OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICE

Results of Agreed Upon Procedures to the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Bergen County Incorporated Grant Numbers 340A047-19, 20 and 21

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FOR NATIONAL
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As suggested by Mr. Stanley Gorland, the New Jersey State Director for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we performed agreed upon procedures to the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Bergen County's Grant Numbers 340A047-19, 20 and 21. The purpose of this review was to determine if grant funds were used to promote and support volunteer activity and in a manner that complied with the terms and conditions of these grants. From January 1, 2000 to June 30, 2002, the Corporation authorized reimbursement payments totaling $200,565 to RSVP of Bergen County.

Executive Summary

RSVP of Bergen County spent CNCS funding to promote retired and senior volunteerism and volunteer activities. However, it failed to recruit and retain the total number of volunteers that were projected in its budget requests and also failed to satisfy the award requirement that at least 25 percent of the CNCS funding be used for volunteer expenses and cost reimbursements. In Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001, the shortfalls were $4,611 and $12,605, respectively. Since the grantee relinquished its third year grant and is no longer operational, no recommendation is made to recoup grant costs for failure to meet the budgeted number of volunteers and for not spending at least 25 percent on volunteer expenses. The detailed results of this application of agreed upon procedures are described in Enclosure 1.

Overview of the RSVP of Bergen County

Prior to its cessation of operations in June 2002, RSVP of Bergen County, a non-profit organization, established under New Jersey laws, facilitated and arranged for the use of non-compensated senior citizens to provide various support services to hospitals, schools,

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and charitable organizations located in the county. The CNCS awarded three grants to RSVP of Bergen County in the following amounts:

Grant No. 340A047-19 for Calendar Year 2000	$83,999
Grant No. 340A047-20 for Calendar Year 2001	$86,630
Grant No. 340A047-20 for Calendar Year 2002	$78,058
Total Award Amount	$248,687

However, for the entire thirty-month grant period, CNCS made total reimbursement payments of only $200,565 ($83,999 for Calendar Year 2000, $79,008 for 2001 and $37,558 for the first six months of 2002). RSVP of Bergen County did not submit claimed reimbursable costs for the balance of the available grant funds for calendar year 2001. Due to the grantee's cessation of operations the calendar year 2002 grant award was modified to $37,558.

The lower actual expenditures were attributable to the grantee's inability to obtain the number of volunteers projected in its budget. For all grant years, the budget projected that RSVP of Bergen County would have 745 volunteers. In its Project Data Report as of September 30, 2001, the grantee listed only 126 RSVP volunteers or approximately 16.9 percent of the budgeted number.

On May 31, 2002, the Board of Trustees of RSVP of Bergen County distributed a memo to the RSVP volunteers, stations and the CNCS State Office advising them of its decision to close the offices of RSVP of Bergen County and to relinquish the balance of the CNCS grant for Calendar Year 2002.

The mission of RSVP of Bergen County was to offer opportunities for persons 55 and older to engage in community-based service to address educational, public safety, economic, environmental and other needs in the county. The work performed included volunteering at hospitals, participating in the Chore Program making minor repairs for elderly and handicapped persons, assisting the Bergen County Probation Department's child support efforts, providing support to Red Cross Blood Drives and serving at the New Jersey Veterans Home in Paramus. In addition, RSVP of Bergen County ran the "Clowns on Call", "Billy" and "America Reads" programs. "Clowns" provided entertainment at various functions throughout the county such as a fun run to raise money. The "Billy" Program was an effort to teach children about the effects of substance abuse. "America Reads" provided seniors for one on one tutoring to help children learn to read.

Background

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, P.L. 103-82, which amended the National and Community Service Act of 1990, established the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Corporation, pursuant to the authority of the Act, awards grants and cooperative agreements to State Commissions, nonprofit entities and tribes and territories to assist in the creation of full and part-time national and community service programs. Through these grantees, AmeriCorps members and others perform service to meet the educational, human, environmental, and public safety needs throughout the nation, especially addressing those needs related to poverty. The Corporation's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) provides grants to qualified agencies and organizations for the dual purpose of engaging persons 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical needs and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers. In return for their service, RSVP volunteers receive reimbursement for transportation to and from their assignments, accident insurance, personal liability and automobile insurance, free meals at host institutions, recognition and physical examinations.

The State Office noted exceptions to the grantee's recordkeeping system after an April 2001 site visit. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2000, Grant No. 340A047-19, the grantee attempted to support grant costs reported on its Financial Status Reports (FSRs). Extensive documentation was provided. The CNCS State Program Specialist reviewed that documentation and provided feedback comments to RSVP of Bergen County. Numerous deficiencies were noted and recommendations for corrective action were made.

During an April 2002 site visit, the CNCS State Program Specialist gathered data to support the FY 2001 grant expenditures (Grant No. 340A47-20). The data collected during this site visit again revealed program shortfalls. Actual volunteer recognition costs and volunteer travel costs incurred were much less than budgeted amounts. This resulted from failure to obtain the budgeted number of volunteers. The Government Performance and Results Act Project Data Report as of September 30, 2001, reported 126 RSVP volunteers. The budget estimated 745 volunteers for all three grant years.

On May 31, 2002, RSVP of Bergen County sent a notification memorandum to its volunteers, stations and the CNCS State Office. It announced the Board of Trustees' decision to close the program with an effective date of June 30, 2002.

Since the grantee gave up its workspace, had no employees, boxed and stored its financial and other records and implemented the Board of Trustees' decision to dissolve, OIG elected to use agreed upon procedures in evaluating the three grants awarded to RSVP of Bergen County.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The scope of this engagement was to compare CNCS funding to documentation obtained from the grantee and to program costs reported on the audited financial statements for fiscal years 2000 and 2001. We also wanted to analyze the number of volunteers working under the grant and whether the 25 percent volunteer expense requirement was met.

Specific procedures included:

- Comparison of the supporting documentation available to grant budgets and grant funding
- Comparison of grantee program costs from the audited financial statements to grant funding
- Review of information from the State Office files to determine that volunteer activities actually occurred.
- Comparison of the number of volunteers budgeted to the number reported on the FSRs
- Calculation of the percent of volunteer expenses in relation to grant costs.

This agreed upon procedures engagement was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The sufficiency of the procedures is solely the requestor's responsibility. By specifying the procedures, the National Senior Service Corps was responsible for ensuring that they were sufficient to meet their objectives, and we make no representations in that respect. The specific procedures are enumerated above. The detailed results of those procedures are provided in Enclosure 1.

Distribution

This report is intended solely for the use of the Office of Inspector General, the Corporation management and the U.S. Congress, and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

J. Russell George
Inspector General
Corporation for National and Community Service
Washington, D.C.

Copy to:
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Rocco Gaudio, Director, CNCS Atlantic Service Center
Stanley Gorland, CNCS New Jersey State Program Director

Results of Agreed Upon Procedures

This report pertains only to the performance of agreed-upon procedures to determine if the grant awards were used to support and promote volunteer activities. We were not engaged to, and did not, perform an examination, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion on the subject matter of this report. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. Had we performed additional procedures, other reportable matters might have come to our attention.

Our comparison of grant costs reimbursed to supporting documentation obtained during site visits and to RSVP of Bergen County's Financial Statements shows that all CNCS funding was spent to support volunteer activities. For the periods covered by this application of agreed upon procedures, total grantee expenses exceeded its revenues. Since the grantee relinquished its third year grant and is no longer operational, no recommendation is made to recoup grant costs for failure to meet the budgeted number of volunteers and for not spending at least 25 percent on volunteer expenses that include such costs as transportation, meals, recognition, and insurance.

The tables below provide the results of the agreed upon procedures. The first table compares the amounts awarded to the amount supported from documentation provided and the amount reported as program expenses in the financial statements.

Year	Grant Award/Budget	Support	Financial Statement Program Expenses
2000	$83,999	$61,831	$126,096
2001	$79,088 *	$93,345	$153,992
2002	$39,040.50		$70,888

* The grant award for 2001 was $86,630. However, RSVP of Bergen County spent only $79,088. The difference between the grant award and expenditures was reimbursed to the Corporation.

The table below shows the number of volunteers reported on the quarterly FSRs. For each grant, the number of volunteers budgeted was 745.

Volunteers Reported by Quarter

2000	Reported
Q1	769
Q2	289
Q3	200
Q4	238
2001	
Q1	206
Q2	200
Q3	117
Q4	190
2002	
1/1-6/30	589

The following table compares the required share for volunteer expenses and the amount reported on the FSRs. Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, section 2553.72 (e) requires that, "The total volunteer expenses and cost reimbursements...shall be an amount equal to at least 25 percent of the Corporation funds in the grant award. Corporation and non-Corporation resources may be used to make up this sum."

Year	Federal Monies Received	25% of Fed.	Actual	Shortfall
2000	$83,999	$21,000	$16,389	$4,611
2001	$79,008	$19,752	$7,147	$12,605