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# OREGON VOLUNTEERS

## Commission for Voluntary Action & Service

### State Service Plan 2018 - 2020



**oregonvolunteers!**

## ABOUT OREGON VOLUNTEERS

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Oregon Volunteers, also known as the Commission for Voluntary Action & Service, was created in 1994 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, Oregon Volunteers' role is to promote and elevate service, volunteerism and civic engagement in Oregon Communities.

*Through House Bill 5201 and House Bill 4163, effective July 1, 2018, Oregon Volunteers moved operations to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Oregon Volunteers is housed in the HECC Office of Workforce Investments.*

### MISSION:

Strengthening our communities by inspiring Oregonians to actively engage, volunteer, and serve.

### VISION:

*For Oregon Volunteers:*

- Oregon Volunteers is the trusted resource on volunteerism and civic engagement.
- Oregon Volunteers is integral and vital to Oregon's addressing of our state's greatest needs.
- Oregon Volunteers is sustainable with resources and stability to meet its mission.

*For Oregon:*

- Volunteering is an integral, prominent, and essential part of everyday life.
- Oregon's 36 counties have strong, healthy communities built and sustained through service.
- Public engagement drives government.

### VALUES:

- **Community:** Strengthening Oregon through service and volunteerism is the heart of everything we do.
- **Diversity:** Commission programs, members and staff strive to reflect the full diversity of all Oregonians. We are especially attentive to issues of diversity including: race, gender, political affiliation, class, education, geography, interests, disability, sexual orientation, age, culture.
- **Effectiveness:** The results of an efficient, effective, strategic use of resources will further the Commission's mission. We will make decisions in line with short and long term priorities.
- **Mutual Benefit:** We take intentional action to create a triple win (win 3) – a win for the commission, for our partners, and for Oregon communities.
- **Integrity:** We do what we say we will do and only what we are able to do.
- **Partnership:** We invest time in building relationships, honoring diverse perspectives, and creating win3 solutions.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** We encourage new ideas and find solutions to better serve Oregon communities.

## 2018-2020 STATE SERVICE PLAN

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In July 2018, the Oregon Volunteers Commission moved to a new home within state government. The Commission transitioned to the Office of Workforce Investments within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Aligning with this transition and fresh start under a new state partnership, the Commission decided to strategically focus its efforts in the short term to plan for long-term growth and success.

Oregon Volunteers' primary goals of fostering volunteerism, civic engagement and AmeriCorps service in Oregon remain unchanged. In implementing this State Service Plan, Oregon Volunteers will phase its strategies, focusing first on strengthening the foundation of AmeriCorps programming, one of Oregon's greatest assets promoting service and civic engagement. These efforts will foster a stable environment for continued growth of the organization's capacity, and implementation of the volunteerism and civic engagement strategies described herein.

This plan serves two key roles for the Oregon Volunteers Commission. First, as a three-year State Service Plan, it showcases our priorities, goals, and desired outcomes. Second, as an organizational strategic plan, it provides a roadmap for OV staff, Commissioners, and stakeholders. The goals and strategies of this plan were determined collectively by the Director, OV staff, and Commission members, utilizing input from AmeriCorps program staff, state and federal government partners, and community member participants from a recent statewide community engagement process that took place in 17 communities across all regions of Oregon.

### Goals and Strategies

#### **GOAL 1: Strengthen Oregon's AmeriCorps programs**

*Outcome:* High quality AmeriCorps programs address local needs identified by communities, leveraging additional resources in terms of funding and people-power, which in turn increases both volunteerism and civic engagement in Oregon.

##### Strategies:

- 1.1 Provide targeted training and technical assistance to AmeriCorps staff based upon annual needs assessments and emerging community priorities.
- 1.2 Implement data quality review standards and framework that increase ability of Oregon's AmeriCorps programs to track and submit quality data, providing the Commission and the network with data tools necessary for identifying community needs.
- 1.3 Support programs to meet or exceed their programmatic performance measures.
- 1.4 Provide training and technical assistance and other identified supports to AmeriCorps programs on topics of recruitment, retention, marketing and branding.

#### **GOAL 2: Strengthen Oregon Volunteers: Commission for Voluntary Action and Service**

*Outcome:* The Commission has ample support, staff resources and funding to promote AmeriCorps, volunteerism and civic engagement to strengthen Oregon communities.

##### Strategies:

- 2.1 Increase diversity of Commission membership through more racial, ethnic, youth and regional representation.
- 2.2 Increase staffing to ensure successful achievement of OV goals, including increased Volunteerism and Civic Engagement-focused activities.
- 2.3 Strengthen local, statewide, and national partnerships.
- 2.4 Develop communication and outreach plan to amplify Oregon Volunteers' voice and reach.

### **GOAL 3: Increase National Service Focus on Statewide Education Outcomes**

*Outcome:* Within Oregon’s AmeriCorps portfolio, programs providing educational services that align with statewide educational directives are highlighted, promoted and connected.

#### **Strategies:**

- 3.1 Raise awareness of state educational priority focus areas, and available resources and funding opportunities, to Oregon AmeriCorps programs.
- 3.2 Identify partnerships and resources available to assist Oregon Volunteers and AmeriCorps programs in providing programming that support Governor Directives for improving educational services, including measures that strengthen community supports for Early Learning transition of students from pre-kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- 3.3 Through funding opportunities, support Oregon AmeriCorps programs aiming to provide high school dropout prevention efforts to increase Oregon’s four-year cohort graduation rates.

### **GOAL 4: Align Oregon project funding opportunities with state and federal partners’ priority focus areas**

*Outcome:* Oregon’s AmeriCorps programs respond to community issues that are having an impact in communities both locally and nationwide.

#### **Strategies:**

- 4.1 Raise awareness of state partner and/or CNCS priority focus areas to Oregon AmeriCorps programs. These include the focus areas of education, environmental stewardship, disaster services, healthy futures, veteran services and safer communities and special initiatives.<sup>1</sup>
- 4.2 Identify partnerships and resources available to assist Oregon Volunteers and AmeriCorps programs in providing programming that addresses the priority focus areas of state and/or national partners.
- 4.3 Through funding opportunities, support Oregon AmeriCorps programs providing programming that addresses the areas of: education, environmental stewardship, disaster services, healthy futures, veteran services or safer communities and special initiatives.

### **GOAL 5: Support Disaster Preparedness efforts in Oregon**

*Outcome:* The Commission is engaged in statewide disaster preparedness efforts with local and statewide partners.

#### **Strategies:**

- 5.1 Establish role for OV within the statewide agency framework by coordinating through the Oregon Office of Emergency Management and other affiliated partners.
- 5.2 Develop plan for unaffiliated volunteers, AmeriCorps, and CNCS programs to align with statewide response, including all responding state agencies and nonprofits.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via>

## SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN FOR VOLUNTEERS AGE 55+ OR OLDER:

### *Opening Summary Statement:*

The benefits of giving back, whether through service or volunteering, are well documented. It has a positive impact on not only those that give their time and efforts, but also the individuals and communities they serve. The act of giving back by community members enriches lives and provides the ability for nonprofits and other organizations to meet the unique needs of their communities.

### *State of Volunteerism and National Service:*

According to the most recent reports (Volunteering in America 2018), over 77.4 million people of all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities, volunteer annually. <sup>2</sup>

Nationally, the numbers show:<sup>3</sup>

In 2017, one in three adults (30.3%) volunteered through an organization, demonstrating that volunteering remains an important activity for millions of Americans.

- Since the previous report, the overall volunteer rate increased by more than 6%; nearly 77.4 million Americans volunteered 6.9 billion hours last year. Based on the Independent Sector's estimate of the average value of a volunteer hour (\$24.14 in 2017), the estimated value of this volunteer service is nearly \$167 billion.
- Volunteers donated to charity at twice the rate of non-volunteers.
- Volunteers invested in community-building; they did something good for the neighborhood at three times the rate of non-volunteers, and did favors for neighbors at nearly twice the rate of non-volunteers.
- Volunteers belonged to a group, organization, or association at five times the rate of non-volunteers.
- Generation X had the highest volunteer rate among age groups at 36.4%, and Baby Boomers had the highest number of hours at more than 2.2 billion. Millennial volunteering increased more than 6% since the last report, now at 28.2%.
- Over the past 15 years, Americans volunteered 120 billion hours, estimated to be worth \$2.8 trillion

In the 2018 Volunteering in America report, Oregon ranked #3 in states for volunteerism. Portland, OR ranked #5 in volunteering among cities.



- **1,448,752 volunteers** contributed **177.7 million hours** of service
- **43.2%** of Oregonians volunteer, which is almost 44% higher than the national average- ranking Oregon **3rd** among states for volunteering
- That volunteer service is worth an estimated **\$4.2 billion**
- **98.9%** of residents regularly talk or

spend time with friends and family

- **61.9%** of residents do favors for neighbors

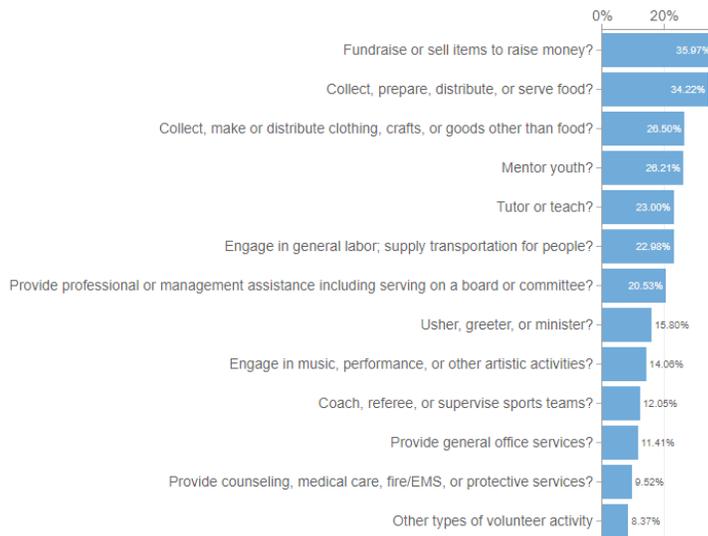
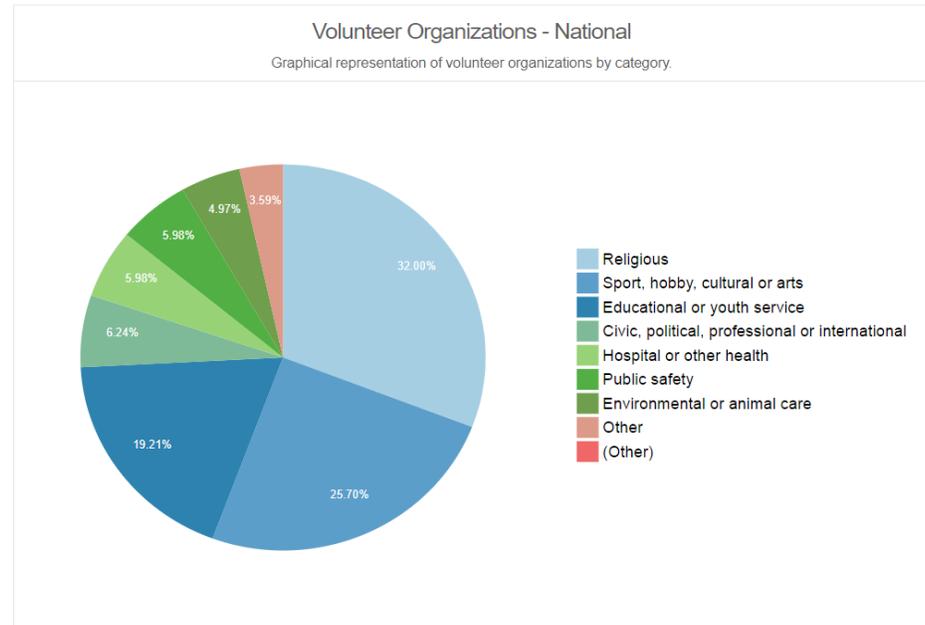
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via/research>

- 32.7% of residents do something positive for the neighborhood
- 43.1% of residents participate in local groups or organizations
- 62.2% of residents donate \$25 or more to charity

**Types of Service and Volunteerism:**

More than 972 AmeriCorps members and 3,309 Senior Corps volunteers are meeting local needs, strengthening communities, and increasing civic engagement through national service in Oregon. Participants in these programs address community needs in disaster services, economic opportunity, education, the environment, health, and veterans and military families.<sup>4</sup>



***Volunteerism Trends (55+)***

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) are often the primary focus of older adult volunteerism, however the first wave of Gen X group (born 1965-1979) is approaching 55 and organizations should be cognizant of not only providing an attractive volunteer environment for Boomers, but prepare for a new generation of retired volunteers who have unique interests, skills and motivations.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/state-profiles/or>

Gen X leads volunteering among generations, followed by Baby Boomers. Boomers are more likely to volunteer mainly for religious organizations<sup>5</sup> and are the most generous of all generations<sup>6</sup>, but Gen X leads volunteering among all generations.

### ***Generation X Volunteerism Trends:***<sup>7</sup>

- 21,720,574 Generation X volunteers contribute roughly 1.8 billion hours of service
- 36.4% of Generation X Americans volunteer
- Volunteer service worth an estimated \$45.2 billion
- 97.9% of residents regularly talk or spend time with friends and family
- 57.2% of residents do favors for neighbors
- 24.6% of residents do something positive for the neighborhood
- 28.0% of residents participate in local groups or organizations
- 58.0% of residents donate \$25 or more to charity

Also consider, from a Pew Research Center study on smartphone ownership, 80% of adults between the ages 30-49 own a smartphone — the second largest generational group to do so<sup>8</sup> while nearly a quarter of 40+ Internet users are willing to participate in virtual volunteering.<sup>9</sup> These factors should be noted when organizations consider how best to utilize volunteers and how best to respond to their interests and means of communicating.

### ***Baby Boomers Volunteerism Trends:***

- 22,631,756 Baby Boomer volunteers contribute roughly 2.2 billion hours of service
- 30.7% of Baby Boomers volunteer
- Volunteer service worth an estimated \$54.3 billion
- 97.7% of residents regularly talk or spend time with friends and family
- 58.8% of residents do favors for neighbors
- 23.7% of residents do something positive for the neighborhood
- 31.9% of residents participate in local groups or organizations
- 62.5% of residents donate \$25 or more to charity
- Overall, each generation has its own unique considerations and qualifications.

Overall, each generation has its own unique interests and motivations communities and agencies should consider in engaging their volunteer services.

### ***Aging Population: Wellbeing, Economic Impact and Challenges***

*“The current growth of the population ages 65 and older is one of the most significant demographic trends in the history of the United States. Baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—have brought both challenges and opportunities to the economy, infrastructure, and institutions as they have passed through each major stage of life”*, states the Population Reference Bureau.

The Population Reference Bureau asserts, “...As older Americans live longer, there is growing interest in exploring the connections between health and happiness in order to improve the overall quality of life in later years. This line of research, known as subjective well-being, goes beyond traditional measures of physical and cognitive health to understand the emotional dimension of older adults’ lives, examining whether people perceive their day-to-day existence as positive and rewarding or negative and distressing. In the United States and many other higher-income countries, life satisfaction follows a U-shaped pattern. Happiness falls to its lowest levels among those ages 45 to 54 before increasing among those in older age groups. Adults ages 50 and older report the highest levels of subjective well-being and are happiest while

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <https://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2016/06/02/knowing-generational-differences-can-help-engage-your-volunteers/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via/demographics>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/01/chapter-one-a-portrait-of-smartphone-ownership/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/nancy-leamond/5-key-lessons-for-engaging-gen-x-and-boomer-volunteers-online\\_b\\_5360252.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/nancy-leamond/5-key-lessons-for-engaging-gen-x-and-boomer-volunteers-online_b_5360252.html)

socializing, working or volunteering, and exercising. Among older married adults, those with disabilities report lower levels of life satisfaction compared with those without disabilities, partly because disabilities limit physical and social activity. Disability can also put significant physical and emotional stress on spouses and others who provide informal care”.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Benefits of Volunteering and Service for Older Adults: CNCS Key Findings***

In 2015, CNCS began two longitudinal studies to review the impact of service and volunteerism for older adults.

Interim findings from these studies show positive effects on health and well-being in Senior Corps volunteers, as well as for caregivers of Senior Companion clients. The volunteers reported improvements in health, physical capacity, anxiety and depression, loneliness and social isolation, and life satisfaction. The Senior Corps volunteer study showed that just after one year of service:

- Nearly half of Senior Corps volunteers (46%) reported improved health and well-being.
- More than one-third who initially reported they were in good health, reported improved health at the end of the one-year period.
- Almost two-thirds of Senior Corps volunteers (63%) reported a decrease in feelings of isolation.
- 67% of those who first reported they “often” lack companionship, reported improved social connections.
- 70% of Senior Corps volunteers who initially reported five or more symptoms of depression, report fewer symptoms at the end of the first year of service
- 63% of volunteers who initially reported three or four symptoms of depression also report fewer symptoms.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Additional Research Findings***

“Previous research has shown that volunteers live longer. This was observed in volunteers age 70 and older (Luoh and Herzog, 2002; Harris and Thoresen, 2005) and, in an additional study, among volunteers who were 50 and older (Lee et al 2010). A study of Americans over age 60 found that those who volunteer reported lower disability and higher levels of well-being relative to non-volunteers. The effects of volunteering were found to be greater than other factors including income, education level, or marriage (Morrow-Howell et al., 2003).”<sup>12</sup>

“Volunteering can be part of a healthy lifestyle. There is increasing research that volunteering can support an active lifestyle. (Fried et al) There is strong evidence that physical activity remains important to health outcomes through the oldest ages (Healthy Futures 2010). A recent study found that over a 20 year period, environmental volunteering during midlife was significantly associated with greater physical activity (Pillemer et al., 2010).”<sup>13</sup>

### ***CNCS Recommendations to increase service and volunteerism amongst older adults 55+:***

*Implications for policymakers, government agencies, health officials, and nonprofit and community organizations to support and increase older adults participation in service and volunteerism activities.*<sup>14</sup>

- Given the positive health benefits associated with volunteering, efforts should be made to engage populations that could benefit the most from volunteering or are underrepresented among current volunteers, including low-income individuals and people with disabilities. Programs such as Senior Corps that offer small stipends or reimbursements for transportation or other costs associated with volunteering make it possible for large numbers of older volunteers to serve their community.
- Volunteering can provide a sense of purpose and future outreach should include older adults undergoing transitions such as unemployment, retirement, or the loss of a spouse.
- For those living in rural areas, volunteering can provide an important way to stay connected and active. Programs for older Americans should include volunteer opportunities in rural areas and consider ways to lower the barriers to volunteering, such as stipends that can reimburse the cost of transportation.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.prb.org/unitedstates-population-bulletin/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/SCLongStudy.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits_factsheet.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits_factsheet.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits_factsheet.pdf)

- Nonprofits and community organizations need to be ready to recruit and retain boomer volunteers. Adoption of key practices, such as matching volunteers with appropriate and challenging assignments, providing professional development opportunities for volunteers, and treating volunteers as valued partners, can help build organizational capacity to recruit and retain boomer volunteers.
- While marketing and recruitment efforts directed to older volunteers should reference the potential health benefits of volunteering, researchers should consider designing health interventions based on volunteering.
- National days of service, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, can be an effective way to introduce new volunteers to service activities that can turn into a long-term commitment.

***Oregon Volunteers Goals:***

- Promote resources, research and best practices that highlight the benefits of volunteering, particularly for those 55+
- Encourage funded AmeriCorps\*State programs to engage community volunteers 55+ in Days of Service activities
- Partner with organizations currently serving the 55+ population to encourage volunteerism and increase awareness of service opportunities
- Connect with local volunteer associations and centers to gain awareness of ways in which the Commission can support their mobilization efforts for community members 55+

*In addition to the CNCS recommendations stated above, Oregon Volunteers recommends policymakers, government agencies, health officials, and nonprofit and community organizations make steps to achieve the following to support and increase older adults participation in service and volunteer activities:*

- Ensure that 55+ Oregonians and their champions are proportionately represented on decision-making bodies at local, regional, and state levels and have opportunities to engage cross-generationally on those bodies.
- Develop volunteerism and service opportunities that capitalize on the education / expertise of the retirement population.
- Adapt and prepare for the retirement of Gen X mission and project-driven volunteer opportunities that recognize the skills and interests of the Gen X population.
- Increase outreach to communities of color and Tribal leadership, and underrepresented populations, including rural and low-income communities.
- Increase access to adaptive resources for persons with disabilities and physical limitations.
- Promote the services of and outreach to agencies and organizations serving the aging population, e.g., Experience Corps, Senior Corps, Encore Fellows.
- For aging services providers, provide tools to local partners that can be used to strengthen communication with other state agencies that oversee development of and support for housing, transportation and other public systems used by older Oregonians.
- Conduct multi-generational training as part of overall diversity training.
- Allow flex-time for employees to be able to engage in community projects prior to their retirement.
- Assign management of unpaid staff to professional volunteer managers with attention to job and project descriptions, orientation, training, supervision and evaluation.
- Recognize organizations that engage older adults with compensatory prizes.
- Provide funding for nonprofits that demonstrate successful models of engaging older adults.

