

The Foster Grandparent Program, having begun in August of 1965, had proven successful and programs were located throughout the nation. Program directors came together in December of 1971 to attend the White House Conference on Aging. Believing that programs could benefit from a formal association, those directors elected their first President and set goals to help ensure a successful future for Foster Grandparent Programs through an organization incorporated as the National Association of Foster Grandparent Program Directors (NAFGPD).

NAFGPD has served as a voice for directors and volunteers with the various federal agencies who have administered the grants over the years. When it was determined that programs could benefit from professional representation in Washington, D.C. the associations representing RSVP and the Senior Companion Programs joined with NAFGPD to share one advocate. The duties of the advocate included communicating with national program officers, Congressional staff members, and others interested in the success of the three programs.

The three associations set different priorities which was understandable considering the differences in management issues for the RSVP projects and those projects focused on recruiting low-income stipend volunteers (FGP & SCP). There were times when the Boards of the three programs were struggling to come up with one message for Congress, and NAFGPD leaders at the time determined that a federal advocate focused specifically on FGP issues would be advantageous for member programs.

NAFGPD continued to collaborate with the officers of the other associations and individual federal advocates for the three programs to identify common issues and challenges as well as proposed solutions for those problems. In the mid 2000's, the National Association of SCP Directors came together with several RSVP and FGP Directors to form the National Senior Corps Association. This new association proposed a merger with NAFGPD; however, Board directors of NAFGPD determined that the issues for FGP were still quite different from those for RSVP and the decision was made to continue to operate NAFGPD to address the needs of FGP program directors.

The focus of NAFGPD continues to be on member success. We believe that when program staff are supported with educational and communication resources; volunteers and the communities they serve benefit. NAFGPD established a list-serve which provides members with a network to share ideas, express frustrations, and ask questions of fellow program directors. The list-serve proved invaluable in recent years when the National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) and the administration of those through a mandated re-check process was difficult to navigate and caused many frustrations. Association members who also managed SCP projects began to ask if their SCP colleagues would be welcome on the list-serve. While SCP directors were welcome to join as Sustaining members and subscribe to the list-serve, only FGP directors and staff were eligible to vote and hold office according to association by-laws.

When the Corporation for National & Community Service instituted a Transformation & Sustainability Plan which included a new umbrella name for the three Senior Corps programs by placing them under the AmeriCorps Seniors label in September of 2020, several SCP directors came to NAFGPD and expressed an interest in becoming professional members of the association. In response to that request and after much deliberation, the NAFGPD board voted to pursue the change in the both the association name and mission to include advocacy on behalf of SCP and FGP. The name AmeriCorps Seniors Professional Network was adopted through a vote of eligible members in early 2021, and the Articles of Incorporation were amended to reflect the change. The mission of the association remains much the same today as when it was formed in 1971: to advocate nationally on behalf of stipend programs to succeed locally in our communities.