



Relinquishment Announcement Impact

We were recently notified that the State of Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, is reluctantly relinquishing its grant agreement with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to operate the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), effective December 31st of this year.

Why: DHS was informed that the current model of subcontracting to the 13 non-profit agencies that operate a FG Program does not comply with provision 45 CFR-2552-22 in the federal regulations.

Facts:

- This contract model has been operating for 44 of the past 51 years in Wisconsin. Through this grant which has been renewed successfully every year, FGPs now serve in more than 20 counties. This statewide model makes it possible for smaller programs and programs in rural area to participate and includes state funding and support.
- 325 low income seniors serve in the program and benefit from the tax-free stipend earned. It pays for Medicare supplements and other basic household expenses. They also have improved physical and mental health, continued activity and involvement in their communities, decreased isolation, and live happier and healthier lives knowing that their lives have purpose again.
- These seniors in turn provide supportive services to more than 4000 - 6000 at-risk children in public schools, homes for the developmentally disabled, early education centers, and youthful offenders at Lincoln-Hills and Copper Lake School for Girls.

We understand that CNCS is developing future funding opportunities for replacement sponsors, but because of the restrictive regulations and strict state monitoring by the federal office, the federal state director is concerned as to whether or not there will be any interest from other non-profits. Additionally, because of the grant qualifications, we fear more than half of the existing programs will not qualify and the other half will struggle to maintain the 80/20 split, which states only 20% of funds can be spent on administration.

Our Concerns:

- We are concerned ample time has not been given to find a solution as this *error* was first discovered in February of this year - only five short months ago.
- AmeriCorps, another CNCS program, is allowed to sub-contract, but Senior Corps is not. Senior Corps started in 1965 and AmeriCorps started in 1994. It is interesting that these regulations are not in alignment.

We believe it will be a real travesty to destroy an effective model based on the narrow interpretation of regulations and that it was never the intention of the law to destroy the programs in Wisconsin. More importantly, the lives and well-being of Wisconsin seniors, minorities, veterans, children who are economically disadvantaged or have special or exceptional needs, children from single-family homes, and children at risk of re-offending, and all families and communities who benefit from this uniquely successful intergenerational program will be negatively impacted by the inability to issue a waiver.

The best solution would be a waiver of these regulations. If a waiver is not granted and no other agencies apply for the replacement grant; the state will no longer have a Foster Grandparent Program; a program that has been the fabric of Wisconsin communities for more than 50 years.

Margie Zutter, President
WISCA
4106 Cherokee Drive
Madison, WI 53711
(608) 695-0856 (cell)

Scott Walker
Governor



DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

1 WEST WILSON STREET
P O BOX 2659
MADISON WI 53701-2659

Kitty Rhoades
Secretary

State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Telephone: 608-266-1251
Fax: 608-267-2832
TTY: 711 or 800-947-3529

July 28, 2016

Dear Foster Grandparent Program Partner,

After extended discussions with the Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS), which administers the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) at the federal level, we have been notified that the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) will no longer be permitted to operate the program under the current model, in which we subcontract program funds to agencies that directly operate local FGPs.

As the Corporation explained to us, federal rules prohibit states from subcontracting FGP funds to program agencies. The intent of this prohibition is to ensure direct fiscal and administrative oversight of all program operations by the agency that holds the contract with CNCS. Wisconsin's subcontracting model, in place for more than 44 years, is not consistent with these rules. While a number of organizational alternatives were discussed with CNCS, it was ultimately determined that DHS would be unable to meet these requirements.

As a result, DHS plans to relinquish its FGP grant at the end of the current grant period (December 31, 2016). We want to assure you that this decision was not made lightly. It is important to DHS to sustain critically important FGP services and to support and promote this effective model of older adult volunteer activity in our state. In the months before that effective date, CNCS will provide a notice of funding opportunity for replacement sponsors. DHS will continue to work with CNCS during this process to minimize disruption to program participants. We will also work with partners to ensure that participants have been provided information about aging programs and benefits in their communities.

DHS particularly values the service your agency has provided in operating the Foster Grandparent Program. We plan to convene a teleconference with you and all current program supervisors to gather input on planned transition activities. We will be contacting you soon with further information about this conference call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carrie Molke'.

Carrie Molke, Director
Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources

Scott Walker
GovernorState of Wisconsin
Department of Health ServicesTelephone: 608-266-1251
Fax: 608-267-2832
TTY: 711 or 800-947-3529Kitty Rhoades
Secretary

July 28, 2016

India McCanse, State Program Director
Corporation for National Community Service
Wisconsin State Program Office
517 E. Wisconsin Ave, Suite 462
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Ms. McCanse:

We acknowledge the receipt of your letter on July 15, 2016 requesting that Wisconsin relinquish its grant agreement with the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) to operate the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). It is our understanding that provision 45 CFR 2552-22 in the federal regulations related to the operation of the Foster Grandparent Program prohibits the subcontracting of grant funds for purposes of program operation by agencies external to a state government grantee. Wisconsin's Foster Grandparent Program has operated successfully on this basis for 44 years, and continued DHS operation of the program would only be feasible under the subcontracting model within our current organizational structure.

During several meetings over the course of the past several months we have discussed with you the possibility of waiving this requirement and permitting us to continue subcontracting with provider agencies. Your letter indicates that a waiver will not be forthcoming. As a result we will agree to relinquish our Foster Grandparent Program grant agreement effective December 31, 2016.

We are disappointed by the loss of this program which Wisconsin pioneered and grew to one of the strongest in the country. It is our expectation that CNCS will develop a FGP provider network in Wisconsin that will sustain the program and minimize the impact of this change on our communities, the 325 Foster Grandparents, and the 4,000 children they serve throughout the state. To that end we are committed to assisting CNCS through an effective transition to a new program structure.

We will be communicating with our program FGP supervisors throughout the state regarding this decision. We believe that their questions and input will strengthen the planning process. To help us prepare for these discussions we ask that CNCS share information about the intended notice of funding opportunity. Please contact Neal Minogue of my staff at (608) 266-2036 for assistance as you plan for this transition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carrie Molke'.

Carrie Molke, Director
Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources