

Effective: October 20, 2017
Revised: September 1, 2019
Cancels: N/A



SME Author: Mark Duncan
Approved: James Trujillo

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Focus Area:
Site and Member Services

See Also: Member Service Agreement; POL-120; POL-121

POL – 125

MANAGING LIMITED TELESERVICE BY MEMBERS

This Policy/Procedure applies to all Washington Service Corps (WSC) AmeriCorps members, including Washington Reading Corps (WRC) and any other program managed by WSC.

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.

In general, teleservice is discouraged due to the difficulty in supervision and the potential for fraud. Teleservice is a privilege, not a right. WSC reserves the right to refuse to allow members to remote work or teleserve. WSC may withdraw that privilege for mission related purposes, if supervision becomes too burdensome, or if hours or work product cannot be validated.

Members interested in teleservice must have a compelling reason to do so and the teleservice must be approved by both the site staff and WSC. The teleservice must be in alignment with the member PDF and the mission of the partner site. In all cases, teleservice will be limited in duration and scope.

PROCEDURE:

1. Teleservice is Appropriate When it Can be Validated

- a. 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. The partner site must have the appropriate technology to monitor and track teleservice.

2. Members May Count up to 6 Hours Per Month of Teleservice

- a. 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. Member Reports Hours as Service or Training

- a. Teleservice hours will be reported as service or training (depending on how time was spent) hours on the AmeriCorps member’s timesheet.

4. Teleservice Will Not Be Performed With Beneficiaries

- a. Teleservice hours will not include a program beneficiary, participant, student or other client of the sponsoring organization or the project site. Direct, in-person service to the community should not be performed as “teleservice”. Any service with public contact should be performed in sponsoring organization-approved locations, with normal support and oversight, from service site staff.

5. Members Might Do Online Training Via Teleservice

- a. 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.

6. Teleservice Activities Should Be in Alignment With The WSC Project

- a. As with all grant-funded service, teleservice activities should 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.

7. Member & Site Staff Completes the WSC Member Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form

- a. The member & site staff will use the WSC Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form to document prior approval and completion of teleservice. When site staff approves a member timesheet that contains teleservice hours, the supervisor will ensure accuracy of teleservice hours by referring to the WSC Teleservice Authorization and Verification Form. Any teleservice hours taken without proper approval outlined in this policy will be disallowed by WSC.

8. Site Staff Will Ensure Liability Insurance Covers Teleservice

- a. 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 performing teleservice.

9. Reasonable Accommodations Requests May Be Exempt

- a. Members requesting teleservice arrangements under the auspices of reasonable accommodation for a disability may be excluded from this policy and procedure, as those requests are covered under other policies, rules, and laws.

10. WSC Monitors Teleservice

- a. 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.