

AmeriCorps NCCC Updated Policies and Procedures Regarding Sexual Assault Allegations

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The AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General (AmeriCorps OIG) received an allegation that a former Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Corps member with the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) was sexually assaulted while on deployment. It was further alleged that NCCC failed to investigate the allegation or report the allegation to law enforcement, failed to take disciplinary action against the alleged assailant, and removed the member from the NCCC program. AmeriCorps OIG did not investigate or render any findings regarding the validity of the complainant's sexual assault allegations because complaints of sexual assault fall under the jurisdiction of local law enforcement. However, AmeriCorps OIG conducted an assessment of NCCC's sexual assault prevention and response program. The assessment determined that NCCC policies, procedures, guidance, and training, regarding sexual assault were insufficient to properly address such matters. AmeriCorps OIG also determined that NCCC staff failed to follow NCCC's own insufficient policies and procedures regarding sexual assault allegations in at least one instance.

AmeriCorps OIG issued a Report of Investigation (ROI) to NCCC and made 16 recommendations to improve NCCC's sexual assault response program. The recommendations related to the creation and/or improvement of specific policies and procedures, training requirements, information resources for victims, and record keeping.

Agency/Administrative Actions

Throughout the course of AmeriCorps OIG's assessment and prior to the issuance of the ROI, AmeriCorps OIG briefed NCCC on its findings and NCCC took proactive steps to improve its sexual assault prevention and response program. This included standardizing training for staff and members, updating policies and procedures, and consulting with the Peace Corps about how it handles sexual assault allegations. NCCC's senior leaders were receptive to OIG findings, and provided multiple memos to AmeriCorps OIG detailing improvements they had made to the program.

In response to the ROI, NCCC concurred with 15 of the 16 recommendations. NCCC did not concur with the recommendation to utilize Sexual Assault Response Liaisons (SARLs) to provide support to victims of sexual assault. However, NCCC intends to build the capacity of existing staff by establishing an annual training curriculum for staff who conduct administrative investigations. NCCC has taken action or plans to take action in response to the remainder of the recommendations, including creating Standard Operating Procedures for responding to allegations when reported, improving how NCCC documents and archives sexual assault reports, and clarifying how NCCC handles disciplinary action against members.

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