers who drive to/from their volunteer site, or transport clients or volunteers must have a valid driver's license and have the minimum amount of automobile liability insurance coverage required by law. Volunteers who drive without a valid license or without the minimum amount of automobile liability insurance covered by law may be subject to corrective action or dismissal

### [Seat Belts](#_Seat_Belts)

Volunteers must abide by the state and local laws regarding seat belts and buckle up on every trip. Every time a volunteer transports other people in their vehicle, including other volunteers or clients, all people in the vehicle must have and use seat belts. (Foster Grandparents may not transport children in their vehicles.) The driver is responsible for ensuring all persons in their vehicle have and use fully-functioning seat belts during every trip. Volunteers who do not use seat belts while driving, either for themselves or their passengers, may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

### [Drugs and Alcohol](#_Drugs_and_Alcohol_1)

Volunteers may not knowingly put themselves or their clients at risk while driving. Volunteers are prohibited from driving if they have taken any prescription, over-the-counter medication, or other substance that is labeled as causing drowsiness as a side effect within four (4) hours prior to or at any time during their volunteer shift. Any volunteer who is found to be using or under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol while driving to/from their Volunteer Station/volunteer site, driving clients, or driving to/from participation in official program activities may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

### [Cell Phones](#_Cell_Phones)

Volunteers are prohibited from using cell phones or Bluetooth systems while driving to or from their volunteer service, official program activities or while driving Senior Companion clients. Volunteers who use cell phones while driving may be subject to corrective action or dismissal. Volunteers may pull off the road into a parking lot, fully stop the vehicle, put the vehicle in park, and then make or take a cell phone call.

Foster Grandparents are prohibited from using their cell phones in the classroom or while working with children. Foster Grandparents who need to take or make an emergency phone call or text message should leave the classroom or wait until a designated recess or break period. Senior Companions should refrain from taking or making phone calls or sending/receiving text messages while serving a client except during emergencies. All volunteers should refrain from talking, texting, or otherwise using electronic devices during mandatory in-service training meetings and other official program activities. If volunteers must accept or return an emergency phone call or text message during mandatory in-service training meetings or other official program activities, the volunteer must exit the room to do so.

Volunteers who do not comply with the Devices policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

### [Driving a Client’s Vehicle](#_Driving_a_Client’s)

Under a case by case circumstance, a Companion may drive a client’s vehicle with a waiver provided by AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager and signed by the client. The client’s car must meet all licensing, insurance and safety regulations listed in the handbook.

Volunteers who drive their clients in the client’s vehicle without having a signed waiver may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## [Political and Religious Activity](#_Political_and_Religious)

Volunteers may not engage in the following political activities while on duty or while off duty but presenting themselves as Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, or volunteers through the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors:

* Influence the outcome of any election for public office
* Influence the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals
* Use any program resources for the purpose of attempting to promote or defeat a candidate for public office, ballot measure, or other legislation
* Directly or indirectly use the name Missoula Aging Services, the Senior Companion Program, or the Foster Grandparent Program in the endorsement of political candidates, initiatives, referenda, or in supporting or opposing a position on other political issues
* Engage in voter registration activity while on duty as a volunteer
* Transport voters (including clients) to polls or similarly help with an election
* Participate in any unlawful demonstration or civil disorder
* Engage in lobbying activities

However, volunteers may be involved in legitimate group activities of their Volunteer Station that may involve conducting a legal petition. Volunteers who wish to campaign for public office should request a leave of absence if the candidacy will prevent them from being able to perform their service as a Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent.

Per Client Care Plan & Letter of Agreement Companions may drive a client to Bible Studies. Foster Grandparents may serve in faith-based schools.

Volunteers may not, at any time, give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or attempt to influence a client’s or children religious beliefs.

Volunteers may be involved in political and/or religious activity when they are not serving or representing themselves as a Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent volunteer.

Volunteers who do not comply with the political and religious policies stated above may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## [Dress Code and Appearance](#_Dress_Code_and)

Volunteers must practice good personal hygiene. Volunteers should check with their Volunteer Station regarding the site’s specific dress code and appearance policy. Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Program guidelines include:

* Clothing must be neat, clean, comfortable, washable, in reasonable condition, and appropriate for the Volunteer Station and activities
* Undershirts, or shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans are prohibited
* Hair must be clean and well groomed
* Footwear should be comfortable and safe
* Caution should be used in wearing jewelry, buttons, or clothes that could harm clients, children, or the volunteer
* Fingernails should be well groomed and an appropriate length that will not cause injury to clients, children, or the volunteer
* Use of cologne, perfume, or after-shave lotion is discouraged
* Smelling of cigarette smoke is prohibited
* Bad body and breath odor are prohibited. Volunteers must practice good personal hygiene, bathe regularly, and brush their teeth/dentures on a regular basis
* Volunteers must wear their name badge during volunteer hours. Name badges must be returned to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff if the volunteer resigns or is dismissed from the program

Volunteers who do not comply with the dress code and appearance policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

# **[Corrective Action](#_Corrective_Action)**

## [Violations of Volunteer Policy](#_Violations_of_Volunteer)

The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors intends to provide a meaningful experience for each volunteer and the people they serve. Occasionally, corrective action must be taken to ensure a quality program and positive experience for all. Examples of actions that may result in corrective action include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to comply with the policies outlined in this Volunteer Policy Handbook, including but not limited to not submitting paperwork on time or in a completed manner
2. Disregard for Confidentiality policy
3. Discrimination
4. Failure to accept supervision from the Volunteer Station supervisor or the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff
5. Physical and/or verbal abuse of a client/student, showing disrespect, insensitivity, or discrimination toward clients, children, families of clients and children, the Volunteer Station supervisor, the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff, other volunteers, or other people with whom the volunteer may come in contact while volunteering or during official program activities (see section 4.4.5)
6. Repeated absences without leave
7. Inappropriate conduct: Inappropriate behavior while serving or participating in official program activities, as outlined in section 4.3

Inappropriate behavior while off duty that may reflect poor judgment and inability to effectively provide services to the community

1. Unwillingness or failure to cooperate with the assigned Volunteer Station or Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors Program
2. Unwillingness or failure to serve the contracted hours committed per week
3. Repeated refusal to take an assignment when not serving 15 hours per week
4. Failure to follow the Care Plan & Letter of Agreement or Child Assignment Plan
5. Inability to carry out assigned duties due to poor health
6. Inability to understand and follow direction
7. Unwillingness or failure to attend mandatory in-service trainings
8. Consuming alcoholic beverages or being under the influence of illegal drugs during the performance of service activities
9. Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs, impairing the ability to perform the assigned duties during service activities
10. Disregard for Mandatory Reporting Abuse and Neglect procedures
11. Disregard for Emergency Procedures
12. A Volunteer has not informed MAS Volunteer Services that allegations have been made by the Volunteer Station about unsatisfactory performance
13. Reports from the Volunteer Station that a Volunteer does not meet the expectations of the volunteer job

## [Corrective Process](#_Corrective_Process)

The corrective process **may** include any of the following actions or may move directly to dismissal depending of the severity of the performance issue or violation:

### [Verbal Warning](#_Verbal_Warning)

When there is an issue with the volunteer’s performance or a violation, the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff and/or Volunteer Station supervisor will visit with the volunteer seeking resolution, possibly giving the volunteer a verbal warning. Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff will make a written note of the visit/verbal warning for the volunteer’s file.

### Behavior Modification Plan

When there is an issue with the volunteer’s performance or a violation, the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff and/or Volunteer Station supervisor may issue a Behavior Modification Plan.

The Behavior Modification Plan will include the date and time of the incident(s), a description of the performance/violation and the Behavior Modifications required as a result of the infraction. The Behavior Modification Plan will require the volunteer’s signature and will be placed in the volunteer’s file with a copy provided to the volunteer.

### [Reassignment](#_Reassignment)

Although an offense may not warrant dismissal from the program, Volunteer Station staff may request a volunteer’s removal from their Volunteer Station. Reassignment for volunteers who are removed from their current placement at the request of the Volunteer Station will be considered on a case-by-case basis. When appropriate, the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff will try to find another placement for the volunteer. If no other placement is available or appropriate, the volunteer may be required to take a leave of absence until an assignment can be made.

### [Suspension](#_Suspension)

Volunteers who fail to comply with program policies may also be placed on suspension until the issue is corrected. For example, volunteers who fail to turn in certain paperwork to meet program requirements, such as the income verification form or the annual physical, may be suspended until the form is turned in to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff. Volunteers may also be placed on suspension while an accusation is investigated. Volunteers will not be allowed to serve or participate in official program activities, nor will they receive stipend and mileage reimbursement until the issue is corrected and the volunteer’s suspension is lifted.

# **[Separation](#_Separation)**

## [Resignation](#_Resignation)

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparents may choose to leave the program at any time. The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors requests that volunteers submit a dated, written statement to Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff stating the date that they will resign and their reason. The Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff also requests that volunteers give their Volunteer Station, clients, and the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff a notice of at least two weeks when they resign. Volunteers who resign must return their volunteer badge and parking passes to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff. They will also be paid out any accrued leave time, pending funding availability. Volunteers who resign and later decide they would like to volunteer again will need to reapply to the program, including undergoing fingerprinting again.

## [Dismissal](#_Dismissal)

Volunteers who fail to comply with program policies will be subject to dismissal from the program. Whenever possible, volunteers will be notified of their dismissal in person. When not possible, notification of dismissal will be made in writing. Volunteers who are dismissed must return their volunteer badge and parking passes to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff.

### [Eligibility-based Dismissal](#_Eligibility-based_Dismissal)

If a volunteer’s circumstances change and they are no longer eligible to participate in the Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent Program, the volunteer will be dismissed. Examples of a dismissal based on ineligibility include but are not limited to:

* The volunteer’s annual income increases to more than the eligible level set by AmeriCorps
* The volunteer is unable to serve a minimum of 15 hours per week
* The volunteer’s fingerprint clearance is revoked or suspended by the Montana Department of Justice
* The volunteer is required to be listed on the National Sex Offender Public Registry

See [section 2.2](#_Eligibility) for eligibility requirements. Volunteers dismissed due to ineligibility may reapply if their eligibility status changes.

### [Funding-based Dismissal](#_Funding-based_Dismissal)

In the circumstance that there is a reduction or restriction in funding for the Senior Companion and/or Foster Grandparent Programs, the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff may use the following or other methods to address the funding limitation:

* Reducing the number of hours all volunteers may serve (for example: all volunteers may be limited to serving a determined amount of hours per week)
* Dismissing the last volunteers enrolled
* Dismissing the volunteers serving the least number of hours

In these circumstances, a dismissal will be preceded whenever possible by at least two weeks written notice to the volunteer. A copy of the notice will be sent to the current Volunteer Station. Volunteers dismissed due to a funding reduction may or may not be paid out any accrued leave time, pending funding availability, and are eligible to re-apply.

### [Performance-based Dismissal](#_Performance-based_Dismissal)

A performance-based dismissal may occur as the result of corrective action process, for violation of any policy or for any of the following reasons:

* Elder abuse
* Child abuse
* Abuse of the Volunteer Station staff, program staff, or property
* Identifying yourself as a staff member of the Volunteer Station or program staff
* Sexual misconduct, including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances or attention, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which others may find intimidating, hostile, or offensive
* Possession or use of a firearm or weapon while participating in official program activities
* Use of alcohol, controlled substances, or illegal substances while volunteering or participating in official program activities
* Misrepresentation of volunteer hours, mileage, or meals to defraud the program
* Falsification of physical examination, income statement, or information on the application form
* Financial misconduct with clients
* Theft, embezzlement, or misuse of the funds or property belonging to the Volunteer Station, Volunteer Station staff, clients, or children
* Actions that endanger the health and safety of the Volunteer Station staff, children, clients, program staff, or families of clients and children served by the volunteer
* Use of the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion position for personal gain beyond stipend payments and reimbursement. Personal gain may include political influence, taking items from clients or their family, being named in a client’s will, invitations to children’s birthday parties, etc.
* Excessive absence or absences from an assignment for three or more consecutive days without notice to the Missoula Aging Services AmeriCorps Seniors Staff or the Volunteer Station
* Refusal or the inability of the volunteer to carry out a reasonable and necessary function of the Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent role
* A decision to remove the volunteer from the current Volunteer Station has been made and no opportunity exists for an appropriate alternative assignment.
* Failure of the volunteer to abide by the rules and policies set forth in this Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent policy handbook

Volunteers who are dismissed from the program for performance-based reasons will not be eligible to reapply, and will not be eligible for a leave pay out upon exiting the program. However, these volunteers may participate in the grievance process if they are no longer on probationary status during their first six months of service (see section 2.5).

### [Grievance Process](#_Grievance_Process)

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to provide a just and equitable method for the prompt resolution of grievances without discrimination, coercion, restraint, or reprisal against the volunteer or the child or client being served who may submit or be involved in a grievance. The procedure is as follows:

Anytime a Volunteer feels that he or she has been treated unfairly by a Volunteer Station manager, the Volunteer may request an interview with Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff who will deal fairly and impartially with the situation. If a Volunteer feels that he or she has been treated unfairly by the Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors staff, he or she may request an interview with the AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager.

Any Volunteer who has been asked to resign or is dismissed from the program may appeal this decision through the Appeals Committee of the Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors Advisory Council.

Appeal Process:

• Must request an Appeal in writing within 30 days of the dismissal

• Within 15 working days of receipt of the written request, AmeriCorps Seniors will detail in writing the reasons supporting termination

• The volunteer will respond in writing within 15 working days to the letter from AmeriCorps Seniors supporting termination. The letter will address only those statements listing reasons for termination

• Both of the letters, appropriate materials and the volunteer’s personnel file will be given to the Grievance Committee of the AmeriCorps Seniors Advisory Council

• Within 20 working days of receipt of materials the Grievance Committee will schedule and convene a hearing with the volunteer. The volunteer may select an individual of their choice to attend the hearing.

• The decision of the Appeals Committee is final

### [Complaint Process](#_Complaint_Process)

The complainant is protected against retaliation. Retaliation or retribution of any kind taken against an individual as a result of that person filing a complaint is strictly prohibited. Any person found to have violated this policy of non-retaliation is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**In Case of Emergency**

**General guidelines in the case of an accident or illness involving a client or student:**

**If you are serving in a school or nursing home type facility, follow the procedures of that Volunteer Station. Contact the appropriate person on site for assistance.**

**If you are serving in a private home or are in public with the client:**

1. **Assess the situation:**

* In case of emergency, call 911
* DO NOT pick up someone who has fallen
* DO NOT touch someone who is on the floor
* DO NOT administer any medication
* In the event emergency responders (911, fire department, police, ambulance etc.) are called, it is acceptable to break confidentiality and share pertinent information with the responders.
* If you are uncertain about the seriousness of the situation, call 911.
* **Process non-life-threatening emergencies according to your Volunteer Station standards and according to the Client Care Plan.**

1. **Always report the emergency situation to your Volunteer Station manager immediately. Leave a message if necessary.**
2. **Senior Companions, if the situation warrants, call the emergency contact on the Client Care Plan.**
3. **Have your copy of the Client Care Plan available at all times so you can answer questions for the paramedics, such as emergency contact, etc., if needed.**
4. **It is considered an emergency situation if a client misses a scheduled appointment or they cannot be contacted by phone. The failure to report a client that cannot be contacted to the Volunteer Station manager is considered abuse or neglect and may be cause for dismissal.**

**Once Emergency is Under Control**

In all cases, always report the incident to Missoula AmeriCorps Seniors within 24 hours. Leave a message if necessary. Information that needs to be included:

* Observe all circumstances surrounding the accident or injury.
* List the names of people who were present when the incident occurred or saw the accident happen.
* List the sequence of events as they occurred.
* Explain what you did in response to the incident.
* Identify who was notified of the incident.