

AmeriCorps Agreed to Implement Safeguards in Future IT System Following Findings of AmeriCorps OIG Investigation to Prevent the Misuse of Personal Identifiable Information

Closed 03/28/2024

The AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General (AmeriCorps OIG) investigated an allegation that the President of the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps (GLCCC) misused personal identifiable information provided by prospective AmeriCorps members at recruitment sessions to enroll them in AmeriCorps' Education Award Program, even though the members did not provide service. It was also alleged that these prospective members were enrolled in the MyAmeriCorps portal with the GLCCC President's email address. AmeriCorps OIG's investigation found that the GLCCC President used his email address to enroll 55 individuals as AmeriCorps members, and that at least one of the individuals was unaware that they were enrolled into an AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps OIG further determined that the GLCCC President attended enrollment sessions of a partner organization that did not receive AmeriCorps funding in order to enroll members into GLCCC's AmeriCorps program, and that hours members served for the partnership organization were counted as AmeriCorps service hours.

AmeriCorps OIG issued a Report of Investigation (ROI) to AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) and recommended that ASN (1) direct the GLCCC President to transfer access to multiple MyAmeriCorps portal accounts back to members, (2) configure the MyAmeriCorps Portal to not allow members to share the same email address, include a box for a member to specify if they are working or serving concurrently elsewhere and if the member is serving elsewhere include additional space for the member to identify the organization and the hours of service per week at that organization, and include a certification box requiring members to affirm the information provided is truthful, (3) create and provide training on how to fill out information on the MyAmeriCorps Portal and require members to include up to date information, and (4) provide training and technical assistance to GLCCC's parent organization, The Corps Network (TCN) to ensure it provides adequate oversight of subgrantees.

Agency/Administrative Actions

ASN responded that it had provided a summary of OIG's findings to TCN and requested follow-up action. As a result, multiple members' email addresses were updated in the MyAmeriCorps Portal and TCN contacted two members who had earned education awards to ensure they were aware of the awards. TCN requested a corrective action plan from the GLCCC President.

With respect to OIG's recommendation to update the MyAmeriCorps Portal, ASN responded that in the future MyAmeriCorps Portal replacement, applicants/members must have unique email addresses or the system will flag the account as duplicate, the replacement system will also record member certifications and staff/award recipient approvals of member exit forms and potentially include a user story area to capture the information on the other organizations where the members are serving/working concurrently.

Regarding the recommendation to create and provide training on MyAmeriCorps portal, ASN responded that it has existing training and guidance related to enrollment in the MyAmeriCorps Portal available on its website. Finally, ASN related that the AmeriCorps Office of Regional Operations would work with TCN to ensure it is aware of existing resources and would provide training and technical assistance.

Case ID 2020-028