

AmeriCorps Members Displaced Staff While Earning Education Award Leads to Disallowed Costs

Closed 9/5/2017

A Hotline caller alleged that staff at the YMCA of Cass and Clay County (YMCA), Fargo, ND, were using AmeriCorps members (members) to fill staff positions and perform duties unrelated to their AmeriCorps position descriptions.

The CNCS-OIG investigation disclosed that the YMCA staff violated 45 CFR § 2540.100(f) *Nondisplacement*, when they knowingly allowed 13 members to fill vacant staff positions (daycare teachers/assistant teachers) with the YMCA's School Age Learning Center (SLC) program for up to three months until the YMCA could hire suitable employees.

Additionally, the YMCA staff violated 42 U.S.C. § 12602 when they improperly awarded Segal Education Awards to eight members whose portion of service hours consisted of staff displacement.

The YMCA staff violated the terms and conditions of the AmeriCorps grant when a YMCA staff employee performed the duties of both the AmeriCorps program coordinator and AmeriCorps volunteer coordinator even though the grant application stated the YMCA would have separate employees performing the duties. Additionally, both positions were charged to the grant as matching funds.

The YMCA also violated the terms and conditions of the AmeriCorps grant when they assigned members to the YMCA's XERZONE so they could watch the children of patrons who utilized the YMCA's facilities (exercise room, gym, pool, classes). Members assigned to the YMCA's XERZONE experienced significant amount of idle time when children were not present. During those idle times, the YMCA did not assign any productive service for the members.

Agency/Administrative Actions:

CNCS management concurred with CNCS-OIG recommendations and took the following action: (1) disallowed and recouped \$22,312 in stipend payments disbursed to thirteen members placed in staff positions; (2) disallowed and recouped \$22, 237.86 in Segal Education Awards awarded to eight members whose hours included staff displacement; and (3) elevate the risk level of the North Dakota Commission due to the poor program management of the YMCA grant. CNCS management declined to disallow any staff salary used as non-Federal match because the YMCA's match contribution (50 percent of total project) exceeded the legally required match amount (38 percent of the total project).

In addition to the aforementioned action by CNCS management, the North Dakota Commission implemented a corrective action plan to ensure the YMCA provided better training to the members and utilized the members more effectively.

Case D: 2016-006

