



**2022-2024**

**State Service Plan for Oregon**

# STRATEGIC FOCUS SUMMARY

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**STRATEGIC FOCUS 1:**  
Evidence-Based, Inclusive Programs

**Strengthen Impacts Of Service**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 2:**  
Volunteer Engagement

**Engage Oregonians In Making A Difference**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 3:**  
Community Capacity-Building

**Foster Ready & Resilient Communities**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 4:**  
Partnership & Policy

**Position Commission As A Leader In Service**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 5:**  
Intergenerational Impacts

**Increase Service Involvement Of Older Adults**

# INTRODUCTION

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OregonServes, the AmeriCorps State Service Commission<sup>1</sup>, was created in 1994, as Oregon Volunteers, to provide Oregonians with a statewide entity to focus service and volunteer efforts, to enhance the ethic of service and voluntarism in the state and provide funds for state-based AmeriCorps programs. As a state commission, OregonServes' role is to promote and elevate service, volunteerism and civic engagement in Oregon Communities.

## OUR VISION

Engaged individuals, empowered communities, and an equitable Oregon.

## OUR MISSION

We advance volunteerism, service and civic engagement to enrich lives and strengthen Oregon communities.

## OUR VALUES

**Impactful:** We engage individuals in purpose-driven service.

**Innovative:** We commit to continuous learning and creative solutions.

**Collaborative:** We build relationships that strengthen Oregon communities.

**Inclusive:** We elevate equity, diversity, and belonging.

## OUR WORK

OregonServes advances national and community service in Oregon by:

- ❖ Establishing and implementing a statewide vision for volunteerism, national service and civic engagement.
- ❖ Promoting initiatives for expansion of service opportunities and impacts.
- ❖ Introducing policy and supporting legislation that furthers the Commission's service goals.
- ❖ Acting as a central hub for the national service network in the state and administering funding to AmeriCorps State programs to make impactful contributions in local communities.
- ❖ Championing greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in Oregon's service and volunteer opportunities.
- ❖ Coordinating national and community service resources to ensure communities are equipped to prepare, respond, and recover from disaster.
- ❖ From youth to adult, promoting activities that instill a lifelong commitment to service, and lead to personal, educational, and career achievements.

OregonServes is an entity of the State of Oregon, housed within the Office of Workforce Investments (OWI), within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). OregonServes is supported by an Executive Director, program staff, and a Commission Board.

## COMMISSION BOARD

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. Now known solely as AmeriCorps, the federal agency is the nation's largest grant-maker for service and volunteering, plays a critical role in strengthening America's nonprofit sector and addresses our nation's challenges through service.

As stated in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, state commissions must exist in order for a state to apply and accept national service grants. According to the Code of Federal Regulations §2550.2 (l), a State Service Commission is a bipartisan or nonpartisan state entity, approved by the Corporation, consisting of 15–25 members (appointed by the chief executive officer of the state), that is responsible for developing a comprehensive national service plan, assembling

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2021 Oregon Legislative Session, through Senate Bill 77, the legislature approved a name change for the state commission. The name change is effective January 1, 2022.

applications for funding and approved national service positions, as well as administering national and community service programs in the state.

The Oregon Volunteer and Community Service Act, passed in 2007, also solidified OregonServes' role to promote the development of better communities by using citizen participation and volunteerism to foster greater civic responsibility. Commission members play an important role by representing the Commission at events, advising on funding priorities, identifying public policy priorities, setting state goals for service and volunteerism through development of the State Service Plan, informing the legislature on activities of the Commission, and conducting outreach and education visits to raise awareness of the impact of national service and volunteer programs across the state.

## **AMERICORPS**

Through federal funding provided by AmeriCorps, OregonServes administers funding to local AmeriCorps programs, called AmeriCorps State programs. AmeriCorps funds projects and programs that address community needs in the focus areas of: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Education, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families.

AmeriCorps State programs provide an opportunity for people to serve at locations across Oregon through nonprofits, schools, public agencies, tribes, higher education institutions, and community and faith-based groups. People serving in AmeriCorps State programs are called AmeriCorps members. Members serve a term of service (typically one year) at their location, earning a living stipend and, at the end of their service term, a Segal AmeriCorps Education award that can be used to pay back student loans or cover education costs.

Since 1994, more than 20,000 Oregon residents have served approximately 27 million hours through AmeriCorps, earning Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$66.7 million.<sup>2</sup>

OregonServes' primary duties as an administrator of AmeriCorps funding includes development of a state service plan, establishing state priorities for national service programs, providing training and technical assistance to grantees and national service partners, assist in provision of benefits to national service participants, support recruitment of AmeriCorps members in programs, administration of statewide grant competition, and conducting monitoring and oversight.

### **Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 660.515:**

The OregonServes Commission shall:

- (1) Develop programs and provide oversight and administration of programs granted to this state By AmeriCorps under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, as amended.
- (2) Prepare state applications to AmeriCorps for financial assistance for state-based service programs.
- (3) Establish state priorities for volunteerism and develop a three-year, comprehensive national and community service plan based on the priorities.
- (4) Develop projects, training methods, curriculum materials and other materials and activities related to state service programs that receive assistance directly from AmeriCorps.
- (5) Coordinate national service and volunteer service in statewide activities for disaster preparedness, response and relief activities and climate mitigation. Coordination under this subsection must include establishing an administration, training methods and curriculum materials.

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<sup>2</sup> [National Service in Oregon](#)

## **VOLUNTEERISM & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

As the State Commission, Oregon Volunteers is also charged with supporting and encouraging volunteerism and civic engagement activities within the state.

### **Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 660.515:**

Promote engagement in volunteerism and service for the purpose of strengthening communities in Oregon by:

- (1) Promoting a statewide volunteer recognition plan open to all sectors.
- (2) Assisting efforts by Oregon communities to encourage involvement in volunteerism.
- (3) Evaluating the status of volunteerism and service in the public, private and nonprofit sectors of this state.
- (4) Assisting efforts to inform young Oregonians about opportunities for involvement in the public, private and nonprofit sectors through service and volunteerism.
- (5) Promoting the value of service learning as an educational strategy in both kindergarten through grade 12 and higher education.
- (6) Promoting the concept and practice of business and corporate volunteering, with an emphasis on communities where business and corporate volunteering initiatives are less developed.
- (7) Promoting best practices in volunteer management, including screening and background check processes.
- (8) Promoting and supporting the concept of participation and volunteerism by all residents as an effective means of addressing community needs and achieving a collective commitment to lifelong community service.
- (9) Recognizing individual members of service and volunteer organizations as a means to honor and celebrate their impact on Oregon communities; and
- (10) Recognizing National Volunteer Week and AmeriCorps Week as a time for encouraging residents to participate in community service projects.

# STATE SERVICE PLAN

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The National and Community Service Trust Act requires that a plan “be developed through an open and public process...that provides for maximum participation and input from national service programs within the state and other interested members of the public.” The State Service Plan serves as a vehicle for creating a broad vision for promoting national service and volunteering and for building a solid infrastructure of high-quality service programs and support services. The plan is a blueprint for identifying state priorities, themes, and areas of emphasis among all the streams of service.

The Oregon State Service Plan 2022-24 serves two key roles for the OregonServes Commission. First, as a three-year State Service Plan, it showcases the Commission’s priorities, goals and desired outcomes. Second, as an organizational strategic plan, it provides a roadmap for policy development, capacity-building, and resource development for the Commission and staff.

## STATE SERVICE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the federal requirements for State Service Plan development, OregonServes’ plan development included four primary processes: 1) Coordination under the guidance of The Coraggio Group, a strategy and organizational change management consultant firm, 2) Formation of a Steering Committee, comprised of staff and board members, 3) Review of the cumulative research, data, and feedback gathered over the last three years through grantee, partner and community conversations, including input from Oregon participants in the Report: Value of State Service Commissions, and 4) Input gathered through surveys and virtual listening sessions.

As part of the State Service Plan Development, the OregonServes Commission took the opportunity to reinvigorate the Commission’s mission, values, vision and purpose statements, to reflect a more inclusive vision of service.

## KEY FINDINGS

Across all streams of research, several themes consistently appeared. While the ethos of service is strong in Oregon – the state consistently ranks in the Top 10 for volunteerism – we heard that we could do better to strengthen service pathways, to invest further in existing community solutions, especially in historically underserved communities, and that barriers to service exist at both the local and national level, requiring intentional, strategic actions to ensure that service is inclusive and equitable.

- Rural regions of the state are often overlooked and left out of statewide planning and resource investments, particularly around disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- National Service in Oregon needs greater visibility.
- Community organizations, especially those in rural areas, and serving BIPOC communities, need greater supports to increase impact and sustainability.
- The volunteer services network, especially in areas without a volunteer resource hub, would benefit from increased professional development opportunities, and access to statewide tools and resources.
- High housing costs, the rising cost of living, and the low living allowance are negatively impacting AmeriCorps programs, resulting in low enrollment and retention.
- More statewide data collection is needed to tell the story of service in Oregon.
- Oregon has the opportunity to create a strong statewide network of alumni.

## **STAKEHOLDER SECTOR THEMES**

### **THEME: EXPAND OPPORTUNITY, ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN NATIONAL SERVICE**

- Reduce Barriers to Service
- Increase Awareness of Opportunities in Rural and BIPOC Communities
- Increase Advocacy at Local and National Levels
- Further Statewide Coordination, Communication, Collaboration
- Support Alumni Engagement

### **THEME: INCREASE SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTEER SECTOR**

- Collect Data to Identify the 'State of Volunteerism'
- Increase Training and Technical Assistance to Volunteer Service Organizations
- Provide resources for recruitment, retention, recognition
- Support Statewide Coordination, Communication and Collaboration

### **THEME: INCREASE CAPACITY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

- Expand Opportunities for National and Community Service, Especially in Rural and Underserved Communities
- Invest in Community Capacity Building and Resiliency Efforts
- Increase Funding and Advocacy for Nonprofit Organizations at the Statewide Level

In 2019-20, OregonServes participated with four other state service commissions, (TX, OH, VT, UT) in a research study, commissioned by the state commission association, America's Service Commissions (ASC) and conducted by Dialogues in Action (DIA). The purpose of the study was to explore the value that state service commissions bring to their states. Respondents in each state participated through surveys and interviews, and overall included a broad range of members, alumni, national and community service partners, community organizations, and public officials.

Included in the development of the OregonServes state service plan are the insights and recommendations presented in the final report, including<sup>3</sup>:

**Place greater emphasis on elevating national service and volunteerism:** Leaders desire for commissions to play a greater role in elevating the value of national service and volunteerism in their states. Interviewees recognized that commissions' place in state government, statewide reach, and vantage point to see across the sector give them a unique ability to communicate the value of national service and volunteerism in the state.

**Strike a better balance between ensuring compliance and supporting impact and innovation.**

**Reduce barriers to equitable and inclusive service and volunteerism.** Better enable programs to support individuals, organizations and communities that can benefit most from national service. Addressing these systemic barriers will allow programs to engage and serve the state's most vulnerable citizens and communities more effectively.

**Play a more significant role in building the capacity of the social sector.** Leaders see the potential for using commissions' capacity-building expertise as a resource to help fill capacity and capability gaps in the nonprofit sector. This would result in organizations being able to take advantage of the opportunities AmeriCorps and volunteerism

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<sup>3</sup>[The Value of State Service Commissions](#)

present to further build their capacity while benefiting individuals and communities throughout the state.

**Developing strong, supportive relationships.** One of the most significant factors contributing to commissions' impact is the strong relationships commission staff have developed with grantees, partners, and community members. These strong relationships promote trust that enables commissions and programs to more proactively recognize and address issues. They also help to bring community members together to achieve their goals.

**Customizing support to meet programs' needs.** Data shows that programs value the unique and deep knowledge commission staff bring to their work. This knowledge provides comfort and camaraderie to program leaders and helps them feel supported in their work.

**Providing valuable training and resources.** The value of the training and resources that commissions provide was evident throughout the project. This is especially important given that many programs report having limited funding and capacity to seek professional development elsewhere.

**Strengthening support networks.** Commissions create an environment that promotes support and builds community despite the fact that programs are often competing for limited funding and resources.

**Purposeful convening.** Commissions' role as a convener brings people together to build community and share resources.

**Promoting stability and sustainability.** Commissions' support contributes to the stability and sustainability of organizations. The policies, procedures, and practices that commissions help programs develop elevate quality throughout the organization, enabling the organization to use its resources more efficiently and effectively.

**Including specific recommendations for greater impact for Oregon:**

- Build a strategic movement for service and volunteerism
- Capitalize on its potential roles as a connector, convener, and coordinator of strategy in the state to build a movement for national service and volunteerism.
- Become champions for equity and inclusion
- Build bridges between the public sector and communities to promote systemic change.
- Raise awareness about service and volunteerism throughout Oregon

# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

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## **FOCUS: STRENGTHEN IMPACTS OF SERVICE**

### Objectives:

- Broaden awareness of national and community service opportunities and impacts, through increased data and research, marketing and outreach, community partnership-building, and state and local government collaboration.
- Prioritize funding to high-quality and evidence-based programs that demonstrate an impact on communities served.
- Explore opportunities to increase the benefits of service (member resources, certifications, hiring priorities, credits, tuition match, leadership opportunities), to ensure successful service terms and support pathways to education, employment, and post-service success.
- Promote equity and reduce barriers to national service for communities historically underserved, under-resourced, and marginalized by systemic oppression.

## **FOCUS: ENGAGE OREGONIANS IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

### Objectives:

- Promote accessible and equitable pathways to national service, volunteerism and civic engagement opportunities.
- Invest in resources and professional development activities that increase the capacity of community organizations to engage volunteers and national service members.
- Recognize the achievements of volunteers and national service members.

## **FOCUS: FOSTER READY & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

### Objectives:

- Provide communities with the resources and best practices needed to effectively engage volunteers to prepare, respond and recover from disasters.
- Strengthen partnerships with local, state, nonprofit, tribal and national service partners active in disaster.
- Coordinate the national service response to disaster through local deployments and leveraging of the national service network.

## **FOCUS: POSITION COMMISSION AS A LEADER IN SERVICE**

### Objectives:

- Secure resources to increase state service commission visibility, capacity and sustainability.
- Introduce innovative programming through collaborative relationships, inclusive engagement, and impactful policy.
- Establish a model framework for diversity, equity and inclusion to guide Commission operations.

## **FOCUS: INCREASE SERVICE INVOLVEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS (*AmeriCorps Supplemental Goal*)**

# NATIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES

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## FUNDING PRIORITIES:

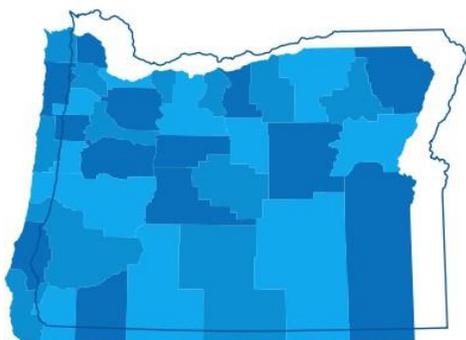
In addition to the national service focus areas of disaster response, healthy futures, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, and veterans and military families, OregonServes prioritizes the following:

- Efforts to help local communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Existing grantees that are seeking to expand an existing program model to a rural community or create a new program to address the above listed priorities.
- New programs from BIPOC-serving or led organizations.

## PRIORITIES IN DEVELOPING NEW SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Resource Gaps:** Activities that may include education and youth development, addressing learning loss, and supporting social-emotional child development.
- **Community Resiliency:** Activities that develop the capacity of communities such as building volunteer capacity, engaging community members as first responders, and improving partnerships and coalition-building among local organizations and agencies.
- **COVID-19:** Activities that center and serve communities who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
- **Environmental Equity:** Activities that improve natural environments such as wildfire mitigation, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable food systems, and conservation and habitat preservation.
- **Health Disparities:** Activities that increase access to health care, including behavioral and mental health care, especially in underserved communities.
- **Housing Affordability and Rent Initiatives:** Activities that support community members with insecure housing such as conducting outreach to unhoused community members, delivery of services to unhoused individuals, and supporting affordable housing initiatives.
- **Racial Equity:** Activities that center and serve communities who are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced, including activities that aim to remove structural racial inequities, advance racial equity and increase opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- **Rural:** Activities that increase capacity and meet urgent needs in rural communities.
- **School-to-Prison Pipeline:** Activities that seek to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline for under-resourced communities such as youth mentorship, improving family relationships with schools, and alternatives to traditional school discipline policies.
- **Systemic Economic Disadvantages:** Activities that lift poverty such as supporting safety net programs, delivering financial literacy education, and providing tax preparation assistance.
- **Workforce Impacts:** Activities that support transitions into the workforce such as pre-apprenticeship programs, skill development, and connecting individuals with employers.

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION



As an entity within the State of Oregon, OregonServes approaches its responsibilities under the guidance of the State of Oregon Equity Lens. In addition to adopting the State of Oregon Equity Lens, OregonServes will integrate practices from the HECC Equity Lens and the State of Oregon Equity Framework in COVID-19 Response and Recovery.

National and Community Service is a special, unique sector with distinctive needs and qualities.

To ensure our work is meeting the need of our programs, members, partners and stakeholders, the OregonServes Commission continues work to adopt a Commission Equity Framework that will also guide our operations and ensure

that we take intentional and transformative actions to embody our values to be impactful, innovative, collaborative and inclusive.

## STATE OF OREGON DEI ACTION PLAN

### DEI Action Plan Objectives

#### Normalize

Normalize the concepts of racial justice in the state government enterprise – acknowledge history, utilize a racial equity roadmap, familiarize by using concepts and tools that will support efforts to put racial equity at the forefront.

#### Organize

Organize efforts and build organizational capacity across departments for connected, cohesive, and amplified impacts. Foster both internal and external partnerships.

#### Operationalize

Operationalize and embed racial equity into every part of state government.

#### Guide

Guide and direct enterprise-level operationalizing of racial equity and DEI work.

#### Inspire

Inspire expansion of equity by sharing and collaborating to build on what is already happening.

## RACIAL EQUITY VISION

Within this context of historical harms, changing demographics, intersectional identities, and more; our vision for the next five years and beyond is to:

- **Dismantle** institutional and structural racism in Oregon state government, and by doing so, have resounding impacts on the communities of our great state.
- **Build** a more equitable Oregon where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and everyone’s voice is heard.
- **Ensure** an inclusive and welcoming Oregon for all by celebrating our collective diversity of race, ethnicity, culture, color, disability, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and immigration status.

## RACIAL EQUITY VALUES

- **Putting racial equity at the forefront while understanding intersectionality.** We must be bold and put racial equity at the forefront as a primary and pervasive location of oppression that connects with and worsens other identity-based inequities.
- **Prioritize equity, anti-racism, and racial justice actions.** Commitment to prioritizing equity and eliminating racial disparities involves taking action in our policies, budgets, decision-making, and daily work.
- **Foster internal and external partnerships.** Across the state enterprise and other institutions, community-based organizations are crucial to achieving racial equity. True partnership means shared power, listening, resolving tensions by creating solutions together, and scaling up what already works well.
- **Ensure collective responsibility and accountability.** As public servants, we have a collective responsibility at every level of government to proactively reduce racial disparities and barriers. We must establish measurements of success so that we can ensure improvements are real and ongoing.<sup>4</sup>

## RACIAL EQUITY GOALS

- **Establish** strong leadership to eradicate racial and other forms of disparities in all aspects of state government.
- **Center** equity in budgeting, planning, procurement, and policymaking.
- **Strengthen** public involvement through transformational community engagement, access to information, and decision-making opportunities.
- **Improve** equitable access to services, programs, and resources including education, health, housing, human services, environmental justice, criminal justice, and economic opportunities.
- **Foster** an inclusive workplace culture and promote equitable hiring, retention, and promotion practices.

### State of Oregon's Definitions for Racial Equity, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Racial Equity** means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally. This commitment requires a paradigm shift on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.<sup>14</sup>

**Diversity** means honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals. It emphasizes the need for sharing power and increasing representation of communities that are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced. These differences are strengths that maximize the state's competitive advantage through innovation, effectiveness, and adaptability.

**Equity** acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.

**Inclusion** is a state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues. Ultimately, inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.

<sup>4</sup> [State of Oregon Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging](#)

## EVALUATION & REPORTING

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The strategic implementation of the plan will be coordinated under the supervision of the OregonServes Executive Director and Commission board and will be tracked through a strategic plan dashboard. Timely updates and progress on strategic goals and activities will be provided at each Commission meeting. The plan will be revisited and modified, at least annually, as necessary.

### **Appreciation To:**

OregonServes Commission Board and Staff

Oregon AmeriCorps Programs and Partners (NCCC, VISTA, Seniors, State and National)

The Coraggio Group

America's Service Commissions

Dialogues in Action

State of Oregon

The many alumni, members, volunteers, volunteer organizations and managers, individuals, community organizations, educational institutions, and local and state officials who provided valuable input and insights for the development of this plan.

## **OregonServes Commission**

[www.oregon.gov/highered/oregonvolunteers](http://www.oregon.gov/highered/oregonvolunteers)

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Higher Education Coordinating Commission

[www.oregon.gov/highered](http://www.oregon.gov/highered)

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