
**Ohio House of Representatives – Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development & Natural Resources
April 10, 2019**

Good morning Chairman Hoops and members of the committee. My name is William Hall and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism, which is more commonly known as ServeOhio. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you this morning to discuss our mission and work.

Established in 1994, ServeOhio is charged with administering AmeriCorps programs and supporting volunteer engagement in Ohio. Federal legislation ensures that states have a key role in determining the allocation of national service resources via state service commissions. ServeOhio functions as Ohio's state service commission.

AMERICORPS

The commission's primary role is the funding and administration of AmeriCorps programs in Ohio. ServeOhio makes AmeriCorps local by working with Ohio communities to define critical needs and develop AmeriCorps programming as an intervention to address those needs. In addition, ServeOhio sets policy and program priorities; competitively awards grants to local organizations; provides training and technical assistance to program staff and AmeriCorps Members; monitors and evaluates grantees to ensure quality and compliance with federal and state laws.

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to serve their communities as AmeriCorps "members" in projects developed to address locally-defined problems. ServeOhio supports AmeriCorps programs that increase academic achievement, expand economic opportunity, and improve health and environmental conditions.

A fulltime AmeriCorps Member serves 1,700 hours within in a 10-12 month service term – earning a modest living allowance and education award upon successful completion. ***In the current program year, over 900 AmeriCorps Members will provide 1.3 million hours of service at 500 sites across Ohio.***

In addition to providing intensive service, AmeriCorps is a proven workforce development strategy – providing a pathway to employment for thousands of Ohioans over the past 25 years. ***This service year, Ohio AmeriCorps Members will receive over 130,000 hours of professional development and earn over \$4.6 million in education awards that can be used for post-secondary education or qualified student loans.***

Education is our number one funding priority. In the current year we are investing \$5.9 million in AmeriCorps programming to support students and increase academic achievement. ServeOhio mobilizes hundreds of AmeriCorps Members as tutors, coaches, mentors and teachers helping students succeed in school and gain skills necessary for 21st century jobs. This program year, our members will support over 24,000 students in education settings; 11,000 students will demonstrate improved academic performance. From kindergarten readiness to college completion – AmeriCorps Members are meeting local education needs critical to the economic and social well-being of our state.

ServeOhio also funds AmeriCorps programming in the areas of economic opportunity and healthy futures. Providing instruction in support of GED preparation and financial literacy; reducing urban blight and creating

safer neighborhoods; and increasing capacity in community learning centers and afterschool programming – AmeriCorps Members are providing opportunity and building economic security in some of Ohio’s most distressed communities. Working in emergency rooms to reduce and prevent opioid abuse; providing access to healthy foods; improving environmental assets; and creating a professional pipeline for long-term care ombudsmen – AmeriCorps Members are providing infrastructure to build a healthier Ohio.

AmeriCorps is a win-win-win scenario – intensive service addressing local problems, an effective approach to workforce development, and a proven mechanism to reduce higher education debt.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

ServeOhio also works to increase the quantity and quality of community volunteer engagement throughout Ohio. Our National Days of Service Project Grants – MLK Day (January), Global Youth Service Day (April), ServeOhio Day (June) and Make A Difference Day (October) – provide over \$60,000 annually to support 60+ locally-defined community projects that engage thousands of volunteers.

Developing and sustaining high-quality volunteer programming is challenging work – ServeOhio engages volunteer administrators throughout the state in professional development that builds effective volunteer management practices. This year, ServeOhio is launching a skills-based volunteerism training program (ServeOhio SBV) that provides advanced training and ongoing support to Ohio nonprofits in the effective engagement of skilled volunteers in highly-defined projects to increase organizational capacity and impact.

BUDGET

ServeOhio is primarily funded by our federal grantor – the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). All of our AmeriCorps program funding -- \$8.7 million in the current program year supporting 900+ AmeriCorps Members – originates at CNCS; such funds are distributed to state service commissions through a combination of formula and competitive processes. In addition, CNCS provides funding to ServeOhio to support the development and administration of AmeriCorps programming (Commission Support Grant and Commission Investment Fund) and to increase community volunteer engagement (Volunteer Generation Fund).

Both the Commission Support Grant and the Volunteer Generation Fund require match. ***The state budget, as introduced, includes \$307,176 in FY 2020 and \$305,971 FY 2021; such resources do not fully cover our required Commission Support Grant match of \$431,643 or our Volunteer Generation Fund match of \$105,061.*** ServeOhio needs additional resources to expand the utilization of AmeriCorps by developing new program models in underserved communities; increase the recruitment and support of AmeriCorps Members via new partnerships and enhanced professional development opportunities; and incorporate new strategies to strengthen community volunteer engagement. We believe that ServeOhio represents a good financial investment for the state – consistently returning \$30 in federal funding for every state dollar expended. But most importantly ServeOhio programming represents an effective strategy in addressing critical issues and building civic engagement.

Thank you for your continued support of the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism. ***In the past 25 years, more than 35,000 Ohio residents have served as AmeriCorps Members – providing 56 million hours of service and earning over \$118 million in education awards.*** ServeOhio looks forward to providing AmeriCorps service opportunities and increasing volunteer engagement over the next 25 years.

I appreciate the opportunity to share this overview of the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism and would be happy to respond to any questions at this time.