

Foster Grandparent Program Handbook



**Child and Family Guidance Center, Inc.
180 Fairfield Ave., 2nd Fl.
Bridgeport, CT 06604 - 4252
Tel: (203) 394-6529 Fax: (203) 394-6534**

I. THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

The mission of the Foster Grandparent Program is to provide an opportunity for persons over 55 years of age who have limited incomes to serve children with special needs, such as, emotional/behavioral problems, mental retardation, learning disabilities, and who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Program is mutually beneficial to the older volunteer and the children served. The Volunteer has the opportunity to remain active, make a contribution to his/her community and to give love to a child. The children receive special time and attention from an older adult who is willing to provide unconditional love and support.

II. REQUIREMENTS

A. WHO CAN BE A FOSTER GRANDPARENT?

To be a Volunteer a person must be 55 years of age or over, meet income guidelines, have no felonies, be in good health, and have a desire to serve children with special needs.

B. ORIENTATION TRAINING

Each Volunteer is generally required to attend training prior to assignment at a Volunteer Station. Generally, the training is held for two weeks prior to placement in an assignment. The first week at your assignment will be 20 hours of in-service, on the job orientation and training. Presentations by Project Staff and consultants will be made. This training will include such areas as personnel policies, the history of the Foster Grandparent Program, staffing, health and nutrition for the older years, working effectively with children and communication skills. This training will also include instruction of duties and the aging process, etc. There will also be mandatory monthly training, called in – service Meetings.

C. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Volunteers are required to have a physical examination each year of service as a Grandparent. He/she is given a physical assessment form to be completed by a physician. When completed, the form should be returned to the Project Director at the Child Guidance Center, to be kept in the Volunteer's personnel file. Any Doctor's notices submitted by the Volunteer are similarly filed. If you have had one recently, your doctor can sign the papers. If you need the name of a clinic, please call our office.

D. VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Volunteers serve 20 hours per week. 4 hours per day, for five days. Sometimes, you may service 5 hours per day, for four days. Transportation time required from the Volunteers home to place of assignment is NOT part of the 4 hour per day schedule. Time spent for meals is NOT included in the hours of service unless sharing a meal with a child as part of the scheduled/assigned duties for that person. Your meal period is considered part of the 4 hours a day schedule.

ADDITIONAL HOURS:

Volunteers can serve additional hours (up to 30 hours per week) with the approval of the Program Director. This is only when the program has the funds and the hours can be terminated at any time.

E. PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The first 3 months of service is a probationary period for the newly hired Volunteer. During this time there will be evaluations made by the staff of the Child and Family Center and by the Volunteer Station. This will provide an opportunity to determine if the assignments are compatible. Changes in placement and assignments can be made when necessary. Assignments are for children in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades.

F. NON-STIPEND VOLUNTEER

An individual who doesn't meet income eligibility guidelines is eligible to serve as a non-stipend volunteer. The non-stipend volunteer will be paid \$5.00/day for out-of-pocket expenses, i.e., travel, meals, and is not eligible to receive the stipend of \$2.65/hour. Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses will come from non-Federal funds.

G. POLICE BACKGROUND CHECK

Foster Grandparents are required to pass a police background check through the City of Bridgeport's Police Department. 300 Congress Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604.

III. BENEFITS

As a Foster Grandparent Volunteer your stipend service of 20 hours per week allows you to receive the following benefits:

A. STIPENDS

Volunteers will receive \$2.65 per hour up to a maximum of \$53.00 per week which is 20 hours of service. Volunteers will be paid for 2 weeks of training. This helps the Volunteers to serve without cost to himself/herself and to fill a useful role in society. The stipend rate is established by Congress. This money is not taxable and should not be

reported as such for eligibility of any benefits e.g.: housing, fuel, food stamps, Medicaid, etc. per PL-93-313-Sec. 418.

B. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation arrangements are established before a new Volunteer is assigned to a Volunteer Station. This is done by the program staff. Occasionally the Volunteer Station Supervisor will assist.

Transportation to and from the place of assignment will be provided in the following way:

- by walking
- by car
- by public transportation (bus)
- by van if you are disabled (People to Places)
- by another volunteer (car pooling)

If you use your own car, you will be reimbursed at the rate of .25 a mile. If you use public transportation, (bus or van) you will be reimbursed. If you provide transportation for another Volunteer, you will be reimbursed .25 a mile, plus an additional .15/mile per Volunteer transported.

C. INSURANCE

Accident and Liability Insurance will cover each Volunteer while on assignment. Volunteers using their own car to transport other volunteers must have a current Connecticut automobile liability insurance. If you intend to use your automobile, you must have your insurance card available at all times.

D. VACATION TIME

All Volunteers are eligible to receive vacation benefits in the following manner:

After three (3) months of continuous stipend Volunteer service, Volunteers are eligible to receive a yearly total of twelve (12 vacation days). These vacation benefits are accumulated on a monthly basis. Volunteers can only take vacation benefits up to the amount accumulated.

E. SICK LEAVE

Volunteers are granted twelve (12) sick days leave during any one year. A maximum of twenty four (24) days may be accumulated toward an extended period of illness when properly supported by a doctor's certificate, no part of which may be taken as vacation

time or the equivalent in money. In the case of certain types of illness or injury, the Project Director may require a Doctor's note before the Volunteer returns to work.

F. PERSONAL LEAVE

Volunteers will be granted 2 personal leave days per year with pay for personal reasons.

G. HOLIDAYS

Volunteers are NOT to work on these holidays. Holidays will be granted for the following twelve (12) holidays:

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving
Martin Luther King Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
President's Day	Christmas Day
Good Friday	Floating Holiday (choice)
Memorial Day	-Rosh Hashanah
Independence Day	-Yom Kippur
Labor Day	
Columbus Day	

H. SNOW DAYS

When weather conditions are such that the Volunteer is unable to safely reach his/her assignment, call the Program Director at the Child and Family Center, 203 394-6529. Listen to WICC (600 on the AM dial) for cancellation notice that your school or community center will not be open.

IV. THE VOLUNTEER STATION AND SUPERVISOR

It is not always possible to give the first choice of assignment to the Volunteer. Choices of assignments are often limited by areas of need and program requirements. Assignments to one of the Volunteer Stations will be made the Project Director.

A. CHILDREN TO BE SERVED

Your Volunteer Station Supervisor, principal, counselor or teacher will select and recommend to the Project Staff, children to be served by the Foster grandparents, and to provide the Foster grandparent with at least one (1) and not more than two (2) children.

B. CLIENT TERMINATION

The following reasons may lead to termination of clients:

1. If the needs of the children become so great that you cannot serve them, or

2. If the needs of the child served diminish so that you are no longer needed, or
3. If the situation/relationship is not satisfactory to you.

When your services are discontinued from a child, reassignment to another child will be made by the Project Staff in consultation with the Volunteer Station.

C. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The Foster Grandparent program requires 4 hours of training for volunteers each month. These meetings are mandatory. The four hours will count toward your 20-hour week.

D. PROJECT DIRECTOR

In addition to training, your Project Director will be visiting each Volunteer Station bi-monthly:

1. To insure that the program personnel policies and Federal Guidelines are maintained.
2. To ascertain problems and/or needs of both the Station and that of the Volunteers.
3. To individually discuss Volunteer's concerns.

V. **DUTIES – THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT JOB SPECIFICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

A. STAFF CODE OF ETHICS

Client Welfare – The first or fundamental ethical principle is that services with or regarding clients must be for the client welfare. A Foster Grandparent may not act in any manner potentially injurious or compromising to the client.

Confidentiality - What is heard from or about any client may not be discussed outside of the Center. Staff may not acknowledge to a third party that someone is a client of the Center or Volunteer Station if applicable.

Relationship Boundaries - Client welfare requires that staff refrain from and, if necessary, actively avoid a mixture of the professional relationship with one of sexual intimacy, romance, family, business, etc.

Gifts from Clients - At times clients may give staff a gift to show their appreciation, however, such gifts should not be excessive or extravagant nor should staff encourage clients to give gifts. All gifts should be reported to the Project Director.

Conflict of Interest – It is unethical to steer clients to any external service provider for any kind of material gain. It is unethical for staff to borrow money from clients. It is unethical for staff to request from clients services of a sort from which staff benefits.

Volunteers engage in activities, which facilitate constructive person-to person relationships, by providing warm friendship, interest, individualized attention, unhurried help and personal care required by the particular needs of a child. This is accomplished through such activities as the following:

1. Talking, reading, playing, singing, listening, etc.
2. Arranging social contact and interaction with other children.
3. Lending support and assistance to a child in learning.
4. Participation in the usual activities of a child, encouraging and helping the child in his achievements, enriching his life, contributing to behavioral development of the child.
5. Act in harmony with institutional objectives and regulations with program schedules for their assigned child. Obey all school rules where you are assigned.
6. Perform those activities that have been assigned by the site supervisor.
7. Inform the site Supervisor of any emergency that might arise.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS *DO NOT*:

1. Substitute for, nor replace staff at program settings, nor do they relieve them of their routine duties.
2. Serve as baby sitters.
3. Act as recreation aides, teacher aides, or teacher substitutes.
4. Function as group workers or care for groups of children.
5. Take a child home overnight (unless done as a private citizen with written clearance from the institution, not as a Foster Grandparent).
6. Assist professionals on a scheduled, recurring basis unless, for example, the child assigned to a Foster Grandparent gets regular professional care and may benefit from the aid and comfort offered by the presence of the Grandparent.
7. Perform their assignment or activities in the community not related to the Foster Grandparent Program.

8. Discuss information about their assigned children, or family of their assigned children, with anyone. The children have a legal right to confidentiality. Each Foster Grandparent has an ethical and legal obligation to adhere strictly to this principle.
9. Become overly involved with their assigned children.
10. Give medication to their assigned children.
11. Complain about their health or personal problems, while on assignment.

B. DRESS CODE

It is important for the Foster Grandparent to project a professional image to the children. Staff should dress appropriately. Clothing that is too casual or provocative is inappropriate, i.e., jeans or short pants. Clothing should be avoided that is not appropriate for a school or office setting.

C. POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This policy affirms the Child Guidance Center's commitment to protect the rights of staff as well as clients, from any indignity or unwanted intimacy from another employee of higher status within the organization.

No employee may be implicitly or explicitly threatened because of reluctance on their part to accept a non-professional or outside relationship. The Child Guidance Center affirms this type of behavior can not be accepted from any supervisory or administrative staff.

Any employee who experiences any such pressures should follow the personnel grievance procedures. Any employee who makes such a report will be protected from any relative or discriminatory treatment based only on having made a legitimate complaint.

D. SMOKING POLICY

It is the policy of the Child Guidance Center that staff is prohibited from using tobacco in any form in the presence of the clients. No smoking is permitted in hallways or any rooms or areas utilized by clients. Staff who must smoke must do so outside.

VI RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

A. TIME SHEETS

Time sheets and Reimbursement forms must be filled out according to time worked on a weekly basis. Depending on your Volunteer Station, you will be informed if you are to

mail your time sheet to the Child Guidance Center, or if your Station Supervisor will take care of this for you. You, as well as your Station Supervisor, must sign the time sheet before you submit it to the Child Guidance Center; seven (7) days before pay day (see the schedule of paydays). If time sheets are not submitted on time, it may delay processing your bi-weekly pay.

B. CARE PLAN

Each client served by a Foster Grandparent is required to have a Care Plan. This Care Plan will outline the client's goals for progress and the activities to be completed by the Foster Grandparent. You will receive a copy, as well as the Project Staff and the Volunteer Station.

C. INCIDENT REPORT FORM

If you are injured or involved in an accident while on your assignment:

1. Seek Medical Care.
2. Contact your Volunteer Station Supervisor.
3. No matter how minor the injury may be, always report any accident while you are on a volunteer assignment, even if you do not get medical care.
4. After you notify your Volunteer Station Supervisor and the Child Guidance Project Director, you will be asked to give further information and details of your accident. You will be asked to fill out and sign a claim form.
5. Be sure to obtain and give a copy of all bills for medical expenses related to the injury received while on assignment, to the Child Guidance Project Director.

D. ABSENCE FROM ASSIGNMENTS

REPORTING ABSENCES

If you are unable to report to your assignment:

1. You should call your Station Supervisor.
2. If your Supervisor cannot be reached, call the Child Guidance Center and report your absence to the Project Director at 394-6529.

After any three (3) consecutive weeks of absence, a Volunteer may be removed from active status by the Project Director and his/her name placed on the waiting list in order that another person may utilize the slot.

E. VACATION REQUEST

Time should be requested two (2) weeks in advance whenever possible. Please submit your request for vacation to the Project Director at the Child Guidance Center.

F. LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Permission must be granted for such leaves, at the discretion of the Project Director, where it is necessary to be absent from assignments because of unexpected illness or other unforeseen events.

G. RESIGNATIONS

Your Volunteer Station Supervisor, and the Project Director must be notified if you resign from the Program. A minimum of two weeks notice is requested.

H. DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND TERMINATION

The philosophy behind policy in these areas may be summarized as follows;

Problems should be resolved at as low a level as possible.

a. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A Volunteers or group of Volunteers, having a grievance should first exhaust the Possibilities outlined in the section above. If the situation remains unresolved, the Volunteer Representative on the Advisory Council should be contacted. The chairperson of the Advisory Council will appoint a grievance committee and set up a hearing date. At this hearing, a final and binding decision will be rendered by the Council.

At the beginning of each project year (July), all Volunteers will be notified of the names and phone numbers of their Advisory Council Representative. The first step in resolution of a problem would be a conference between the volunteer and his/her immediate Supervisor. If this does not solve the problem, the Volunteer, the Project Director, or other representative would meet. Finally, if the problem still remains unresolved, all involved would meet with a grievance committee composed of Foster Grandparent Program Advisory Council Members.

Disciplinary steps to be taken when a Volunteer is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities are as follows:

1. Verbal warning from immediate Supervisor.
2. Probation for a 2-4 week period to be initiated in written form by the Director, upon recommendation by the immediate Supervisor. This letter would also refer

to the verbal warning, which proceeded probation status. Newly hired Volunteers will be considered on probation for a three (3) month period.

3. At the end of the probation period, a conference will be held to discuss further action. At this conference, a short evaluation of progress and recommendation would be presented by the Supervisor and discussed with the Volunteer.
4. At the end of the probationary period, a letter will be sent to the Volunteer indicating termination of probation or extension of probation (with duration stated and reasons clearly outlined).

III. **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The NSSC (National Senior Service Corp) Program Advisory Council meets on a regular basis. The Advisory Council functions in a supportive capacity to advise the sponsor, The Child Guidance Center and Project Staff in matters affecting planning, support and significant program and personnel decisions.

Advisory council membership may include representatives from community service agencies Volunteer Stations, Volunteers, the Child Guidance Center Sponsor Executive, one member of the Child Guidance Board of Directors and the Project Director.

The Advisory Council may form committees to deal with recruitment and selection of Volunteers, fund raising, project appraisal and Volunteer recognition events.