

## 2019-2021 Strategic Plan: Maine Commission for Community Service

GREEN = done; RED = delete; Brown = Underway, not completed. BLUE = Move forward 1 year.

### Strategic Opportunity #1:

Serve as Maine’s center of excellence on volunteer service.

- Provide consultation and training on volunteer engagement and program operation to individuals and organizations seeking to build their capacity to engage volunteers in effective and efficient service that achieves the intended outcomes.
- Identify key issues impacting Maine’s volunteer sector and Commission grantees that need to be monitored or researched.
- Provide information and data on the status of Maine’s volunteer sector, civic health, and civic engagement.

**End Outcome:** The Commission identifies and responds with appropriate supports to emerging challenges or opportunities encountered by Maine’s volunteer sector.

|  | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   |
|--|--|--|--|
| Consultation and training about volunteer engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase certified Service Enterprise trainers to expand MCCS training capacity</li> <li>• Set strategy for increasing Certificate in Management of Volunteers course proctors so sessions and student enrollment can increase</li> <li><del>• Convene leaders of peer-to-peer networks to develop training and TA growth plan with work shared by MCCS and network conveners.</del></li> <li>• Determine how to expand state volunteerism conference or launch symposium on service/volunteerism.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct feasibility study of Maine certification of managers of volunteers and relationship with national accreditation exam (CVA). <sup>1</sup> If deemed feasible, include implementation plan.</li> <li>• Implement changes in statewide place-based training events (conference/symposium)</li> <li><del>• Implement peer network training/TA plan</del></li> <li>• Engage four new trainers in either CMV or Service Enterprise training activities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Enterprise cohorts engage 20 agencies per year and achieve 50% certification</li> <li>• 150 managers of volunteers complete at least 16 hours of training conducted by MCCS</li> <li>• 300 people participate in 2 days of educational programming related to community service and volunteerism</li> </ul> |
| Research, data, evaluation                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a work group/task force to direct research/evaluation activities relating to MCCS grantmaking, Maine’s civic health<sup>2</sup> and Maine’s volunteer sector (NOTE: established but only 1 member. Could consider this underway/not done.)</li> <li>• Determine extent and reliability of available data on Maine’s civic health and volunteer sector</li> <li>• Identify state partner to conduct Maine-focused research/evaluation of civic health and volunteer sector.</li> <li>• Conduct study of 25 years of ME AmeriCorps</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish first comprehensive civic health and volunteerism status report</li> <li>• Publish impact report for 25 years of AmeriCorps funding in Maine</li> <li>• Explore joint assessment opportunity with VolunteerPro (owner of volunteer management capacity assessment)<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Secure funding for 3 years of research/evaluation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a research agenda for MCCS grant activities, Maine civic health, and Maine volunteer sector issues.</li> <li>• Establish cycle for refreshing civic health and volunteering status reports</li> <li>• Include a budget for research and evaluation as permanent line in MCCS budget</li> </ul>              |

<sup>1</sup> Public input for strategic plan has urged state certification for the third time in a row. MCCS expected the national exam to meet the need but it is not seen as the same by managers of volunteers in Maine.

<sup>2</sup> Rates of volunteering and community service are one indicator of civic health but the status of the volunteer sector is greater than just volunteer rates.

<sup>3</sup> Volunteer Management Capacity assessment is done annually as a self-selected sample. If participation by Maine volunteer managers grew to significant levels, state data could be obtained.

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### Strategic Opportunity #2:

Cultivate young volunteer and service leaders through a newly established formal year of service, the Maine Service Fellows Program. Leverage the impact of volunteer service to meet state need to attract and retain talented young adults.

**End Outcome:** Young adults commit a year of service to helping a Maine community address a pressing issue and develop not only a greater understanding of how to have an impact on community life, but also create ties to community that have the potential to become roots.

**NB:** During this process support for two distinct programs emerged:

- Service Fellows, a program for recent college graduates with training and education related to the service assignment. Their full-time service year would be a transition from higher education to career. They would bring the latest technical approaches to communities. Initial recruitment will focus on 21-30 year olds (undergraduates and advance degrees) with commitment to examine broadening age participation after 2021.

- Maine Service Corps, a program modeled after pre-1993 non-environmental youth corps. Corps members would be ages 17-24 who are looking for a “gap year” experience after high school or during college. They would serve on a team that undertakes human service, education, public safety, disaster service, economic, or cultural projects in support of community solutions to problems.

|                       | 2018–2019   | 2019  | 2020  | 2021   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Maine Service Fellows | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 9/30 design Service Fellows program. Include preference for rural placements but permit any locale.</li> <li>By 12/31 have funding identified to support 2019 pilot group of 6.</li> <li>Identify potential benefits (e.g., in-state tuition rate)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage consultant or project staff to operationalize Service Fellows program</li> <li>Assign initial 6 to local agencies</li> <li>Secure funding for 10 Service Fellows</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign second Service Fellow cohort (10)</li> <li>Secure funding for Service Fellows through 2023</li> <li>Build pipeline for Service Fellow applicants</li> <li>Design and implement evaluation plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish preliminary evaluation of Service Fellows.</li> <li>Develop long-term funding strategy for Service Fellows</li> </ul> |
| Maine Service Corps*  | Requires legislative action. Only pursue if opportunity presents itself. Concentrate on MSF for now.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage stakeholders in design of Maine Service Corps</li> <li>Identify lead operator</li> <li><del>Submit proposal for AmeriCorps</del></li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>If funded by AmeriCorps, provide start-up training/tech assistance. If not funded,</del> explore feasibility of other public/private funding to establish.</li> </ul>                                       |  |

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### Strategic Opportunity 3:

MCCS is the only entity, public or nonprofit, that focuses on capacity and sustainability of volunteerism in the public and nonprofit sectors. It is a business-to-business entity meaning: constituents are organizations and individuals who are responsible for volunteer engagement/activity. MCCS has a unique role to play as a public voice for the volunteer sector that:

- increases recognition, visibility and respect for volunteer efforts;
- fosters a culture of service and civic engagement; and
- promotes understanding of connections between volunteering, civic engagement, economic and community success.

**End Outcome:** VolunteerMaine is the public name for the Maine Commission for Community Service and is the champion for volunteer service that contributes to the civic health of thriving Maine communities.

|   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   |
|---|--|--|--|
| Commission recognition is as strong or stronger than its programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officially adopt VolunteerMaine as Commission DBA (doing-business-as) brand</li> <li>• Develop goals for consultant proposal to help MCCS establish new identity</li> <li>• Work with private consultant or graduate student to develop complete strategy and tools for launching new identity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Commission rebranding as VolunteerMaine</li> <li>• Engage all Commissioners in public speaking schedule to introduce new name and key messages</li> <li>• Develop communications plan and messages for 2021 and 2022</li> <li>• The Commission’s activities (grants, initiatives, programs) are recognized as activities of VolunteerMaine.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commission is known as VolunteerMaine</li> <li>• Commissioners, grantees, and key partners can confidently describe the complete mission of MCCS</li> </ul>   |
| Commission advocates for & cultivates service                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the sources of information and messages to use in public education outreach (research agenda, studies to be published, grant activities, volunteer manager needs assessment results, etc.)</li> <li>• Identify best plan for staffing effective communications support for Commission</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate the two most urgent messages about Maine’s volunteer sector and/or civic health into Commission talking points for 2020 and 2021</li> <li>• Develop metrics for monitoring impact of communications and implement plan</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VolunteerMaine is consulted when public or private leaders are examining an aspect of civic health or volunteer service.</li> <li>• Leaders in all community sectors can explain civic health and civic engagement</li> </ul> |

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### Strategic Opportunity 4:

The Commission’s grant making activity is a powerful vehicle for fostering community service and volunteerism that is effective in addressing critical needs of Maine communities. Through the grant process, MCCS will support

- new approaches to encouraging rural volunteer service;
- volunteer programming that targets aging in place, rural transportation, and food security;
- volunteer-powered solutions to these and other emergent community problems; and
- building the capacity of grantee organizations to effectively and sustainably engage volunteers.

**End Outcome:** Commission investments in national service and volunteer programs succeed in strengthening communities’ capacity to solve local problems through service.

|  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021   |
|--|---|---|--|
| Grants of either public or private funds awarded by MCCS to others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>**Outline priority areas for grant funding while remaining open to funding other impact areas and needs prevalent in Maine communities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Connect appropriate capacity building requirements (e.g., Service Enterprise, CMV 101 course) to grant programs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop funding to re-introduce support of youth-driven service-learning or community service programs.</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey other rural state commissions to identify successful national service and volunteer programs impacting issues relevant to Maine</li> <li>• Issue requests for AmeriCorps proposals to operate models of particular interest or relevance to Maine issues</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess and adjust the AmeriCorps Formula applications requirements for the funding competition to cover 2021-2024.</li> </ul> |
| Commission development of applicants and grantees                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Set criteria for actively developing responses to federal service grant opportunities</b></li> <li>• <b>Strengthen effectiveness of outreach to potential grantees and coaching related to proposal development</b></li> <li>• <del>Launch Advance Volunteer Management online course.</del></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop relationships with municipal governments to increase their interest in AmeriCorps as a resource</li> <li>• Develop AmeriCorps start-up course for new Maine grantees.</li> <li>• Assess Commission program design course (online, asynchronous).</li> </ul>        |  |

**\*\*While this was completed in 2018 for the major competitions that year, it should be redone in 2020 in anticipation of the major competitions occurring in 2021.**