

AmeriCorps Disallowed Costs Associated with Sex Offender Who Failed to Properly Register

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AmeriCorps OIG investigated allegations that the Good Samaritan Society (GSS), Sioux Falls, SD, allowed a Senior Companion Program (SCP) Volunteer to serve for over a year, even though GSS was aware the SCP Volunteer was a convicted sex offender. The investigation found that the SCP Volunteer had been convicted of a sex offense in Wisconsin before moving to South Dakota. At the time, Wisconsin did not require the SCP Volunteer to register as a sex offender. The SCP Volunteer was unaware that he was required by South Dakota law to register as a sex offender upon moving to South Dakota but disclosed his sex offense to GSS when enrolling in SCP. GSS permitted his enrollment because his National Sex Offender Public Website check did not return derogatory information. Two years later, AmeriCorps flagged the SCP Volunteer based on a proactive review of SCP Volunteers' criminal histories. GSS then confirmed with local law enforcement that the SCP Volunteer was required to register as a sex offender in South Dakota. The SCP Volunteer subsequently resigned from the program.

Agency/Administrative Actions

In response to an AmeriCorps OIG recommendation, AmeriCorps disallowed \$4,051.85 from GSS to recoup the funds improperly paid to the SCP Volunteer. AmeriCorps OIG also recommended that AmeriCorps educate and encourage grantees to make functional, risk-based decisions about whether and under what circumstances to enroll an eligible individual with a relevant criminal history and to train AmeriCorps staff and grantees to recognize and seek guidance when confronted with a multijurisdictional criminal history check issue. AmeriCorps responded that it encourages AmeriCorps staff and grantees to coordinate with the Office of the Chief Risk Officer when they have complex or ambiguous criminal history check questions, and AmeriCorps training on National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) informs grantees that they may establish additional suitability criteria above the minimum statutorily required NSCHC.

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