



**2023-2025**

**STATE SERVICE PLAN**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## VISION & MISSION

Volunteer NH is a 501c3 organization that envisions our state as a place where people volunteer together to build strong and connected communities. We bring our vision to life by engaging those communities to solve local challenges through volunteerism.

## PREFACE:

Volunteer NH serves as New Hampshire's designated State Service Commission per the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act. Volunteer NH administers grant funding to the AmeriCorps State programs, stewards the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) to increase the capacity of local volunteer initiatives, and offers support to other AmeriCorps programs, including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps Seniors, and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).

The AmeriCorps federal agency requires every State Service Commission to design and develop a three-year State Service Plan. The purpose of the State Service Plan is to create a set of priorities that the State Service Commission will use when allocating National Service resources. Additionally, the State Service Plan is intended to establish goals and strategies that directly respond to the identified priorities. AmeriCorps mandates that the priority areas be identified with public participation to guarantee that they are truly reflective of the critical needs of the state.

To ensure diverse statewide input, Volunteer NH created an online survey for those who live and work in New Hampshire to identify the needs of their communities. Additionally, VNH invited participants to attend focus groups to discuss challenges and potential solutions in greater depth.

# DATA COLLECTION: SURVEY

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

Volunteer NH collected data from more than 360 individuals. Respondents were from all regions of the state and identified as community members, volunteers, volunteer managers, or other employees working in fields that address AmeriCorps priorities areas.

AmeriCorps utilizes a set of core focus areas to maximize the impact of investment in national service: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures and Veterans and Military Families. Survey respondents were asked to rank these focus areas by perceived order of importance. They were then asked to select the top three issues from a set of priority areas that fall under the identified focus areas.

## OUTREACH METHODS

### Within Volunteer NH networks:

- Emails to Constant Contact list of 14,000+
- Emails to all 15,000+ users of Get Connected
- Social media posts (organic)
- Press release to major outlets in NH
- Outreach to elected officials, including the entire NH House of Representatives and New Hampshire State Senate
- Personal outreach to other local nonprofit organizations
- Outreach to AmeriCorps programs and Volunteer Generation Fund grantees
- Volunteer NH Board of Directors
- Volunteer NH Sponsors

### Paid social media outreach:

- Targeted ads to Facebook and Instagram: Received a total of 38,000 impressions and 937 clicks on the link to the survey
- LinkedIn: Received 17,393 impressions and 140 engagements with the post including link clicks.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Responses came from all **10** NH counties.

Respondents ranged in age from **18-55+**.

**72%** of all respondents have noticed community needs or issues that have been made worse or more urgent during or due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**52%** of all respondents are affiliated with an organization or community group that serves a population affected by any of the AmeriCorps focus areas or the additional priority areas noted in the survey.

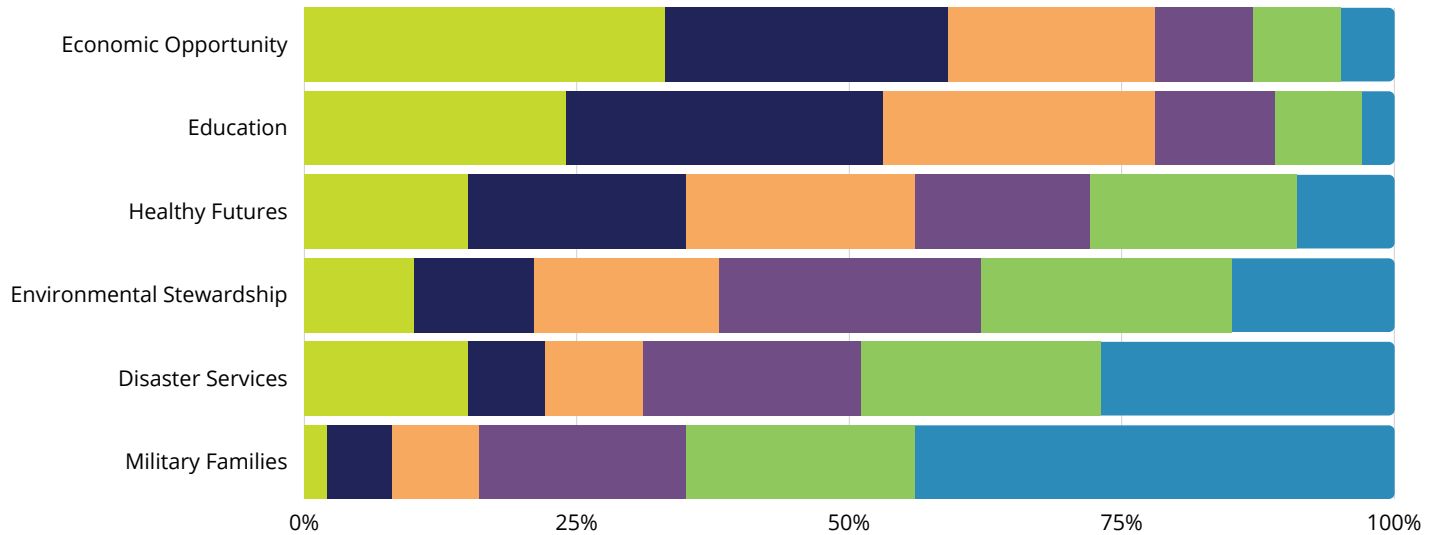
**47%** of all respondents volunteer their time in some way.

**46%** of the above respondents manage volunteers in their role at work.

**38%** are current employees of a nonprofit organization.

## FOCUS AREAS

The AmeriCorps focus areas ranked as respondents' top three choices are:  
Economic Opportunity, Education, and Healthy Futures



## DEFINITIONS

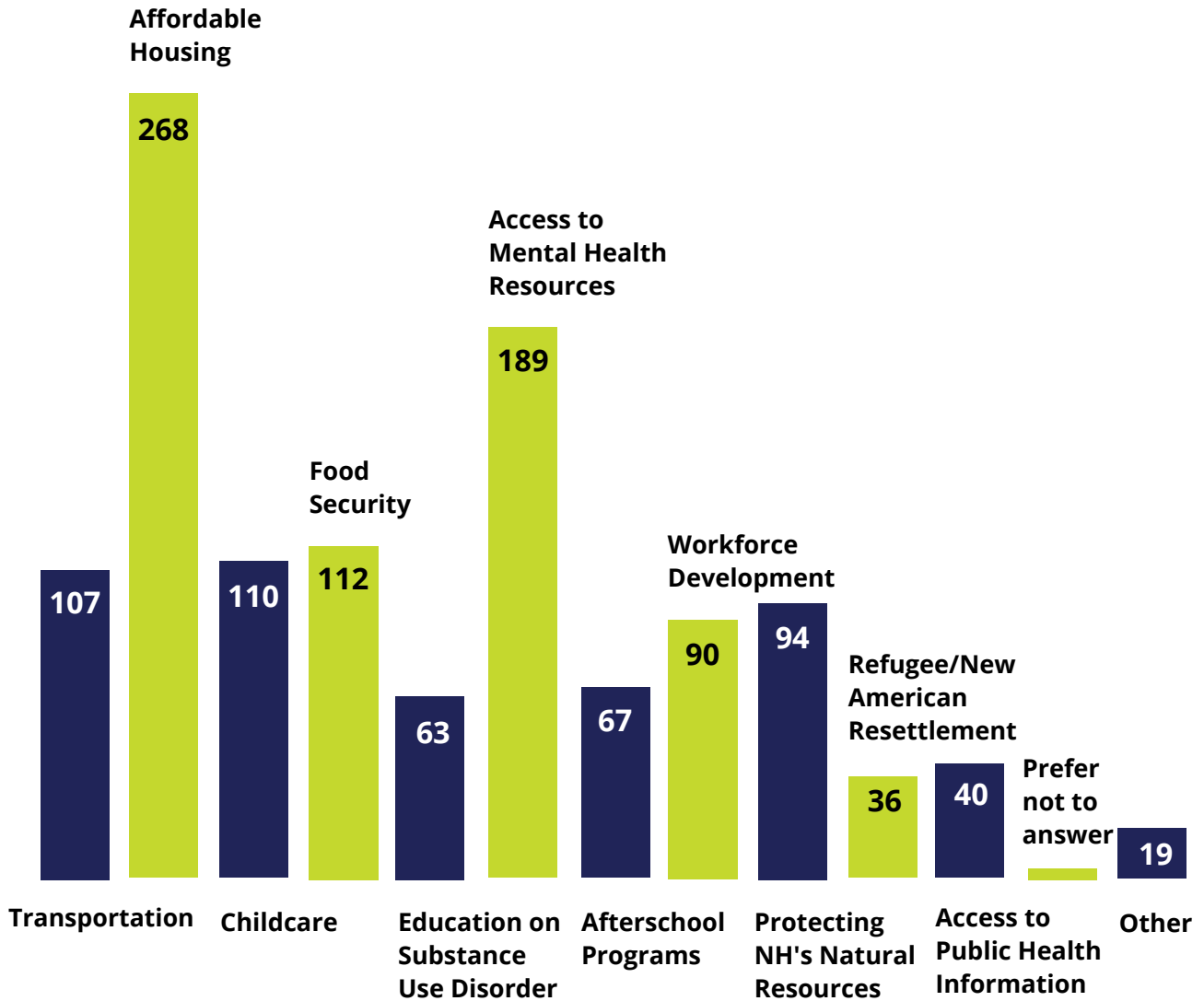
**Economic Opportunity:** Provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

**Education:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

**Healthy Futures:** Provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.

## PRIORITY AREAS

After setting the context of broader focus areas of importance in New Hampshire, survey participants were asked to narrow in on more specific priority areas.



**Within the scope of the broader AmeriCorps focus areas, the top three priority areas of particular importance in New Hampshire are:**

Affordable Housing, Access to Mental Health Resources, and Food Security

# DATA COLLECTION: FOCUS GROUPS

## FOCUS GROUPS

Volunteer NH hosted four focus groups over Zoom in September of 2022, targeting individuals who responded to the survey in order to delve deeper into the results. In total, 38 individuals attended across these four sessions. Participants also completed a two-question poll during the Zoom meeting (results on page 6).

The focus groups yielded results that were consistent with the results found in the online survey responses. The AmeriCorps focus areas identified as the top issues in **all** focus groups were: Economic Opportunity, Healthy Futures,, and Education. There were two specific priority areas identified by **all** focus groups: Affordable Housing and Access to Mental Health Resources.

### Mentioned most often within focus group sessions:

#### **Economic Opportunity**

Affordable Housing: renting and owning

Childcare affordability and availability

Opportunities for New Americans

Transportation: a statewide problem more pronounced in rural areas

Workforce Development

#### **Healthy Futures:**

Access to mental health services, including for children

Substance use disorder resources

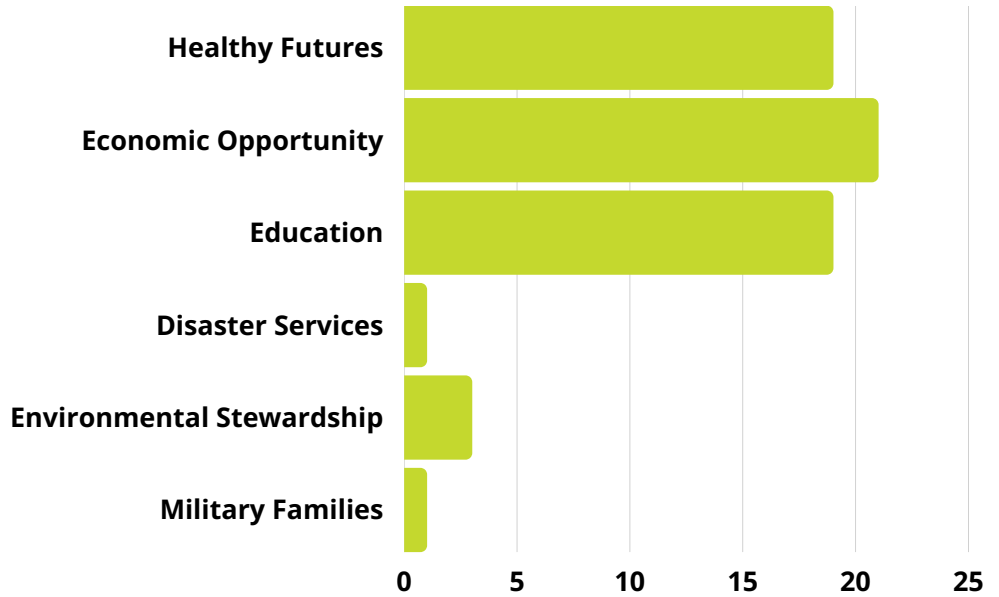
Food security

#### **Education:**

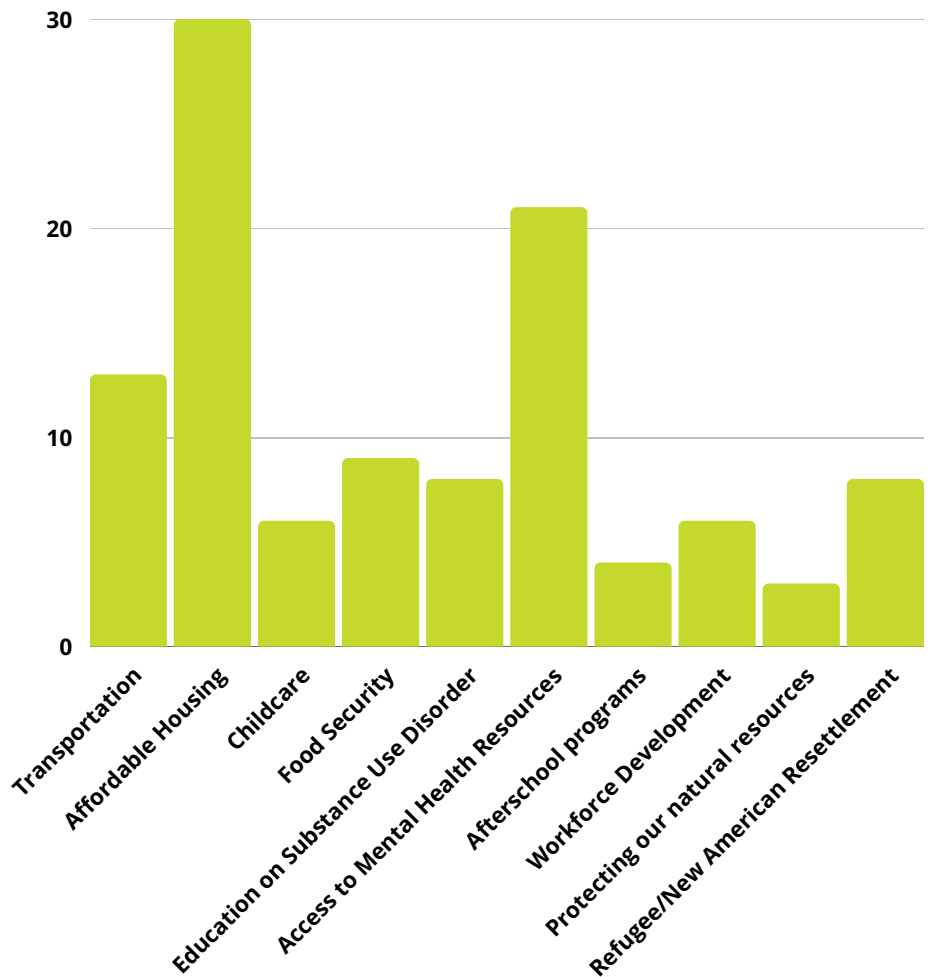
Lack of teachers, social workers, childcare workers, afterschool programs

## FOCUS GROUP POLL RESULTS

Identify the focus area(s) of highest concern to you:



Do you consider any of the following to be community issues or pressing needs of specific importance to New Hampshire? Select up to THREE of your top concerns.





# 2023-2025 STATE SERVICE PLAN

## GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR ALL PRIORITY AREAS

### STRATEGIES

1. Research and engage with existing AmeriCorps programs and volunteer initiatives to inform the development of strategies for New Hampshire.
2. Develop and/or support AmeriCorps programming and volunteer service opportunities, as appropriate.

### RESOURCES

Volunteer NH offers a variety of resources that may be useful in efforts to address any of the identified priority areas. All resources are described in detail later in this document.

#### Funding

- AmeriCorps Planning Grants
- AmeriCorps Program Grants
- Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grants

#### Technology

- Get Connected
- Serve Learn Earn NH
- Volunteer Resource Center
  - Basecamp for Volunteer Administrators

#### Additional Resources

- New Hampshire Association of Volunteer Administrators (NHAVA) Taskforce
- National Days of Service
- Governor's Conference on Volunteerism
- Spirit of NH Awards

#### Partners

- AmeriCorps NCCC
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- AmeriCorps Seniors
- AmeriCorps State/National

# 2023-2025 STATE SERVICE PLAN

## TOP PRIORITY AREAS

### CONTEXT & ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

New Hampshire residents face a variety of challenges that impact their well-being and economic security. As a result of efforts over the next three years, residents will have increased access to affordable housing, mental health services, and food.

### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

#### Potential Strategies:

1. Build capacity of organizations that provide housing and/or shelter.
2. Direct resources to organizations that help individuals navigate available systems to access housing assistance.

### HEALTHY FUTURES: MENTAL HEALTH

#### Potential Strategies:

1. Support initiatives that provide community-based or school-based psychological, emotional, and mental health services.
2. Explore AmeriCorps as a pathway to employment in the mental health field.

### HEALTHY FUTURES: FOOD SECURITY

#### Potential Strategies:

1. Build capacity of organizations that increase access to healthy meals for K-12 students.
2. Support initiatives that promote and provide education on existing programs such as SNAP, EBT, and WIC.

### SECONDARY PRIORITY AREAS

The following priority areas were highly ranked by survey-takers and among the top concerns discussed in focus groups. As such, Volunteer NH will also prioritize these areas:

- Economic Opportunity: Childcare
- Economic Opportunity: Transportation

# SERVICE PLAN FOR ADULTS AGE 55 & OLDER

## CONTEXT & ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

New Hampshire is the second-oldest state in the nation. Adults age 55 and older often have desirable skill sets and ample time to dedicate to serving their communities. They may also require additional support as they age. As a result of efforts over the next three years, New Hampshire will see maximized utilization of AmeriCorps Seniors programming and additional resources to engage and support adults age 55 and older.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

### **AmeriCorps Seniors**

1. Partner with the AmeriCorps Northeast Regional Office and local AmeriCorps Seniors projects to understand how they are meeting needs identified in the State Service Plan and how Volunteer NH can assist with unmet needs.
2. Support meetings, training, grant opportunities, expansion, and collaboration opportunities for AmeriCorps Seniors programs.
3. Encourage the participation of adults 55+ in AmeriCorps Seniors programs.

### **Other AmeriCorps Resources**

1. Prioritize the funding of programs that provide direct services to adults ages 55+ in the areas of food security, access to mental health resources, and affordable housing.
2. Support the creation of an AmeriCorps VISTA position focused on conducting research on the needs of the 55+ population in New Hampshire.
3. Encourage the participation of adults 55+ in AmeriCorps programs.

### **Additional Strategies**

1. Support data collection efforts regarding the needs of the 55+ population in New Hampshire, and the resources available to address these at the state and local levels.
2. Work with business and nonprofit partners to identify opportunities for expanded volunteer engagement and development for adults age 55+.
3. Encourage the participation of adults 55+ in volunteer opportunities.

# VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

**Volunteer NH has the following resources and programming available to support and grow volunteerism and volunteer programs in New Hampshire.**

## GET CONNECTED: NEW HAMPSHIRE'S VOLUNTEER HUB

Boasting 15,000+ registered users and nearly 900 organizations with listings, this is a fantastic resource for volunteers and volunteer programs alike. Volunteers use Get Connected to find nearby opportunities that fit their interests and schedules. Volunteer needs are searchable and categorized by location, organization, interests, accessibility, and more. Organizations use the site to recruit volunteers and then manage/track their service activities.



## NATIONAL DAYS OF SERVICE

In NH, National Days of Service typically include opportunities for AmeriCorps members to complete service projects, learn about civic engagement, and/or network with peers, alums, and local leaders.

- **MLK Day of Service (January):** This day celebrates the civil rights leader's life and legacy, focusing on equity and Dr. King's dream of the Beloved Community.
- **AmeriCorps Week (March):** This week is dedicated to offering appreciation to AmeriCorps members and alumni for their service, thanking AmeriCorps community partners, and celebrating AmeriCorps impact on communities and on the lives of those who serve.
- **9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance (September):** On this day, people across the U.S. volunteer in tribute to those lost and injured on 9/11/2001, transforming the anniversary into a national day of doing good in the spirit of remembrance, unity, and service.

# PARTNER PROGRAMS

**While not directly managed by Volunteer NH, the following AmeriCorps programs are available in New Hampshire and exist to build organizational capacity.**

## AMERICORPS VISTA

While most AmeriCorps programs do direct service – performing activities that immediately address community/client needs – AmeriCorps VISTA is dedicated to capacity-building service. Members serving in these programs create, expand, or strengthen the systems and processes that help an organization to carry out its anti-poverty work. AmeriCorps VISTA members do projects such as:

- Recruiting volunteers to build houses
- Designing the curriculum for a financial literacy course
- Organizing a fundraiser to support an organization’s services

## AMERICORPS NCCC

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) deploys teams of young adults throughout the country to help communities meet their critical needs. Teams of 8-12 members typically serve on a project full-time for about 6-8 weeks. Project types may include:

- Energy Conservation: Community energy audits, weatherization, education programs, etc.
- Environmental Stewardship and Conservation: Trail building/maintenance, planting trees, education programs, etc.
- Infrastructure Improvement: Constructing wheelchair ramps, assembling playgrounds, repairing public facilities, preserving historic buildings, etc.
- Natural and Other Disasters: Home repair, clean-up of public lands, restoration of natural habitats, staffing shelters and distribution centers, etc.
- Urban and Rural Development: Building/rennovating homes for low-income residents, supporting after-school/STEAM programs for youth, community revitalization projects, etc.

# AMERICORPS DIRECT SERVICE

**Volunteer NH manages AmeriCorps State programs. AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps Seniors programs place members in direct service positions.**

## AMERICORPS STATE

Volunteer NH receives AmeriCorps funds to disburse throughout the state to tackle specific community issues. There are many ways organizations can access these resources:

- **Member Hosting:** Organizations with enough work for one or a few AmeriCorps members may approach an existing AmeriCorps program to inquire about becoming a Host Site. They would then be responsible for day-to-day supervision and guidance of the member(s).
- **Plan a Program:** Organizations with enough work for 10+ AmeriCorps members may apply to Volunteer NH for an AmeriCorps Planning Grant and spend up to one year planning the partnerships, training, activities, etc. for a full AmeriCorps program.
- **Run a Program:** Organizations with experience running an AmeriCorps program – or those who have completed a Planning Grant, may apply for a full AmeriCorps Program Grant. Those which are not funded directly by AmeriCorps' Competitive Funding may still be able to receive Formula Funding from Volunteer NH.

## AMERICORPS SENIORS

AmeriCorps Seniors recruits individuals 55 and older to serve in these programs:

- **Foster Grandparents:** Volunteers mentor and guide young people with exceptional needs, providing the kind of comfort and love that sets them on a path to a successful future.
- **RSVP:** Volunteers in this program are very similar to AmeriCorps State/National members. Service positions are varied, suiting a wide range of interests/skills and schedules.
- **Senior Companions:** Volunteers serve as a friend and companion to older neighbors, helping with daily living tasks such as shopping or paying bills.

# AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS

## CURRENT PORTFOLIO (2022-2023)



**AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program (AVAP):** Members ensure services/education are available to victims of domestic and sexual violence and stalking throughout New Hampshire. (A program of the NH Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence)



**City Year New Hampshire:** Members partner with educators in Manchester elementary schools, helping students to fully take advantage of their drive and skillsets.



**Granite State Education Corps:** Members provide children with academic support and connect them with services to help them succeed. (A program of Goodwill Northern New England)



**Lakes Region Conservation Corps (LRCC):** Members conduct conservation efforts such as removing invasive species, maintaining trail networks, and spearheading reports for relevant efforts in the Lakes Region. (A program of Squam Lakes Association)



**Manchester Excels:** Members serve as student teachers in greater Manchester while completing a Master of Secondary Education degree. (A program of Goodwill Northern New England)



**Student Conservation Association (SCA), New Hampshire Corps:** Members provide environmental education and complete projects that improve and protect the state's recreational, environmental, and cultural resources.

# CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECTS

## VOLUNTEER GENERATION FUND (VGF)

**VGF Cohort:** Volunteer NH subgrants federal AmeriCorps funds to local organizations to increase their capacity to recruit, manage, and support volunteers serving New Hampshire communities. Awards range from \$7,500 – \$25,000 over 9-12 months. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, cities and towns, faith-based organizations, and more. Cohort participants improve the capacity of their volunteer initiative to make an impact on a community need through methods such as:

- Hiring a dedicated volunteer manager
- Paying for staff time spent formalizing volunteer policies, recruiting/training volunteers, etc.
- Purchasing new volunteer training/management software



**Mini-Grant Opportunity:** This is a scaled-down version of the cohort model where applicants request smaller grants from Volunteer NH for specific, one-time needs. Awards range from \$1,000 – \$4,000 with a shorter spending timeline of approximately 3 months. Grantees improve the capacity of their volunteer initiative to make an impact on a community need through methods such as:

- Hiring a consultant to create marketing materials for volunteer recruitment
- Hosting a volunteer training event focused on a new initiative
- Purchasing new volunteer management software



# RESOURCES FOR VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER MANAGERS

**Volunteer NH provides the following resources and platforms free of charge for volunteers and volunteer managers.**

## **NH VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT NETWORK (FORMERLY NHAVA)**

In 2021, Volunteer NH took on the recently dissolved organization, the New Hampshire Association of Volunteer Administrators (NHAVA). Following a rebrand, it is now known as the NH Volunteer Engagement Network (NHVEN), and its duties are to determine the most pressing needs of volunteer administrators in the state and provide opportunities for peer support. The group meets quarterly to share updates and advice, and has future plans to incorporate relevant training opportunities into meetings.

## **VOLUNTEER ADMIN RESOURCE-SHARING PLATFORM**

Volunteer NH has launched a resource-sharing platform via Basecamp for those in the field to share best practices, ask questions, and post/access resources. This is where NHAVA Taskforce meeting notes and invites are shared, along with information regarding other relevant Volunteer NH events and resources.

## **VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTER**

Our Volunteer Resource Center is designed to benefit anyone engaged in volunteerism, including volunteer managers seeking to strengthen their program. This section of the Volunteer NH website groups all of our volunteer resources in one convenient location, and includes many of the resources in this document (Get Connected, conference sessions, VGF grant details, etc.).

# EVENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER MANAGERS

## GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTEERISM

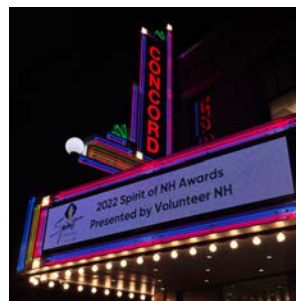
Volunteer NH hosts the annual Governor's Conference on Volunteerism as a professional development opportunity for volunteer managers, nonprofit employees, AmeriCorps members & staff, and corporate employees. Through this unique training experience, individuals can walk away with the tools to strengthen New Hampshire's volunteer programs and organizations. Session recordings from past years are available on our website, [VolunteerNH.org](http://VolunteerNH.org).

## SPIRIT OF NH AWARDS

Since 2003, Volunteer NH has hosted the Spirit of NH Awards as an annual celebration of volunteerism.

This event recognizes those who go above and beyond the call to serve throughout the Granite State, shining a spotlight on the often unsung heroes among us in front of an audience of their families, friends, colleagues, and the greater community.

Awards are presented to individual volunteers, groups of volunteers, and organizations with volunteer programs/initiatives. Any member of the general public can nominate a volunteer for an award.



# GOVERNOR APPROVAL



Christopher T. Sununu  
State of New Hampshire

## AMERICORPS NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT

The AmeriCorps Regional Office in New Hampshire is committed to aiding in the execution of the Unified State Service Plan and will assist with working on the goals set within the plan, leveraging VISTA and AmeriCorps Seniors resources, as well as conducting meetings and conference calls with grantees to encourage volunteer recruitment and placement in the priority areas.

## CONCLUSION

Volunteer NH has developed a three-year State Service Plan that seeks to effectively respond to unmet critical needs identified by the public, and prioritized them based on data collected from our survey and focus group discussions. The 2023-2025 Unified State Service Plan has outlined a series of goals and strategies that Volunteer NH will use to make decisions and develop plans for New Hampshire's National Service resources. Volunteer NH will encourage the volunteer community to engage with these priorities as well.

Thank you to all who volunteer. Your service is an inspiration to us at Volunteer NH and to the citizens of our great state!



**VolunteerNH.org**

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