



Volunteer Maine
Maine Commission for Community Service

2023 Annual Report





Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service
A Stronger Maine Through Volunteerism



February 5, 2024

To the 131st Maine State Legislature,

With pride, I share with you the 2023 Annual Report from the Maine Commission for Community Service (doing business as Volunteer Maine). This Annual Report provides you with an overview of our Commission and the dozens of volunteers who make this Commission work for the people of the State of Maine.


The Annual Report further spells out the amount of volunteer capacity we have built across the State through our Training and Technical Assistance for Community Volunteer Programs, as well as illustrates the success of our two pilot programs, Maine Service Fellows and the Maine Climate Corps. You can also read about what we are doing to promote the value of volunteering for Maine's children with our Youth Service Grant Partnerships, and how we are preparing community groups to apply for and achieve their first federal grant. Additionally, you will find the list of organizations that are successfully completing AmeriCorps grants.

The impressive level of volunteerism is something that should make us all proud as Mainers where serving our neighbor is in our DNA. We are thankful for the 131st Legislature's support in our legislative initiatives, such as the continuation of the Maine Service Fellows and the Maine Climate Corps, as well as the allocation of resources to communities that need help in kick-starting their volunteer sector.

Unfortunately, the two successful pilot programs, the Maine Service Fellows and the Maine Climate Corps, will most likely fade away into our history because they are not garnering the necessary public funding at the state level. This omission will leave the most rural Maine communities struggling, as they do currently, because they do not have the capacity to access new resources and engage their residents in volunteer-driven solutions. The current budget deliberations may also cut two positions from the Maine Commission for Community Service staff. One provides the training and technical assistance to community volunteer programs and the other has, in just one year, connected volunteer programs to over \$2 million in federal funding for sensible climate actions. These losses will profoundly affect needy towns in Maine.

We at Volunteer Maine do appreciate your support for the demonstration phases of these initiatives. Now, we continue to ask for meaningful state investment in this work. Relying on others to care about and fund the pressing needs of Maine rural communities, needs that can be addressed by residents who get support and resources to solve their own problems, is a recipe for weakening the resilience of our people. We hope this report demonstrates what is possible and provides a vision of what could be. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or Commission members with any questions or ideas.

Respectfully yours in service,



Luke C. Shorty
Volunteer Maine, Chair

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About Volunteer Maine

Volunteer Maine, the Maine Commission for Community Service, is the state service commission. It was established in 1994 and its mission, duties, and programs are described in 5 MRSA c373 §7501 et seq.

The Commission builds capacity and sustainability in Maine's volunteer and service communities by funding programs, developing managers of volunteers, raising awareness of sector issues, and promoting service as a strategy.

The Commissioners

The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to serve 3-year terms. Members are a diverse, bipartisan group of citizens, actively engaged in community service, and represent every region of the state. The board seats are designated in statute. Each person represents a facet of Maine's volunteer service sector.

Currently Serving

Luke Shorty, Chair, Winthrop
Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives
Thomas College

Chelsey Fortin-Trimble, Winslow
Associate Commissioner of Policy & Programs
Maine Department of Education

Pamela Proulx-Curry, Chair-elect, Old Town
Executive Director
Maine MultiCultural Center

Jacinda Goodwin, Winslow
Program Specialist, SERVE Center, North Carolina

William Guindon, Jr., Vice-chair, Auburn
Mass Care Coordinator
Maine Emergency Management Agency

Becky Hayes Boober, Rockport
Penobscot Bay Community Health Partnerships
Penbay YMCA

Jenifer Tilton-Flood, Immediate Past Chair, Clinton
Dairy Farmer
Flood Brothers Farm LLC

Diane Lebson, Camden
CEO and Co-Founder
Evergreen Philanthropic Solutions

F. Celeste Branham, Brunswick
V.P. for Student and Community Services
University of Maine Farmington (retired)

Janet May, Bangor
Coordinator of Transition and Adults, UMaine
Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies

Necole Janczura, Cushing
Business Development Officer
First National Bank

Thomas Meuser, Ph.D., Portland
School of Social Work, Westbrook College of Health
Professions, University of New England

Susan Cheesman, Concord, NH
Senior Portfolio Manager, Northeast Region Office
AmeriCorps

Will Sedlack, Scarborough
Executive Director
Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Kelly Day, Westbrook
Director of Volunteer Services
Catholic Charities Maine

Julia Van Steenberghe, Old Town
Recruitment & Engagement Specialist
Graduate School of Business, UMaine

Gary Dugal, Winslow
President/Executive Director
Good Will-Hinkley

Matthew Williams, Ellsworth
City Planner
City of Ellsworth

Michael Williams, Greenbush
County Manager
Piscataquis County



The Commissioners (continued)

Completing Service

The Commission is deeply grateful to board members completing their service.

Susan Asselin-Hawthorne, Sanford
Ed Barrett, Lewiston
Philip Bosse, Winthrop
Margaret Brownlee, South Portland
Stacie Haines, Augusta
Zachary Maher, Poland
Robert Meinders, Benedicta
Jeff McCabe, Skowhegan
Nathaniel Rudy, Readfield

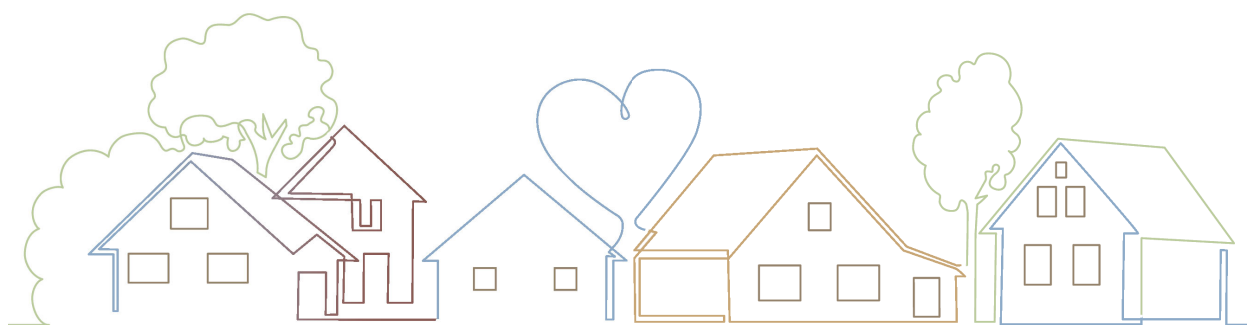


Volunteers

The Commission involves community members as volunteers on its advisory committees, grant selection task force, grant peer review, and trainers. Their contributions help Volunteer Maine extend its internal capacity. With appreciation, we recognize

Cory Long
Jared McCannell
Maggie Lynn
Jessica Freeland
Ron Holmes
Jeanne Kannegieser
Sherry Locke
Michael Moran
Dr. Tiffany North
Scott Hardy
Besty Fitzgerald
Ivan J. Fernandez
Abigail Henry
Representative Morgan Reilly

Kate Klibansky
Ann Louise Rice
Mark Benjamin
Kellie Doyle Bailey
Emily Vigneron
Nathan Robbins
Jen Loble
Tom Mullin
Lisa Morin
Tom Judge
Jennifer Christian
Kristen Grant
Veronica Kupferman
Brenda Zollitsch



Training and Technical Assistance for Community Volunteer Programs

Our Constituents

The Commission serves managers and leaders of volunteer programs, Maine civilian national service grant staff, public and private nonprofit organizations seeking to strengthen volunteer engagement, as well as organizations and agencies seeking to develop service programs.

The goal of all technical assistance and training is to impact the capacity, sustainability, inclusivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of Maine's volunteer sector. During COVID, Maine's volunteer force shrank by 33,000 participants and is now in a rebuilding phase.

2023 Activities

- 56 Community organizations received multi-session technical assistance aimed at increasing their ability to effectively involve volunteers in delivering services
- 153 Leaders of volunteer programs are members of the Maine Volunteer Managers Network which holds monthly virtual meetings. Sessions combine peer advising, guest speakers, and training.
- 42 Organizations that engage youth in service were trained in an approach that empowers the young people to design and lead service activities while adults take the role of advisors.
- 15 Volunteer leaders completed the Commission's 30-hour course and earned their Certificate in Management of Volunteers.
- 3 Commission staff partnered with UMaine Cooperative Extension and designed a new online credential in basic volunteer management principles. This is the entry level course for people who find themselves responsible for leading volunteers but have no human resource background. The credential was piloted with 12 volunteer leaders and the first module launched in fall 2023.
- 6 AmeriCorps Planning Grant agencies completed 12 months (576 hours) of training and program design technical assistance provided by the Commission's training officer. They will be eligible to apply for operating grants as soon as spring 2024.
- 102 Participants attended the Maine Volunteer Leadership Conference to learn about program evaluation, risk management, youth mental health, engaging people with disabilities in volunteer roles, and how volunteer projects are a vital element in building strong communities.
- 15 AmeriCorps members learned to assess professional development needs, select training sessions, work with a facility and event sponsors, and organize a 10-hour educational conference for 92 AmeriCorps members from all Maine programs. The planning is a leadership development experience facilitated by Commission staff.
- 332 hours of group training and technical assistance on issues related to AmeriCorps program operation and compliance with federal regulations was conducted for 52 AmeriCorps grant staff.
- 95 Community members attended a session specific to one of nine organizational requests for training on volunteer management.





Maine Service Fellows

The Maine Service Fellows program was established to help rural communities by assigning someone to devote full-time effort to a critical need. It recognizes that some communities do not have the municipal or nonprofit staff available to research solutions, secure resources, and manage a project. They need one more set of hands to accomplish their goals.

Eligible communities are in these counties: Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington. Towns in Penobscot County that are outside the Greater Bangor region and have populations under 5,000 are also eligible to participate.

The mission of the Maine Service Fellows program is to

- Provide rural, underserved communities with a resource to address critical needs;
- Increase the opportunities for recent college graduates to devote a year of service to communities and use their skills to make a difference;
- Attract and retain people with a passion for public service, especially in rural areas; and
- Strengthen civic engagement and community resilience by involving community residents as well as Service Fellows in volunteer-based solutions.

Community partnerships can submit projects that address needs related to Covid-19 recovery, housing including eviction prevention, workforce development, climate action, substance use prevention and recovery, and public health including mental health. Letters of Interest are reviewed by the Maine Service Fellows Advisory Committee and, if accepted, lead to developing a work plan, role description, and recruitment of the Service Fellow.

2023 Program Launch

The Sipayik Resilience Committee, a community group focused on climate action and resilience serving the Passamaquoddy Tribe at **Sipayik**, was the first host site ready to have a Maine Service Fellow. **Sam Gilbert**, a graduate of the University of Maine at Augusta, began service in June 2023. His assignment is focused on energy efficiency for homeowners.

In addition to organizing and managing an early fall window-insert build for 40 households, Sam was asked to help Eastport with a similar program. Back in Sipayik, he is bringing information about other energy saving programs to the community and helping homeowners identify which fit their needs, what the application process is for each, and what agency oversees each program.

Sam represents the Sipayik Resilience Committee on a number of state and national workgroups and helps to move the community's efforts forward to increased energy conservation and climate resilience. An excerpt from his August 2023 interview appears on the next page.

James Fagan is the second Maine Service Fellow. The Commons Energy Collaborative in **Dover-Foxcroft** is the host organization and its project for James also focuses on energy efficiency initiatives and engaging volunteers in climate action. Volunteer Maine approved the placement in November. Fagan is a graduate of the University of Southern Maine and will begin service in January 2024.

A one-time appropriation by the legislature was paired with funds secured by the Maine Volunteer Foundation to support these positions which are not eligible for federal civilian national service monies.

A coalition of nine towns led by Norway is ready to host the third Service Fellows as soon as funding is identified.



A Conversation with Sam Gilbert, the first Maine Service Fellow

Interviewer: I am talking with Sam Gilbert, who is the first Maine Service Fellow. He began his year of service at Sipayik in June. He serves under the sponsorship of the Resilience Citizens Committee.

Sam, people in rural communities around the state are curious about how the Maine Service Fellows program works. I thought talking with you would give them the best insight. What's the project that the community asked you to take on?



Sam: To start, it's weatherization. And the part we're doing right now is building window inserts to conserve heat. We are letting the community know about this. Someone calls us and we go out, measure their windows and gathering all the data. The builds start on [August] 21st.

I have to organize the build. We're going to have several different stations set up. One person will be cutting. One person will be putting the plastic on and that sort of thing - like an assembly line pretty much.

It's my first time doing this with WindowDressers. So far, everything is going pretty smooth.

Interviewer: Your educational background is very different from the project work you are doing. What did you study?

Sam: I have an associate degree in network security/computer forensics and a bachelors in cybersecurity. Now I'm working on my masters. I'm halfway through it and it is definitely a lot different from what I'm doing here. But [Maine Service Fellows] had the opportunity to be involved in something to help my community.

Interviewer: How is the community involved?

Sam: We got all the information from people that wanted window inserts and we asked most of them to volunteer and help build them. There is a grant for materials so they are free to seniors, disabled people, and whoever else can't afford them.

Interviewer: So why is this project important to the Sipayik community?

Sam: We're focusing first on weatherization because there are a lot of families in the area that can't afford to weatherize their home. This project gives 10 free window inserts per household. They're designed to reduce your loss of heat and that, of course, saves on the heating bill.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit about the community group that is the Maine Service Fellow sponsor?

Sam: Ah, well, there's so many community groups right now. Jasmine is my supervisor and Genevieve is another local person. Two or three different little groups that kind of all overlap - they all came together and they decided this is where they wanted to start.

Interviewer: That's an important piece for folks to understand. There's a primary supervisor who's local, and then there might be others who are advising or helping with certain things.

What prompted you to step up and serve?

Sam: Well, like I said, I've always wanted to help my community here. A lot of people are struggling to get by, especially in wintertime. You know, fuel bills, get high. Sometimes it's really cold and you gotta keep the heat up a little bit more. I've just wanted to help them.

Interviewer: I think that's going to be one of the hallmarks of anybody who is a Service Fellow. It doesn't have to be associated with their educational training. They might have relatives in the community but not live there themselves, so it gives them a year to come back and figure out where the family is come from.

Anything you think that a potential project sponsor should know?

Sam: Well, I guess there's a lot of challenges for someone that, like I said, didn't have any experience with the process. They met with me often to help and had great training videos. They bring you up to speed so you know you're an asset. They help every step of the way to make sure you know what needs to get done. Working together is the main thing, so people get what they need.



Youth Service Grant Partnership

Volunteer Maine promotes youth-led service and is pleased to have private partners who underwrite small grants to youth groups to support their service actions. “Youth-led” means individuals 17 or younger take the lead in all aspects of the initiative (research, decision-making, design, implementation). Advisors over 18 years old are resources and process facilitators.

Youth-leadership is a long-recognized protective factor and asset in youth development. From the Search Institute research in the 1990s through America’s Promise in the 2000s to prevention work of the 2020s, service led by youth has proven to foster their knowledge, skills, confidence, sense of belonging, and personal agency.

The Commission’s funding partners are the Maine Masonic Charitable Foundation and America’s Service Commissions.

Award Recipients - Spring and Summer 2023

Climate Science Creators, Greely High School, Cumberland Center

High school students developed a curriculum for a semester-long course on climate science and climate change in Maine.

Beecoming the Change, Space on the River, Skowhegan

The high-school aged students in Beecoming the Change (the bee is their mascot) enlisted other youth in a project to create murals to be hung in the community. A member explained, “we hope this mural project can be a reminder that we have the power to impact our community, no matter our age.”

League of Women Voters Education Fund, Fryeburg

The Youth Council Leadership Team of high school students developed individual projects that helped each member explore government and democracy in a deeper way.

Portland Housing Authority, Portland

Fifteen teens in the CHEETAH Project conducted service projects while learning project management and developing leadership skills. The CHEETAH project members live in one of PHA’s three family neighborhoods (Kennedy Park, Sagamore Village, and Riverton Park).

Award Recipients - Fall 2023

These recipients will complete their projects late spring of 2024.

Hardy Girls Healthy Women, Waterville

Beecoming the Change, Skowhegan

Kennebec County Youth Caucus of the Voices Project

Teens2Trails, Brunswick

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, Gardiner

Washington County Youth Caucus of the Voices Project

Central Lincoln County YMCA, Damariscotta

First Church in Belfast, UCC Youth Group

Penobscot County Youth Caucus of the Voices Project





Maine Climate Corps: An Update

The Commission worked on several recommendations of *Maine Climate Corps: Inspired by History. Designed for Today*, published in 2022.

The first state-funded Climate Corps program grant was awarded to Downeast Community Partners. Members conduct energy audits of Weatherization Assistance Program clients' homes, provide energy efficiency education to community residents, and analyze data from homes audited and weatherized. Members received extensive training in weatherization, earning the Building Science Principles, Building Analyst Technician, and Building Analyst

Professional credentials.

The Maine Climate Corps Network (MCCN) now includes nine service programs spanning community resilience, energy, land and water preservation, and other climate action activities. All programs in MCCN contribute to the goals of *Maine Won't Wait*, provide individuals with experiences that prepare them for careers in climate action, and engage the community in their activities.

2023 Network member programs are:

- AmeriCorps Resilience Corps
- Campus Climate Action Corps (Maine Sites)
- Downeast Community Partners Climate Corps
- Friends of Cobbossee Watershed Youth Conservation Corps
- Island Institute Fellows Program
- Maine Conservation Corps
- Maine Service Fellows (Sipayik and Dover-Foxcroft)
- Thompson Lake Environmental Association: LakeSmart Youth Conservation Corps
- WindowDressers Community Build Program

The Network programs reported multiple successes in 2023. For example,

- Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed saw increased requests for site evaluations and their Youth Conservation Corps, to help stabilize properties.
- The Island Fellow on North Haven researched and presented recommendations to the town to help accommodate sea level rise in the downtown area.
- WindowDressers, led by 100 core volunteer leaders across Maine, provided window inserts to over 600 households, helping residents save money and reduce carbon emissions.

Funding for Maine Climate Corps programs comes from multiple sources: AmeriCorps, State funding, and private investments. Volunteer Maine identifies additional funding to support programs. A total of \$2.3 million ended up helping two programs.

- Maine Conservation Corps accessed over \$1.5 million to support new "Community Tree Stewards" placements contributing to workforce development, community resiliency, and local forestry goals.
- AmeriCorps Resilience Corps connected to over \$800,000 to address energy insecurity and climate adaptation for underserved populations in Greater Portland.

Volunteer Maine's Climate Corps Coordinator and Executive Director are members of two national workgroups coordinating across states to provide advice and feedback to federal policy makers on implementation of the American Climate Corps. To date, there is no funding attached specifically to this initiative.



AmeriCorps Planning Grants

Volunteer Maine awards 10-month planning grants so community groups and their partners have the resources, technical assistance, and support to develop a “shovel-ready” AmeriCorps State program that can be proposed for operating funds in a future Maine AmeriCorps grant competition.

During the planning period, the grantee devotes personnel to training and completing tasks that:

- clarify the scope and impact of the critical issue affecting their community.
- research and identify an evidence-based service response to the issue, one that can be implemented by AmeriCorps members and the community volunteers they recruit.
- develop an operation model to deliver the services effectively.
- establish effective partnerships to connect with community beneficiaries and acquire needed human, financial, and other resources.
- develop the human resource policies, systems, and management procedures required to recruit, select, onboard, supervise, evaluate, train, and record accomplishments of both AmeriCorps members and community volunteers.
- develop data collection systems that will be used for reporting, learning, and continuous improvement.
- prepare to integrate AmeriCorps financial management requirements into agency policies and procedures; and
- educate financial, human resource, senior leadership, and relevant organizational staff about AmeriCorps grant provisions, regulations, and resources available for new grantees.

Throughout the planning grant, the lead planner and their team members must participate in Commission training about specific aspects of program planning. The organization must also complete critical tasks between training sessions.

An advisory committee must be created with a variety of community stakeholders including people who will benefit from the service activities. The Advisory Committee’s mission is to assist in crafting the overall program design by clarifying program goals, identifying AmeriCorps members’ service activities and sites, developing partner roles, and outlining budget needs and sources of match funding.

As grantees work through the design and preparation curriculum, some groups realize they do not have the capacity to implement the program. The capacity issues most often relate to having a staff person who can bring on a team of new people and provide the training, supervision, and record-keeping that goes with any management role. The Commission views this as a positive outcome and encourages the grantee to explore whether a partner has the ability, or whether internal work will lead to a future grant application. Grantees with an asterisk indicate organizations who determined they are not ready to apply for an operating grant.

Total Funds Awarded through Planning Grants

\$478,314

Grant Recipients

Alpha Legal Foundation, Portland

The grantee is a BIPOC-led nonprofit that proposed to develop an AmeriCorps program that would place members in courthouses, legal aid organizations, and community-based organizations. The program would be an adaptation of an AmeriCorps program that has developed in other states as a complement to existing legal aid and court self-help resources.

Maine Prisoner Re-entry Network, Augusta

The grantee proposed to develop a statewide AmeriCorps program to support community reintegration after incarceration and reduced recidivism. Partners include Department of Corrections, business, Department of Labor, Maine Association of Recovery Residences, Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition, mental health providers, and representatives of formerly incarcerated citizens.

Maine Emergency Medical Services, Augusta*

Maine EMS proposed to develop a statewide AmeriCorps program to address increasing the quality of emergency medical services that impacts the lives of all visitors and residents of the State of Maine. The program would help address the disparities in quality assurance (compliance with existing standards) between smaller communities with fewer human resources and funding and larger communities.

Maine Department of Education, Augusta

The Office of School and Student Supports at the Maine Department of Education proposed to develop an AmeriCorps program to serve York County, ME. It focused on mental health, well-being, and access to resources that impact the lives of students PK-12, parents/families, and school personnel.

Unity College, New Gloucester

Unity proposed to work with the Moose River Valley/Jackman region's residents to develop an AmeriCorps program based out of their Sky Lodge facility. The program would address workforce development and public health issues that impact the lives of area residents.

Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle

Haystack Mountain developed a FAB Lab that they propose to extend throughout Hancock County. The AmeriCorps program would increase access to workshops and training programs in coding, computer-aided design, 3D printing, and robotics for youth and underemployed or unemployed adults. The goal would be to enhance the employment prospects of local residents.

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, Fairfield*

KVCOG proposed to develop an AmeriCorps program that would address a shrinking and aging workforce in Kennebec, Somerset, and Waldo counties. Partners in the planning were Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, KV Community Action Program, the Kennebec Regional Diversity Coalition, and the United Way of Kennebec Valley.

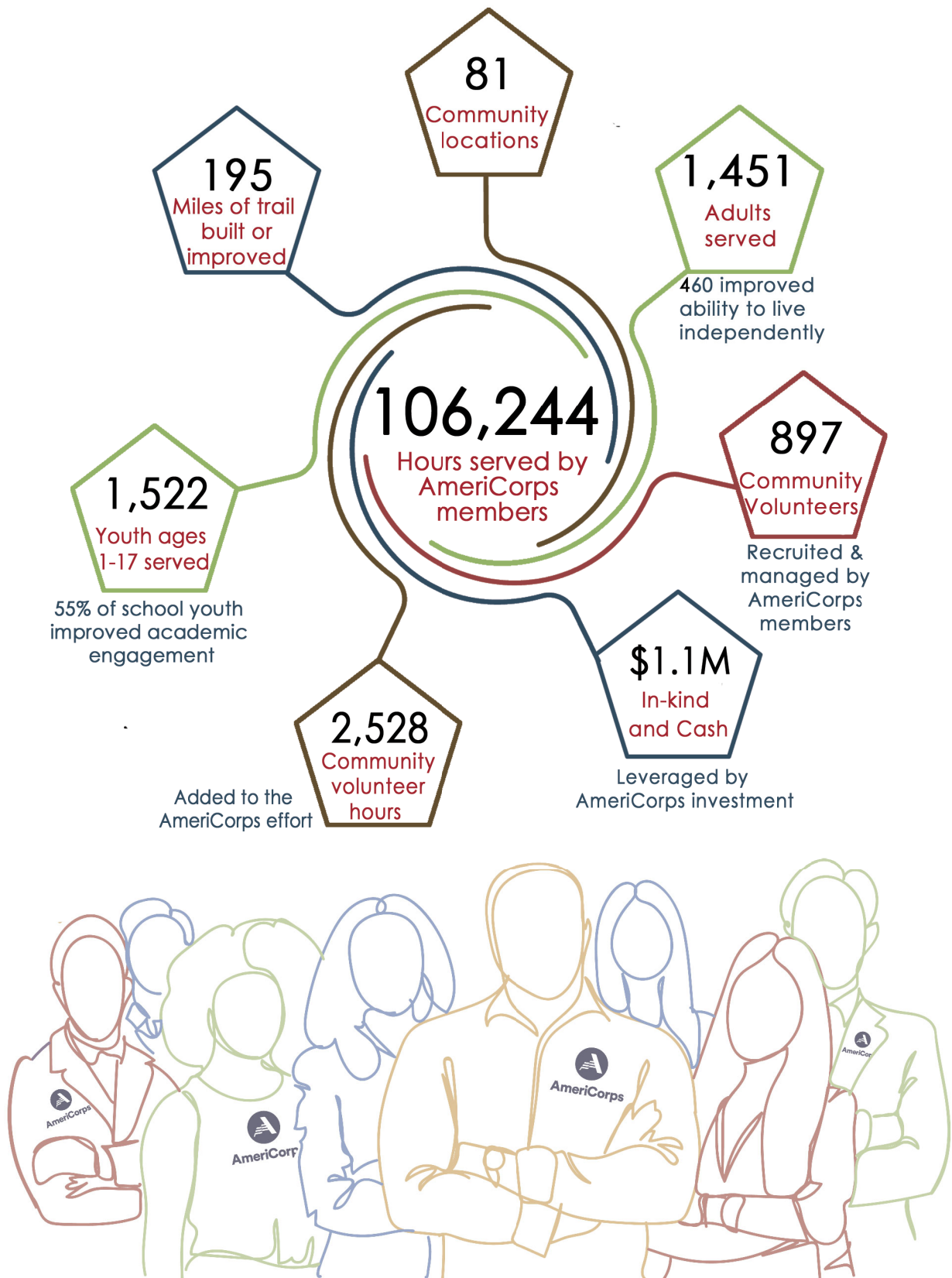
A Climate To Thrive, Bar Harbor

The grantee proposes to develop a statewide AmeriCorps program with a particular focus on communities identified as disadvantaged by the Justice 40 rubric and that have the highest energy burdens. AmeriCorps members would help communities - particularly small, rural ones -- address energy and resilience challenges.



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps Member 2023 Service Results



2023 Maine AmeriCorps Programs

Volunteer Maine awards grants to operate AmeriCorps programs to public and nonprofit organizations using funds allocated to Maine by the AmeriCorps federal agency. After grant decisions, Volunteer Maine monitors grantee performance, outcomes and compliance. It also ensures participants in AmeriCorps are eligible for program benefits. Program grants are for 3 years with the option to compete for another 3-year award.

AmeriCorps Resilience Corps

Grantee: Greater Portland Council of Governments
Award: \$362,062
Member positions: 14

The AmeriCorps Resilience Corps supports local government agencies, nonprofit agencies and regional cohorts in the Greater Portland area in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and planning efforts towards regional resilience. Fourteen Corps Members assist projects related to regional, community, or organizational resilience and help to accelerate civic innovation, climate action, racial equity, and digital equity for all Mainers.

Corps members serve local government entities or support regional projects. They develop skills in data collection, analysis, and visualizations and they participate in AmeriCorps National Days of Service.

I Know ME AmeriCorps

Grantee: Maine Youth Alliance, Belfast
Award: \$104,000
Member Positions: 4

The Game Loft hosts four AmeriCorps members to provide mentoring to RSU #3 students, age 12-15, in Waldo County, using the "I Know ME" curriculum.

Each year the two AmeriCorps members are responsible for preparing 36 at risk students for success in the classroom, within their peer groups and beyond the school walls. Additionally, the AmeriCorps members engage local volunteers in developing new mentoring relationships with the students and develop the host agency's capacity to better manage volunteers.

Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps

Grantee: University of Maine Center on Aging
Award: \$212,860
Member positions: 18

The mission of the Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps Program is to serve alongside local grassroots organizations on age-friendly, lifelong community development projects that will contribute to a more resilient, healthier, safer, and more engaged community.

AmeriCorps members help to address challenges such as access to technology, food security, home repair, transportation, and social isolation. Members build local capacity by networking with partners, recruiting volunteers, and serving with the core team to develop sustainable and inclusive leadership.

While the focus is on older residents, Lifelong Communities work for a time when residents of all ages, abilities, economic backgrounds, and lifestyles will have the opportunity to live safe, healthy, and rewarding lives.

Maine Conservation Corps

Grantee: Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Award: \$894,240
Member positions: 88

MCC has two AmeriCorps service options: Environmental Stewards and Field Teams.

Environmental Stewards serve individually with non-profits and state and federal agencies to increase organizational volunteer capacity and aid in the development and implementation of host sites' land management plans. They plan conservation projects and recruit, train and lead volunteers in creating and improving recreational trails.



AmeriCorps

Field Team members construct and rehabilitate trails on public lands like Baxter State Park, the Appalachian Trail, and land owned by local communities and land trusts.

Members are taught employment skills and create individualized plans for employment. Collaborative partnerships with workforce development organizations help create positive economic opportunity outcomes for members.

Skowhegan Outdoors AmeriCorps

Grantee: Main Street Skowhegan

Award: \$130,000

Member positions: 6

Skowhegan Outdoors AmeriCorps Program offers connection to outdoor recreation for those in the Skowhegan community, including free outdoor programming, the implementation of a community gear library, the development of Run of River, and the expansion of the local trail network. Skowhegan Outdoors promotes use of common outdoor spaces and facilities, and catalyzes a shift toward a more active lifestyle for Skowhegan residents --a lifestyle that supports a healthy lifestyle and is accessible to everyone.

AmeriCorps members organize and execute outdoor recreation programming. They also train additional volunteers to lead the programs, promote the programs in virtual and real spaces, create online content, and are tasked with establishing a gear library so residents can borrow outdoor recreation equipment free of charge.

Trekkers AmeriCorps Aspirations

Grantee: Trekkers

Award: \$77,200

Member positions: 3

Since 1994, Trekkers has been dedicated to helping young people thrive. Its mission is to cultivate the inherent strengths of young people through the power of long-term mentoring relationships. Trekkers is a unique six-year experiential learning program for students, starting in 7th grade and lasting through 12th grade.

Throughout the school year, teams of up to 20 students meet to plan their annual expedition and

participate in activities, like exploring the outdoors, volunteering, learning about new cultures, and more. Student voice and choice is essential, so every program looks a little different.

First4 AmeriCorps

Grantee: Kennebec Valley Community Action Program/Educare Central Maine

Award: \$265,896

Member positions: 25

The goal of the program is to support the social emotional development of the children in Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms as a means to reduce overall toxic stress, to boost resilience, and to improve school-readiness because it is known that approximately 80% of brain development happens in the first four years of life.

Members provide direct support to children in KV-CAP's Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms; build strong relationships and secure attachments with the children; receive training to better understand trauma-informed teaching and social-emotional development; and collaborate with a team of like-minded people eager to impact children's futures.

Commission Staff

Maryalice Crofton
Executive Director

Michael Ashmore
Program Development and
Training Officer

Kirsten Brewer
Climate Corps
Coordinator

Jamie McFaul
Grant Officer

Kelsey Preecs
Program Officer,
Volunteer Initiatives

Jake Hurner
Maine Service Fellows
Program Coordinator

Bryan Roche
Public Information Officer

Nathan McIvor
Office Administrator



Program and Event Supporters

The Commission appreciates the support from the following partners and sponsors.

Alumni TIES, US Department of State
America's Service Commissions
Bangor Daily News
Maine Masonic Charitable Foundation
Northeast Delta Dental
Kennebec Savings Bank
ME Department of Economic and Community Development
University of Maine Cooperative Extension
Maine Emergency Management Agency
Good Shepherd Food Bank
Goodwill of Northern New England
Machias Savings Bank
First National Bank Corp
Good Will-Hinkley
Oakhurst Dairy
Cabot Creamery
Portland Sea Dogs
Maine Association of Broadcasters
Maine Volunteer Foundation



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