

DELAWARE'S STATE SERVICE PLAN 2025-2027



Prepared by the

**GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION
ON COMMUNITY AND
VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

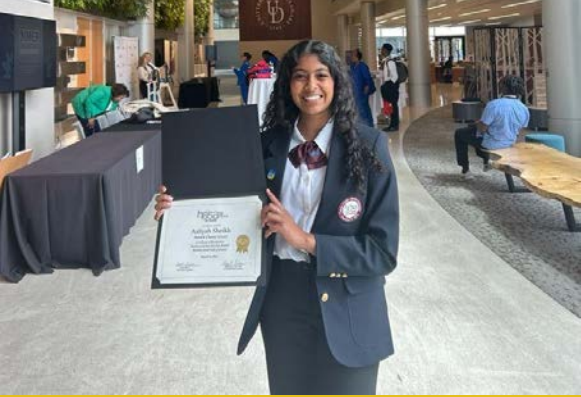


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“Service is a powerful tool to address the issues our communities face. The spirit of ‘neighbors helping neighbors’ is a part of our identity as Delawareans.”

-Governor John Carney



Welcome

**The Governor's
Commission on
Community and Volunteer
Service is devoted to
promoting and advocating
for service and
volunteerism to enrich
lives and communities in
Delaware.**

Dear Delawareans,

In 2022, our primary goal was to effectively address the pressing challenges facing our communities. The needs of our communities were more evident than ever, with stark disparities in social, economic, and health spheres. Despite the isolating forces of the past two years, they also revealed the unifying power of service, grassroots volunteerism, and civic engagement. Whether dedicating time to causes or simply helping a neighbor in need, these moments showcased our unity.

As the guiding force for national service and community volunteerism in Delaware, our Commission sees itself as more than an agency; we're deeply connected to daily acts of inspiration. Our Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service has developed a strategic plan to address community challenges and promote service and volunteerism. Our focus is the following:

- **Become the statewide catalyst and resource for volunteerism.**
- **Create connections among organizations across sectors to enhance our collective ability to achieve shared goals.**
- **Expand the impact and reach of AmeriCorps and National Service Programs in Delaware.**

These are not just goals; they reflect our shared commitment. Our state service plan has been meticulously developed through an inclusive, stakeholder-driven process. To all those who contributed to shaping this plan, we extend our warmest gratitude. We invite newcomers to join us, bringing their passion and expertise to help realize our shared vision.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Paul Calistro

Chair, Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service (2019-2024)

Margarita Rodriguez-Duffy

Chair, Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service (2024-Present)

John Sullivan

Senior Administrator, State Office of Volunteerism

Executive Director, Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service

WHO WE ARE



The Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service (the Commission) is committed to being a catalyst for positive social change. The Commission, appointed by the Governor, is comprised of representatives reflecting the broad diversity of the state. It includes members of the public sector, the private, non-profit sector, and the business community. The Commission is supported by and works in collaboration with the Office of the Governor, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, the Division of State Service Centers, and the State Office of Volunteerism.

The State Office of Volunteerism, in partnership with the Commission, aspires to be the premier resource for volunteerism and national service in the state and region. Together, we can address and tackle community problems through service and volunteerism. The Commission advises the Governor on pressing matters related to volunteerism and provides counsel to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services.

In partnership with the State Office of Volunteerism, the Commission is devoted to promoting and advocating for service and volunteerism to enrich lives and communities in Delaware. Our programs are improving the lives of Delawareans by providing life-changing service opportunities that focus on economic opportunity, education, health care, and more. The State Office of Volunteerism encompasses four programs: AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, Volunteer Delaware 50+, and Volunteer Delaware.

Commissioners

Margarita Rodriguez-Duffy, Chair
Debbie H. Smith, Treasurer
Charles Vincent, Secretary
Natalie DiSabatino, Co-Chair of Volunteerism
Peggy Mika, Co-Chair of National Service
Tamara Brown
Paul F. Calistro, Jr.
Cassandra Codes-Benjamin
Lossie Freeman
Kennadie Patterson
Melody Phillips
James Reddick
Gerald Rocha
Timothy Sheldon
Marilyn Siebold
Dr. Enid Wallace-Haley
Molly Williams
Valarie Wright

THE TEAM



Full Commission



Subcommittee



State Office of Volunteerism



DELAWARE AT A GLANCE

#4

**Informal
Volunteer
Rank**

Delaware Gives Back!

Source: [Volunteering & Civic Life in America-Delaware](#)

- **239,568** residents volunteered through an organization contributing **\$496.8M** in economic value in 2021.
- **499,000** residents helped their neighbors in the height of the pandemic.
- **29.8%** of residents formally volunteered through organizations.
- **94.6%** of residents informally helped others by exchanging favors with neighbors.
- **49.3%** of residents donated \$25 or more to a charity.
- **\$29.56** is the volunteer worth per hour in Delaware

#6

**Delaware's
Overall Rank**

National Service in Delaware Statistics for 2023

Source: [National Service in Delaware](#)

- **\$7,801,995** invested in AmeriCorps programming across our state.
- **1,297** National Service members and Volunteers served in Delaware in 2023
- **205** AmeriCorps service sites welcomed members
- **134** AmeriCorps State members completed service
- **74** AmeriCorps National members completed service
- **42** AmeriCorps VISTA members completed their service across 9 service locations.

AmeriCorps Seniors, Program Statistics for 2023

Source: [National Service in Delaware](#)

- **770** RSVP participants completed their service term.
- **216** Foster Grandparent Program participants completed their service.
- **61** Senior Companion participants completed their service term.
- **102** AmeriCorps Seniors service sites were located across Delaware.

#7
**Volunteering
& Service
Rank**

[Informal Volunteering Rank, Overall Rank, and Volunteering & Service Rank](#)



WHY WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN

The Commission is confronting a substantially different landscape from that of the previous State Service Plan, adopted in 2021, due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic changes, and ongoing social issues. These circumstances necessitate a reevaluation and potential revision of the plan to more effectively address the current challenges and priorities.

The State Service plan is intended to provide guidance for all facets of National Service and volunteerism, serving as an inclusive strategy to address the diverse needs within our state. It underscores the enhancement of volunteerism and National Service through strategic partnerships. Spanning a three-year duration, this Delaware State Service Plan is designed as a dynamic, working document. It encompasses defined goals, priorities, and strategies to advance National and Community Service.

As a recognized state service commission responsible for managing federally funded AmeriCorps State programs, the Governor’s Commission on Community and Volunteer Service commits to developing a strategic plan every three years as required by AmeriCorps. This plan will serve as a prioritization tool and meet the requirements of the [Code of Federal Regulations \(45CFR2550.80\)](#) and AmeriCorps.

Furthermore, this plan acknowledges the exceptional service the people of Delaware contribute to our great state, as evidenced by the national rankings that Delaware has achieved.











HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN

Right from the start, our goal was to capture the perspectives of numerous partners in this plan. We decided to utilize a grassroots method to survey volunteer managers, direct volunteers, and AmeriCorps members. Additionally, we interviewed stakeholders, consisting of leaders of organizations that heavily rely on volunteers. To ensure we gained the necessary insights to guide the planning process, the Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service (GCCVS) appointed a committee of commissioners, supported by the State Office of Volunteerism (SOV) Staff to formulate the State Service Plan (SSP).

The SSP Committee convened weekly for one year, enlisting the expertise of a local consulting firm. This approach to developing the plan is unique in that the Commission was very hands-on, rather than delegating most of the work. The Commissioners and SOV staff collaborated seamlessly to create this roadmap for enhancing Delaware's volunteer experience.

The Committee's focused efforts involved a meticulous evaluation of 15 state service commission plans, to identify best practices and areas for improvement. The initiative encompassed the administration of volunteer surveys, yielding 673 responses, and surveys targeting volunteer managers, which garnered 112 responses from organizations of diverse sizes and sectors. Furthermore, valuable stakeholder insights were gathered through interviews with leaders from 15 volunteer-reliant organizations. The engagement extended to the general public, with 40 attendees from events, town halls, and the State Fair, sharing their perspectives. Lastly, regarding National Service, 25 second-year AmeriCorps members offered valuable contributions.

To emphasize the importance of surveys in formulating this plan, it's crucial to note that Delaware's participation rate, relative to its population, surpassed that of four other states (with populations ranging from three to thirteen million) by at least tenfold.

 15 Comparative State Service Plans	 15 Stakeholder Interviews	 10 Events, Fairs, Townhalls	 40 General Public Responses	 112 Volunteer Manager Survey Responses	 25 AmeriCorps Member Responses
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WHAT WE LEARNED



We Heard...

“It is important that we share the word of volunteer opportunities and the reality of what the volunteer opportunities look like.”

We Heard...

“Is there funding to support Volunteer Management? It would be very helpful for our organization to have better training in onboarding and volunteer management, and capacity funding to help grow volunteer management needs.”

We Need a Stronger Sense of Community

In response to a comprehensive stakeholder survey, community leaders identified key areas for strategic improvement within their volunteer management initiatives.

- Increase the sense of community and our partnerships to extend reach
- Increase administrative capabilities, such as technology and communications, for organizations managing volunteers
- Identify ways to improve their programming and extend impact
- Need for support in volunteer management; better onboarding tools
- Increase availability of time for volunteers to commit to volunteering

When surveyed, stakeholders reported a high need for additional volunteers and outlined their continuous efforts in recruiting and onboarding. The survey also revealed the expressed need to identify strategies for expanding reach, fostering community ties, and securing funding to enhance technology and communication support.

The survey not only highlighted the need for volunteers but also underscored the necessity of enhancing administrative capabilities. Specifically, there was a discernible need for technological advancements and improved communication support.



WHAT WE LEARNED



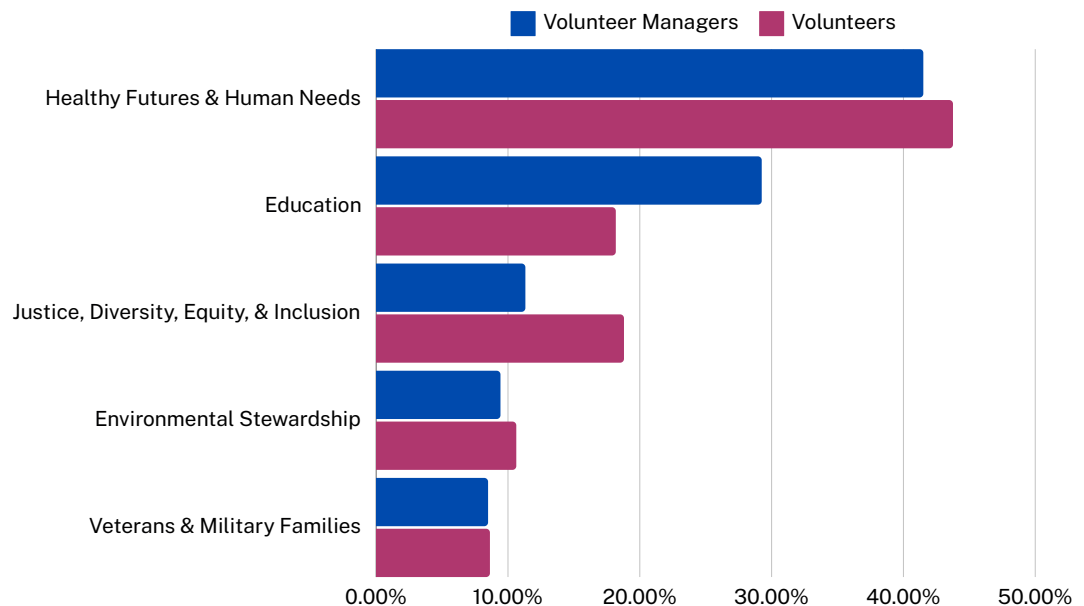
Healthy Futures: Delawareans' Primary Priority

In separate surveys targeting volunteers and volunteer managers in Delaware, participants were asked to identify the most critical priorities for the Governor's Commission. The majority, comprising 41% of surveyed volunteers and 43% of volunteer managers, emphasized Healthy Futures and Human Needs as the top priorities for the commission to address and commit to. Other priorities mentioned included: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), Education, Environmental Stewardship, Veterans and Military Families.

These insights highlight that both surveyed volunteers and managers place a strong emphasis on Healthy Futures and Human Needs. Moreover, our interviewed stakeholders identified mental health and housing access as the most pressing needs in our state. This indicates the importance of prioritizing these areas in the Governor's Commission's initiatives for service and community engagement in Delaware.

Survey Question:

Which of the following National Service priorities do you view as the most critical for the Governor's Commission to care about and/or commit to.



We Heard...

According to our survey, the top three community issues volunteers are most likely to participate in are:

1. Hunger, Access to Health Food
2. Literacy Support, Mentoring, & Tutoring
3. Access to Housing

WHAT WE LEARNED



We Heard...

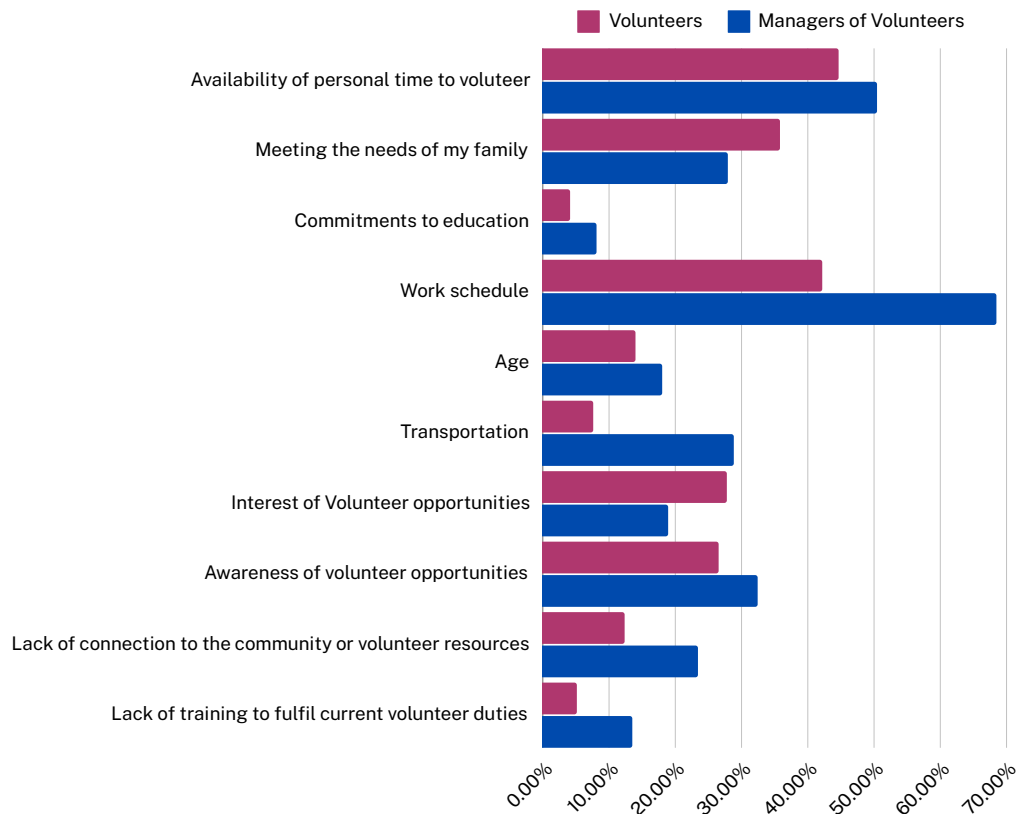
“I’ve noticed a decline in volunteers as a result of people having to work multiple jobs to support their families. Most people don’t have time to give back to the community more.”

Volunteer Time Commitment & Availability

Additionally, the Stakeholder survey underscored a scarcity of personal and/or work time available for individuals to dedicate to volunteer opportunities. While there is a willingness to engage in volunteer work, the constraint lies in the limited availability of personal time. Balancing professional responsibilities and family obligations often restricts individuals, providing only a narrow window for additional commitments like volunteering. Acknowledging and addressing this reality is imperative for organizations seeking to both attract and retain volunteers.

Survey Question:

What factors prevent you from volunteering?



We Heard...

“[The Commission] could reinforce adults to volunteer more. Companies that promote volunteerism among their employees make a huge difference in getting volunteers into our buildings.”

PREVIOUS PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS



The previous plan, 2020-2022, involved a heavy focus on direct volunteer engagement. The priorities included improving the volunteer and national service experience in Delaware, increasing the number of volunteers and national service participants, along with expanding the network of volunteers and national service participants. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, significant progress was made in the pursuit of the 2020-2022 strategic priorities. Volunteer Delaware provided services by initiating partnerships with other state entities and transitioned to virtual operations when required.

Accomplishments of State Service Plan 2020-2022

- ✔ **The Commission developed and implemented the Corporate Volunteer Network, working on highlighting corporate initiatives in the community and connecting to develop strategies as a team.**
- ✔ **The Commission initiated unique VISTA intermediary projects, relieving non-profits of burdensome administrative responsibility.**
- ✔ **VISTA members provided capacity building to the organizations that they served and worked on to build bridges between the non-profits and state entities in Delaware.**
- ✔ **Additional trainings were provided to volunteers and National Service members including trauma-informed care, career exploration, self-care workshops, etc.**
- ✔ **Volunteer Delaware website added additional criteria to be completed by the new volunteers, specific data including types of opportunities, locations, and dates.**
- ✔ **Volunteer Delaware 50+ improved contact with volunteer managers, adding direct involvement of the advisory council.**

Various organizations, some successful and some less successful, had to pivot to virtual service. Some individuals were able to continue serving in the community, others had to temporarily stop due to the pandemic. Many organizations that thrived on volunteer support suffered the loss of countless long-standing volunteers. The network of volunteer managers is still recovering and pivoting to return to their volunteer base.

It should be noted that new collaborations and partnerships were created in the midst of changing community needs during the pandemic. Mobile COVID-19 testing sites, purchasing and distribution of personal protective equipment (face masks/shields), and coordination of services by non-profit and state entities, all displayed how Delawareans can rise to the occasion to meet community needs. (The 2020-2022 State Service Plan evaluation can be found on [Volunteer.Delaware.gov](https://www.volunteerdela.gov)).

STATE SERVICE PLAN OVERVIEW

Based on survey responses and the climate of volunteerism today, our priorities are more focused on the infrastructure of volunteerism. The valuable insights shared by Delawareans regarding volunteerism have guided us in crafting three strategic priorities. These priorities are meticulously designed to foster a more robust infrastructure for volunteerism and national service in our great state, ensuring a framework that resonates with our community's spirit of service.

We envision positioning ourselves as the premier statewide catalyst and resource for volunteerism, aiming to foster a culture of engagement and community service. Secondly, our focus extends to the establishment of robust coalitions and aligned partner networks, a strategic move to enhance the impact of our initiatives through collaborative efforts. Lastly, we are committed to expanding the influence and reach of AmeriCorps and national service programs in Delaware, aspiring to make a lasting and widespread difference in our community.

In the upcoming pages, we will delve into our three key priorities, providing a detailed breakdown of specific and measurable goals. This approach will enable us to plan and achieve our objectives more effectively.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: BECOME THE STATEWIDE CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR VOLUNTEERISM

Provide Advertising & Promotion, Communication & Technology, Expense Resources

- Double the website views from 51,000 to 102,000.
- Implement two to three weekly social media postings of partner opportunities, events, and promotions.
- Develop alternative resources to support expenses related to volunteer management via corporate support and/or Volunteer Generation Fund.

Find Solutions to Volunteer Availability

- Cultivate collaboration between the Corporate Volunteer Network and employers to encourage and increase employee volunteering.
- Maintain monthly highlights of employee and business volunteerism on the Volunteer Delaware website and social media.

Develop Training for Volunteer Managers to Include Recruitment, Retention, & Recognition

- Produce/provide a minimum of three Volunteer Manager training workshops to be made available in-person, virtually, or via video.
- Assist organizations with obtaining certifications for volunteer managers.



“We are part of the solution to meet the critical community needs identified, through coordination of grants and human capital.”

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: BUILD COALITIONS AND ALIGN PARTNER NETWORKS

Create Connections Among Corporate Entities, State-Wide Volunteerism Stakeholders, and Non-profit Organizations Sharing Common Priorities

- Create five focus area networks and invite organizations to participate and share best practices.
- Recruit three new partners to add to the Corporate Volunteer Network and connect corporations with community initiatives they can support (i.e. sponsor National Day of Service).
- Establish annual meetings with Delaware's largest, state-wide, non-profit stakeholders.
- Collaborate with existing networks and host annual volunteer conferences to connect state-wide volunteer organizations.

Provide Communication Resources to Networks

- Post announcements of networking events on the Volunteer Delaware website and social media.
- Promote state-wide volunteer networks at State Office of Volunteerism (SOV) events.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3:

EXPAND THE IMPACT AND REACH FOR AMERICORPS AND NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS IN DELAWARE

Add Focus Priorities to AmeriCorps Portfolio

- Add at least one subgrantee to the portfolio in each of the six AmeriCorps focus areas.

Build a Pipeline for AmeriCorps Programming

- Maintain a minimum of two planning grants in the AmeriCorps portfolio.
- Expand VISTA from 22 to 30 members statewide through AmeriCorps Delaware sponsorship.
- Host a minimum of one National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) team in the state annually.

Develop Formula Grant Programs into Solid Competitive Grant Applicants

- Coach/mentor a minimum of three formula subgrantees to apply for the AmeriCorps competitive grants.

Advance the Number of Employers of National Service and Schools of National Service

- Recruit a minimum of five Delaware employers to provide special hiring consideration for National Service alumni.
- Add two additional schools of National Service in Delaware.
- Collaborate with schools of National Service to increase the participation of alumni.



Employers of National Service connects AmeriCorps alumni with employers from the private, public, and non-profit sector.



Schools of National Service recognize that individuals who serve in AmeriCorps bring tremendous value to higher education and other post-secondary experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service, the Office of the Governor, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, the Division of State Service Centers, the State Office of Volunteerism, and AmeriCorps Delaware express gratitude to our partners for their diverse support in ensuring that service has a positive impact on the people and places of Delaware, including those who actively participate. The success of service initiatives benefiting all Delawareans relies significantly on these partnerships. As we implement the State Service Plan, we acknowledge the collaborative efforts necessary from each individual to foster the health and prosperity of our communities. We extend our thanks to individuals, organizations, government agencies, and philanthropic partners who actively engage in service with us. If you or your organization is interested in learning more about supporting the mission of SOV or our AmeriCorps family, or if you simply want to share ideas and gain insights into our work, feel free to contact us. Your support is greatly appreciated!

*Thank
you!*



TO LEARN MORE

For more information please click the links below:

- [Formal/Informal Volunteering](#)
- [Governor’s Commission on Community & Volunteer Service](#)
- [AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps Seniors](#)
- [AmeriCorps Delaware](#)
- [Volunteer Delaware](#)
- [Volunteer Survey](#)
- [Stakeholder Survey Results](#)
- [Delaware Health Trends](#)
- [Delaware State Health Improvement Plan](#)
- Assessments by other organizations
 - [Community Health Needs Assessment | Bayhealth](#)
 - [NAMI Delaware Fact Sheet](#)
 - [Advocates for Community Health](#)



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES



AmeriCorps
Delaware

DEL  **W** **OLUNTEER**
ARE