



Maine Commission for Community Service

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The Maine Commission for Community Service uses a strategic plan which incorporates the statutorily required state service plan as its guide for fulfilling its mission. The most recent Strategic Plan covered the period through 2013.

In June 2013, the Commissioners decided to extend the current plan through 2017 for several reasons. One was to adjust the timing so development of the next M CCS plan could be fully informed by the strategic plan of the Commission's major federal partner, the Corporation for National and Community Service. The extension moves Maine's plan development to a year after the CNCS plan is published.

The second reason was the number of strategies in the 2013 plan that were partially implemented or ready for implementation but not yet fully in place. Rather than look for new work, M CCS opted to complete what has been started.

As required by federal and state law, there were opportunities for public input from National Service programs, people active in Maine's volunteer sector, municipalities, and the general public. Between October 1 and December 1 of 2013, sessions were held in Machias, Farmington, Bangor, Augusta, and Kennebunk. The process used in each location gave participants a chance to request additions or modification to the strategic plan and advise the commission on community needs that should be funding priorities for 2014-2017.

In April 2014, a draft of the extension was published for public comment. Eleven comments were received by close of the period on June 11, 2014. All submissions advocated for continued funding of a particular AmeriCorps program.

The comments were reviewed and the task force elected to keep the language about funding priorities as it was formulated. The relevant objective calls for 80% of the Commission grants to be within the scope of the listed priorities. And it is not the purpose of a strategic plan to make competitive funding decisions. Those occur during the annual grant selection competitions.

The full Commission voted to approve the extension of the Strategic Plan on June 13, 2014.

GOAL 1: *Maine communities will routinely engage citizens in effective volunteer solutions to critical human and environmental needs in their communities.*

Objective A: By 2017, 50% of Maine counties will be served by volunteer connector organizations that perform the functions expected of a Mobilization Affiliate in the Hands On Network model of affiliate operations.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - Count of volunteer connector organizations or systems, peer networks for managers of volunteers, and the counties served by each.
 - Survey of functions performed by Volunteer Connectors
- Strategies
 - Develop and utilize resources and technology to strengthen existing 4 volunteer connector organizations and 8 volunteer administrator peer networks
 - Develop resources to launch at least 3 new volunteer connector organizations
 - Provide training and technical assistance to 7 volunteer connector organizations to build their internal capacity
 - Develop and pilot a Maine volunteer coordination program to provide leaders in rural areas who can participate in community problem solving activities and foster engagement of volunteers in municipal as well as educational and nonprofit service.

Objective B: By 2017, 35% of Maine citizens will be engaged in service.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - Number of Maine adults reporting they devote time to volunteering
 - Number of Maine citizens who work with neighbors to fix or improve something
 - Number of Maine citizens that belong to one or more groups
 - Average number of hours a Maine citizen volunteers
- Strategies
 - Strengthen collaboration across industry, non-profits, faith-based organizations and communities by increasing outreach about volunteer opportunities and increasing networking opportunities for programs to connect to volunteers
 - Devote 60% of commission public information/education efforts to increasing public understanding of and support for
 - the connection between civic engagement and civic health, community vitality
 - effective engagement of volunteers
 - community impact of volunteers
 - Identify and replicate national models (Franklin Project, state task forces on expanding citizen service) that suit Maine as ways to expand intensive service by citizens in rural areas (non-CNCS programs).
 - Work with partners to develop a better understanding of civic engagement and volunteering in Maine by producing a detailed profile of the civic health indicators in Maine along with a series of structured community forums that connect the civic health findings to state and regional development initiatives.

Objective C: By 2017, MCCS National Service grantees annually will engage at least 4,000 citizen volunteers in service requiring at least 8 hours of work related to the grantee mission.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - Average number of hours by citizen volunteers as reported by grantees
- Strategies
 - Support training and technical assistance based on competencies for managers of volunteers to grantees and national service participants
 - Require all grantees to contribute to building the volunteer engagement capacity of local partners and host sites objectives
 - As a condition of a grant, organizations will report against a MCCS capacity building performance measure in addition to a measure relevant to the service activity (education, environment, health, etc.).

Objective D: By 2017, 1000 managers or leaders of volunteers will increase their skills, knowledge and abilities to develop volunteer responses to local needs and recruit, retain, and support citizens who volunteer.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - # of volunteer staff who complete professional development activity supported by MCCS and report at least one of the following:
 - Applying new skills in volunteer program setting
 - Applying new knowledge in program setting
 - A change in the operation of the volunteer program attributable to their learning
 - # of grantee staff, supervisors of national service participants, and managers of community volunteers who show progress along the novice-expert continuum according to the self-assessment
- Strategies
 - Provide professional development and training opportunities for volunteer administrators
 - Increase awareness, number of applications, and diversity of applicants to the Professional Development Fund.
 - Offer the online novice course at least twice annually and make it available to volunteer centers for their use
 - Create online the intermediate course for volunteer management using the curriculum developed for classroom delivery
 - For Maine National Service program grantee staff, develop self-assessment of proficiency using the Competencies for National Service Program Grantee staff and provide training/technical assistance to foster advance their skills/knowledge
 - Broaden the purpose of the Blaine House Conference on Service and Volunteerism from needs of novice volunteer administrators to also meet the needs of intermediate and advanced managers of volunteers
 - Through the Blaine House Conference on Service and Volunteerism, provide access to regional and national experts, emerging models for service, and new research or effective practices for community and volunteer service.
 - Provide training and technical assistance based on competencies for managers of volunteers to grantees and supervisors of national service participants

Objective E: By 2017, 85% of community programs that partner with MCCS grantees will improve their volunteer engagement capacity.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - Number of partners who add or increase the frequency of use of at least 3 of the 22 effective practices in volunteer management.
 - Number of partners who increase either the number of volunteers engaged or the average hours of service by their volunteers
 - Number of community partners that are trained and ready to respond to a local emergency
- Strategies
 - Require all grantees to contribute to building the volunteer engagement capacity of local partners and host sites objectives
 - As a condition of a grant, organizations will report against a capacity building performance measure related to volunteer management practices or systems in addition to a measure relevant to the service activity (education, environment, health, etc.).
 - Expand capacity in at least two additional regions of the state as well as the Commission to fulfill volunteer management emergency response and recovery obligations during local and state emergencies.

Objective F: By 2017, 80% of National Service grantees within Maine will strengthen communities and foster an ethic of service among participants by undertaking service that tackles community needs identified through public input as high priority for National Service activity.

- Measures
 - Output and outcome measures related to service activities
 - Output and outcome measures related to National Service participants
 - [AmeriCorps and VISTA specific] Skills, knowledge and abilities assessment
- Strategies
 - Target funding and authorization of Maine National Service project activities at the following focus areas and associated issues:
 - Economic Opportunity
 - Service as a pathway to employment (“job skills through volunteer service”) – include veterans as priority population
 - Education
 - Increased school readiness in pre-k population
 - Increased adoption of service-learning in k-12 school districts or, if connected to local curriculum, in local youth serving organizations’ programs
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Stewardship of natural resources by service programs that promote economic opportunity of those engaged in environmental stewardship activities
 - Healthy Futures
 - Increased food security

GOAL 2: *Community youth development and education programs support academic success of young Mainers by adopting, as a program operating strategy, service-learning that is tied to the local approved k-12 curriculum.*

Objective A: By 2017, 50 different youth development organizations will use service-learning as the basis for engaging youth in completion of local projects or activities.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - # of MCCS-funded service day grant recipients who provide evidence authentic service-learning was implemented
 - # of MCCS-funded school-community partnerships in which local curriculum is explicitly tied to youth programming in the community
- Strategies
 - Require service-learning be incorporated into Days of Service and Global Youth Service Day activities supported by MCCS mini-grants
 - Promote Semester of Service as a structured introduction of service-learning
 - Orient prospective grant applicant leadership to the principles of service-learning prior to any application deadlines
 - Restructure grant applications to support implementation of service-learning
 - Connect service-learning with community-based service through sessions at the Blaine House Conference.
 - Continue to solicit and recognize outstanding service-learning districts and educators in the Governor's Awards for Service and Volunteerism
 - Develop resources to support medium-sized grants to school districts and community partners that connect curriculum-based service-learning and community-based youth programming (summer, extended day, after-school, etc.) or implement the Semester of Service.

GOAL 3: *Maine's volunteer sector thrives and succeeds because sponsors deliberately connect volunteers to mission services and adequately plan, resource, support and acknowledge volunteer contributions to organizational achievements.*

Objective A: By 2017, 60 Maine nonprofits will increase their understanding of the relationship between an organizational culture of service and enhanced capacity to achieve their mission and meet community needs.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - # of certified consultants in Service Enterprise registry
 - # of Service Enterprise sessions completed
 - # of Orgs completing SED tool
 - # of Orgs reporting working with consultants
 - # Orgs reporting actively implementing improvement
 - # Action plans completed

Objective B: By 2017, 15 Maine nonprofits will earn the Service Enterprise certification and demonstrate measurable increased capacity to achieve mission and meet community needs.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - # of organizations implementing Service Enterprise action plans after completing training sessions
 - # Orgs certified as Service Enterprises
 - # of Service Enterprises reporting increased service outputs and financial resources
- Objective A and B Strategies
 - Work with United Way of York County to complete the Service Enterprise Pilot Initiative for Maine in 2014.
 - Using criteria and consultant certification process from Points of Light, create and maintain a registry of Service Enterprise Consultants who can work with organizations statewide
 - Use the pilot program as the basis for customizing the Service Enterprise Curriculum for Maine by December 2014.
 - Recruit nonprofit spokespersons from Service Enterprise Pilot to reach out to their peers.
 - Convene a working group representing the sector and Commission to develop and vet a tiered program that reviews the volunteer management practices of organizations and awards the appropriate level of recognition for quality volunteer program operation.
 - Develop public education strategy aimed at raising awareness among board members and senior leaders of organizations about Service Enterprise.
 - Establish framework to certify an additional 5 organizations each year after the pilot.
 - Work with Volunteer Centers and other partners to deliver Service Enterprise training statewide.
 - Develop a track at the Blaine House Conference for Nonprofit Service Enterprise.
 - Develop and implement a “Train the Trainer” program for Nonprofit Service Enterprise.
 - Reach out and partner specifically with rural organizations across the state to help implement Nonprofit Service Enterprise.
 - Research feasibility of state certification of Service Enterprise for Non Profits

Objective C: By 2017, 5 Maine public or tribal government agencies or offices (excluding schools) will earn the public Service Enterprise certification and demonstrate measurable increased capacity to achieve mission and meet community needs.

- Measures/Indicators:
 - Service Enterprise indicators, assessment, and verification completed
 - Curriculum for to guide public agencies through Service Enterprise developed and tested
 - # of consultants in Service Enterprise registry certified to work with municipal or county government agencies
 - # of sessions
 - # of agencies completing diagnostic tool
 - # agencies reporting actively implementing action plan
 - # Action plans completed

- Strategies
 - Work with Reimagining Service to develop a pilot curriculum and certification criteria for municipalities.
 - Revise and refine Service Enterprise Diagnostic tool to apply to municipal government.
 - Convene working group of municipal officials and town managers to review and provide input into a municipal Service Enterprise model.
 - Conduct a review of diagnostic tool, curriculum, and resource materials with Reimagining Service and other partners before launching a pilot.
 - Identify and recruit 5 municipalities covering a good cross section of Maine for the initiative to implement pilot model.
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 - Conduct the assessment.
 - Conduct the training.
 - Certify 5 municipalities.
 - Create a track at the Blaine House Conference on Service Enterprise for Municipalities.
 - Specifically seek out rural partners from across the state to help with the development and delivery of Service Enterprise for Municipalities.
 - Develop a “Train the Trainer” program for Municipal Service Enterprise.
 - Research feasibility of state certification of Service Enterprise for Municipalities

Definitions of terms

Local k-12 curriculum.

Service Enterprise. An organization that fundamentally leverages volunteers as a core strategic function to achieve the social mission of the organization

Service Enterprise certification process. A comprehensive assessment, training and consulting model that leads to nonprofits reimagining the way they strategically engage volunteers as well as earning certification as a Service Enterprise

Volunteer connector organization. An organization that is widely recognized in its community as an expert and leader in civic engagement, volunteering and service. It's primary mission is to activate, connect, mobilize and manage meaningful opportunities for volunteers to serve in their community. The volunteer connector organization demonstrates knowledge of and commitment to convening community partners to build productive and citizen-led responses to meet pressing community needs. The organization develops leaders for the volunteer sector in its region by 1) developing leadership capabilities of professional staff that have primary responsibility for recruitment, engagement, organization, and direct oversight of volunteers; and 2) through formal leadership development training and/or apprenticeship-style experiences, develop leadership skills of volunteers who lead other volunteers in service.

Youth development organization. A community-based nonprofit whose mission is to support of the natural positive development of the potential inherent in children and youth in relation to the challenges of their physical and social environment. These programs seek to build the abilities and competencies of youth by increasing participants' exposure to supportive and empowering environments where activities create multiple opportunities for a range of skill-building and horizon-broadening experiences.

Youth education program. A planned youth program designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which (a) complements their formal, academic, or vocational education and training; and (b) is provided primarily by non-profit or faith-based youth organizations.