

Effective:  
October 20, 2017



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Cancels: N/A

## **POLICY**

Approved by:  
*Mark Duncan*

See Also: Member Service Agreement; FRM-125A;

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# **POL – 125**

## **MANAGING LIMITED TELESERVICE BY MEMBERS**

This Policy applies to all Washington Service Corps (WSC) AmeriCorps members, including Washington Reading Corps (WRC) members.

Telework has become increasingly popular across the private, public and nonprofit sectors. Washington Service Corps (WSC) acknowledges there are a number of risks and liabilities associated with this approach to service. So in order to support limited opportunity for a WSC AmeriCorps member to perform teleservice, a policy and procedures has been developed to help mitigate the risk associated with this type of service.

At the federal level the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and several programs have been investigated due to the supervisory challenges and increased risk of abuse with teleservice. CNCS has provided guidance that directs programs to put in place internal controls for detecting and preventing time and attendance abuse to ensure supervisors can tell when their members are actually serving and can verify that service was performed during the time of teleservice.

The funds for CNCS and AmeriCorps are provided with public funding therefore it is imperative that a system is in place that safeguards these funds. Teleservice lends itself to abuse because it takes place without onsite supervision or the observation of fellow members or co-workers. Any use of teleservice must be subject to reasonable controls that address this vulnerability. With appropriate controls, teleservice can be a limited available option.

1. Washington Service Corps member teleservice is appropriate only when the activity can be meaningfully supervised and the hours independently validated. Advanced authorization by the supervisor must be provided prior to the teleservice taking place. Documentation of the teleservice outcome or project must be provided by the member to the supervisor to verify.

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2. The maximum teleservice hours that can be served in any one month is 6 hours. Teleservice hours cannot be “banked” and used in future months. Teleservice is not intended to be used as alternative service to make up a significant amount of missed hours. Nor is it a replacement for holidays, breaks that a school or organization may take during a service term or for extended inclement weather situations. Other protocol does exist to help address such situations. Teleservice is intended to be used for an occasional purpose with specific approval and verification.
3. Teleservice hours will be reported as service or training (depending on how time was spent) hours on the AmeriCorps member’s timesheet.
4. Teleservice hours will not include a program beneficiary, participant, student or other client of the sponsoring organization or the project site.
5. One example of teleservice may include completing online training. In this example, an audit trail would be produced by which a supervisor can verify the hours claimed. Where the service activity results in a work product, a supervisor can reach a reasoned judgment as to whether the product reflects the number of hours claimed by the member. Tasks performed while logged into a grantee information system may result in a record of the member’s level of activity. Hours devoted to planning can be validated by reference to a predetermined standard listed in the WSC Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form. A standard might be allowing no more than one hour of planning for each hour of presentation.
6. As with all grant-funded service, teleservice activities must be within the scope and purpose of the project site’s Request for Application (RFA) and the activities contemplated in the application. In other words, the project should not ordinarily create teleservice activities solely to accommodate a request for teleservice, nor should the grantee authorize additional teleservice activities late in the service term in order to enable a member to accrue the hours necessary to earn an education award.
7. The WSC Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form will be used to document teleservice. When supervisors approve a member timesheet that contains teleserved hours, the supervisor will ensure accuracy of teleservice hours by referring to the WSC Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form.
8. The member has a legal duty to record time and attendance accurately and is subject to criminal penalties for knowingly misstating hours. The project site staff may be subject to legal penalties for knowingly submitting false claims to the government or for misleading the government about the extent of their approval and validation activities.

9. Project sites are to ensure their liability insurance will cover a member serving in their agency for incidents that could occur while a member is teleserving.
10. Members requesting teleservice arrangements under the auspices of reasonable accommodation of a disability are excluded from this policy and procedure, as those requests are covered under other laws and policies.
11. WSC will monitor quality and effectiveness of its internal controls, including the execution of the Member Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form, and will initiate corrective action when deemed appropriate.
12. Teleservice hours that occur prior to executing approval through the completion of the Member Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form will be disallowed by WSC.
13. Teleservice is a privilege, not a right. WSC reserves the right to refuse to allow members to remote work or teleserve. WSC can withdraw that privilege for mission related purposes, if supervision becomes too burdensome or if hours or work product cannot be validated.