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MEDIA CONTACT: David Taylor
513-672-3702
dtaylor@ccswoh.org

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio Faces Closure of AmeriCorps Seniors Programs Amid Funding Crisis

CINCINNATI — July 21, 2025 — Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio regretfully announces the potential shutdown of its AmeriCorps Seniors programs—Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents—serving Hamilton County.

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has already started to dismantle service programs by withholding nearly \$200 million in AmeriCorps funds previously appropriated by Congress. As a result, grantees nationwide that were told they were approved for the upcoming year are now bracing for an end to their services.

Locally, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio has operated two effective and cost-efficient AmeriCorps Seniors programs for nearly 60 years. The Foster Grandparents Program places older, low-income adult volunteers in schools and early childhood centers to serve children needing extra help. The Senior Companions Program likewise places volunteers into community service by helping other low-income, older adults remain independent in their homes and assisting with daily activities, respite and transportation. Without renewed federal approval for Catholic Charities' Hamilton County AmeriCorps Seniors programs by August 15, 2025, operations will begin winding down, with a complete closure anticipated by September 30, 2025.

Catholic Charities' AmeriCorps Seniors programs have provided meaningful service opportunities for seniors and invaluable support to vulnerable populations. In 2024 alone, Foster Grandparents locally contributed 55,088 hours mentoring and supporting 308 students in 21 area schools. In addition, our Senior Companions logged 28,348 hours of service helping 148 isolated older adults, veterans, and disabled adults stay engaged, independent, and connected.

If shuttered, this funding loss will immediately affect over 70 active volunteers, many of whom are low-income, older adults who receive modest service stipends. They rely on the program for greater financial stability, but, more importantly, for purpose, dignity, and socialization.

Robin Jones, a Catholic Charities' AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent, shares what taking part has meant to her, "The program has impacted me financially and mentally. I enjoyed the opportunity to serve children and make a profound difference in their lives. It gave me a purpose for life."

"We cannot afford to lose programs that successfully support our vulnerable children and seniors," shared Tony Stieritz, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio. "This is a cost-effective

service that punches above its weight in the impact it makes for our community. The suddenly announced termination of this program comes as a surprising and undeserved blow to our senior volunteers and all those who benefit from their noble contributions across Hamilton County.”

Jewish Family Service of the Cincinnati Area, which runs a number of older adult services, hosts some of Catholic Charities’ Senior Companions. Ann Sutton Burke, Chief Services Officer, emphasized the ripple effect of the program's closure: "Nonprofits rely on one another and their programs to create the best outcomes for our community. The loss of the Senior Companion Program in Hamilton County not only disrupts vital support for clients who depended on these volunteers—it also takes away the sense of purpose and connection that volunteers found in serving their peers. Being part of this meaningful initiative for over two decades with Catholic Charities has been an honor, and its absence will be deeply felt if the program cannot continue."

Help Us Save AmeriCorps Seniors in Hamilton County.

Catholic Charities is urging supporters and policymakers to act swiftly. You can contact U.S. Senator Jon Husted, U.S. Senator Bernie Moreno, Representative Greg Landsman and Representative Warren Davidson at <https://voicesforservice.org/take-action/contact-congress/> and let your voice be heard. Ask them to preserve funding for the AmeriCorps Seniors programs and protect essential services for the community.