

AmeriCorps Recouped \$2,825 from Funds Misallocated to a Former Commission Employee

Closed 03/28/2024

The AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General (AmeriCorps OIG) investigated allegations that the former Executive Director (ED) of the Volunteer and Community Service Commission of Puerto Rico (Commission) attempted to use AmeriCorps funds to award a sole-source contract to a close friend, required prayers before AmeriCorps events, and requested subgrantees allow AmeriCorps members to perform service outside the scope of their grant. AmeriCorps OIG's investigation confirmed the allegations regarding the sole-source contract and that the former ED required a prayer before the start of multiple AmeriCorps events. The investigation also found that the Commission was not reimbursing its subgrantees in a timely manner and that a former Commission Program Coordinator was improperly paid \$2,825.

AmeriCorps OIG provided a Report of Investigation (ROI) to AmeriCorps recommending that AmeriCorps (1) recoup \$2,825 from the Commission for the improper payments to the former Program Coordinator, (2) create training for EDs on the policies and regulations governing AmeriCorps awards in conjunction with internal controls to ensure all EDs receive the training at the start of their terms, and (3) place the Commission on manual hold to ensure it was using AmeriCorps funds properly and providing timely reimbursement to subgrantees. AmeriCorps OIG did not recommend any actions against the former ED because the ED was no longer employed by the Commission.

Agency/Administrative Actions

In response to the ROI, AmeriCorps established a debt for \$2,825 to be recovered from the Commission. AmeriCorps did not create new training for EDs, but provided a history of actions taken and training provided to the Commission, including training resources on financial management and one-on-one consultations on various grants management issues. AmeriCorps declined to place the Commission on a manual hold or manual review because it had previously placed the Commission on manual review for approximately two years during the timeframe of AmeriCorps OIG's investigation and did not encounter any major issues with the Commission's submissions during that time. Finally, the AmeriCorps Office of Monitoring would create an internal referral form outlining issues identified in the ROI to include in the agency-wide risk assessment and future monitoring plans to ensure AmeriCorps properly reviews Commission documentation for timeliness of payments.

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