

Pennsylvania State Service Plan 2007-2010

PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service

Partners:

Pennsylvania State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Volunteer Centers of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Campus Compact

This *Pennsylvania 2007- 2010 State Service Plan*, the successor document to the previously-submitted *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Unified State Plan 2002-2005*, and the *Pennsylvania 2006 State Service Plan*, reflects the strategy of PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service with regard to the coordination of national service and volunteer service activities across all streams of service in the state. Our goal is to ensure that all national service and volunteer service entities within the Commonwealth, including but not limited to our state commission, PennSERVE; the Pennsylvania State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service; all Corporation grantees and stakeholders, including AmeriCorps State and National Direct programs; State Education Agencies; The Volunteer Center Network of Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania Campus Compact; and other volunteer service organizations within the state are communicating, cooperating, and collaborating.

This plan focuses particularly on the four strategic initiatives outlined in the Corporation for National and Community Service Strategic Plan 2006-2010, namely:

1. mobilizing more volunteers;
2. serving at risk youth and connecting them with service opportunities;
3. engaging students in communities;
4. using baby boomers' experience; plus the newly-added
5. disaster services.

For purposes of alignment, the format of this plan will mirror that of the Corporation for National and Community Service Strategic Plan 2006-2010, and will contain an Overview, Statement of Service Ethic, and five Focus Areas, culminating with a conclusion that seeks to address certain additional information sought by CNCS.

I. OVERVIEW: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Unified State Plan 2002-2005 unveiled the following Vision Statement:

“To encourage, develop and facilitate volunteer and citizen community service which builds upon the talents, strengths, opportunities and challenges of people and communities in ways which enhance the quality of life for all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”

It is our goal to set forth a strategic plan that will not only pursue this vision, but will move Pennsylvania national service initiatives to a new level of excellence.

One particular challenge, therefore, is the apparent decrease in volunteerism described in the recent Corporation for National and Community Service report entitled “Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings 2002-2005,” and the statistics for 2006 as well, which indicated a decline in the number of Pennsylvanians who reported that they volunteer. It is the intention of this plan, its strategies and targets, to arrest any such decline, and to set a course that will result in a steady increase in the number of Pennsylvanians who do, in fact, volunteer. Consistent with the “10 by 10” Initiative set forth by CNCS, Pennsylvania sets as a great and achievable goal a 15% increase in the number of its citizens who engage in volunteerism, by the year 2010.

II. STATEMENT OF SERVICE ETHIC: The guiding principles underlying this plan rely on the twin priorities of meeting critical needs through service and volunteerism, while at the same time developing an ethic of service and a lifetime commitment in those who serve. In this way, the capacity of communities, organizations, and individuals can be strengthened to provide the sustainable networks necessary to face life's challenges.

In particular, Pennsylvania's focus on recruitment, preparation, mobilization and coordination of volunteers and national service members, in response to the ongoing needs of our state, will provide preparation for disaster response, both within and without our Commonwealth's borders. Resources and attention will continue to be directed across the Commonwealth, especially in those rural and distressed areas most in need.

We recognize the importance of partnering with key stakeholders, to align with their goals and to leverage limited resources, including volunteers, and therefore seek greater inclusion and closer collaboration of government entities, federal, state and local; educational institutions, including colleges, universities, K-12 public and private schools, school districts and Intermediate Units, and pre-school and Head Start programs; non-profit service organizations; communities of faith; volunteer connector organizations; and business corporations.

III. FIVE FOCUS AREAS

While the strategies below are segregated for the purpose of aligning with focus areas, many, if not most, have been designed to be multifaceted and focused, maximizing the integration of partners and mission.

A. Pennsylvania Strategies: Mobilizing More Pennsylvanians to Volunteer

1. Investigate feasibility of state-wide Volunteer Portal to facilitate volunteer matching opportunities with AmeriCorps programs, Senior Corps programs, and nonprofits in general.
2. Build on the success of the Martin Luther King Day of Service and use it as a springboard for sustained high impact volunteerism, in an effort begun a few years ago to link communities from one end of the Commonwealth to another in continuing Dr. King's legacy by making this a day of action. Through such strategies as adopting inclusive state-wide themes [A Home for All of Pennsylvania's Children (2006), Strengthening Pennsylvania Communities: Safety, Security and Service (2007), and Safe in Our Homes; Safe on Our Streets (2008)], and inclusion in the agenda for autumn program trainings, PennSERVE encourages Pennsylvania programs to engage Pennsylvania communities in extraordinary MLK Day of Service events. Each year, more nonprofits participate in the preparatory calls, register on the website, and undertake service projects, and as a result, more volunteers are engaged.
3. Support a statewide program to build the capacity of the PA statewide volunteer center network to ensure a system for volunteer coordination and management throughout the state. In this regard, Volunteer Centers of PA (consisting of 15 Volunteer Centers throughout the state) has embarked this year on a state-wide collaboration with PennSERVE, CNCS and Points of Light Foundation (recently merged with Hands-On Network) to enhance the volunteer network infrastructure; increase the capacity of Volunteer Centers to serve Pennsylvanians; enhance youth, corporate, and senior/ baby boomer volunteerism, in affiliation with some internally-operated RSVP programs. In addition, VCP has been able to assign four CNCS VISTAs to individual Volunteer Centers within the state, working to build local and state capacity, programmatically and administratively, and on outreach and marketing within the association and to community-based agencies.
4. In addition, in collaboration with the New Jersey Commission, PennSERVE applied in September of 2007 for a Volunteer Management Grant from CNCS, which would enable us to offer volunteer management training to 150 nonprofit entities across the state (including AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps grantees), and to facilitate locally- based sustainable collaborations with the support of Energize, Inc. a Pennsylvania company nationally-recognized as expert in the field. Grant notifications are expected by year end 2007.

B. Pennsylvania Strategies: Ensuring a Brighter Future for all of Pennsylvania's Youth, including serving at-risk youth and connecting them with service opportunities

1. Recruiting and supporting mentors for youth by strengthening partnerships between AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, and such organizations as BBBSA, Amachi, PA Mentoring Partnership, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Head Start programs. Expanding initiatives such as *One Book, Every Young Child* program in collaboration with Pennsylvania Library Association, in which AmeriCorps and RSVP programs solicited Cabinet and elected officials to read with pre-school and Head Start children, and to distribute books. Similar focus with AmeriCorps program Jumpstart/Starbucks *Read for the Record*.
2. Implementing and expanding inter-generational opportunities for mentoring, particularly in area of literacy, with special emphasis on growth of Experience Corps National Direct AmeriCorps program to Pennsylvania sites beyond Philadelphia.
3. Ensure that children of pre-school age are getting the support they need to enter school ready to learn. Jumpstart AmeriCorps program partnering with local colleges and universities to attract college mentors; collaborating with Head Start programs to provide meaningful kindergarten-readiness curricula.
4. Strategically select for grant funding and support those programs which have demonstrated success in engaging youth in at-risk and disadvantaged environments in meaningful service experiences, especially in the area of mentoring. Includes expansion of AmeriCorps recruitment to neighborhoods and populations so-identified. Collaborations planned with the Corps Network and Public Allies, which focus on such initiatives; both have a presence in Pennsylvania, with the Public Allies Pittsburgh program new to our state this year.
5. Promote service-learning initiatives in collaboration with Pennsylvania Department of Education (21st CCLC, Project 720), Center for Schools and Communities, and the Institute for Global Education and Service Learning Y.O.D.A. (Youth Organized for Disaster Action) Learn and Serve program, which increase the opportunities for community involvement and improvement for youth, in school and after-school/vacation/summer settings. Involves strengthening network of intermediaries including local nonprofits such as ASAP (After School Activities Partnerships); Philly Fellows; and PennSERVE's own Youth Advisory Council.

Former teacher and service-learning advocate, Joan Liptrot, Director of the IGESL, is currently acting as mentor to the Youth Advisory Council, involving the conducting of surveys, the hosting of conference calls and the scheduling of meetings, and the mobilizing of these young people to perform, support, and engage their peers in service projects across the state.

C. Pennsylvania Strategies: Engaging Students in Communities

1. Increase the number of college students/college age individuals who volunteer through the Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania AmeriCorps program; Pennsylvania Campus Compact; State and National Direct AmeriCorps programs, and other service learning and college based programs, in collaboration with the Institute for Global Education and Service Learning, PHEAA/AES, the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development, the LEAGUE, various school districts, and scores of nonprofit organizations which specialize in service-learning.
2. Increase the number of higher education institutions providing opportunities for meaningful civic engagement, by facilitating membership in Pennsylvania Campus Compact, promoting use of VISTAs on college campuses, supporting satellite Volunteer Centers on college campuses, and continual growth of Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania AmeriCorps program. Encourage application for distinction on the *President's Honor Education Community Service Honor Roll*, and recognize Pennsylvania colleges and universities so honored, by letter and celebration planned for 2008 Campus Compact Conference.

3. Continue to emphasize state-wide platform to promote the value and importance of service on campus, provide information, and create opportunities for recruitment, through PennSERVE Citizenship Initiative, City Year's Keystone Service Tours, *Campus Philly* Involvement Fair and Festival on the Parkway at which AmeriCorps recruitment display and Dr. Benjamin Franklin will encourage student participation in service opportunities, PSAs, support of targeted collaborative service opportunities such as through past year's Best Buy/Learn and Serve grant, and enhanced outreach for Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania AmeriCorps program (including solicitation for matching of Education Award by colleges).
4. In celebration of National and Global Youth Service Day, soliciting from school superintendents and administrators from all 501 school districts, and from college and university presidents across the state, a recognition of importance of civic engagement among students, the creation of opportunities for service activities, and nomination of high school youth whose exceptional service merits consideration as PennSERVE High School and College Youth Commissioners. Similar strategy for Presidential Freedom Scholarships, Pennsylvania School Board, perhaps U.S. Public Service Academy.

D. Pennsylvania Strategies: Harnessing Baby Boomers' Experience

1. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, the Center for Intergenerational Learning (CIL) at Temple University, Senior Corps, local Public Broadcasting System affiliates, and other strategic partners, establish the *Coming of Age* protocol as a state-wide initiative. First year expansion will move beyond Philadelphia and environs to the Lehigh Valley, Central Pennsylvania, and Pittsburgh areas.
2. Promote increased, meaningful volunteer opportunities for baby boomers by encouraging culture shift among current programs, Volunteer Centers and nonprofits through trainings, cross-stream meetings between Senior Corps and AmeriCorps directors and members, distribution of educational materials such as the CIL toolkit from the CNCS National Training and Technical Assistance Network, and inclusion of Network trainers in conferences and other training venues.
3. Recruit prospective and current retirees from all walks of life, encouraging them to consider national service as a full-time transition to leisure retirement; provides emotional and financial gratification and allows expertise to be shared. Plan involves outreach to government, union and business offices which run retirement seminars, do mailings, and otherwise engage employees nearing the ends of their chosen careers to consider next-stage planning.
4. In connection with National Family Volunteer Day, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, and in fulfillment of the Governor's pledge to improve the quality of life for seniors, we have engaged in media and public relations outreach to encourage family, intergenerational volunteerism, beginning with the holiday season and continuing throughout the year. Partnership has expanded to include Volunteer Centers of PA, whose Disney grant will allow additional resources for the effort.
5. Secure commitments from Pennsylvania businesses to expand employee volunteer programs; including collaboration with local Chambers of Commerce to sponsor recognition events. Using the Lehigh Valley as a model, host Spirit of Service Awards to honor such businesses and provide replication models.
6. Develop cross-stream plans aimed at allowing more Pennsylvania seniors to live independently, including enlisting baby boomers as Senior Companions, providing weatherization to homes consistent with the Governor's *StayWarmPA* initiative and in furtherance of Lowes/United Way of PA/AmeriCorps collaboration to provide training, supplies, AmeriCorps members, and volunteers to winterize homes across the Commonwealth.

E. Pennsylvania Strategies: Disaster Services

1. In partnership with PEMA and the EMAs in Pennsylvania's 67 counties, develop a comprehensive plan for deployment of members of CNCS- supported programs to assist in local disasters that includes preparation/training, information dissemination, communication and leadership to mobilize citizens to respond effectively to disasters. Several Volunteer Centers already have strong disaster preparedness programs, and are leaders in their local VOADs.

Volunteer-generation, particularly in the realm of disaster-preparedness, was the focus of the Pennsylvania-only cross-stream training segment of the 6-state MEGA-Conference in Princeton, NJ, during August 2006; and the service activity/training section of the state-wide AmeriCorps Launch, National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA in October 2006, which involved AmeriCorps State, National Direct and VISTA members in disaster-preparedness drills; and will be the focus of the March 2008 AmeriCorps Program training, in collaboration with the Volunteer Centers of Pennsylvania.

The expansion of our AmeriCorps State Program, United Way of York *SecureCorps*, pre-eminent in the field of county-wide collaboration in disaster-preparedness planning, involves mentoring and establishment of replicable best practices, with a view toward a state-wide roll-out on a county by county basis.

2. Provide and promote state-wide model of civic engagement on college campuses in area of disaster preparedness through *Ready Campus* (Pennsylvania Campus Compact), PEMA and local EMAs, and entities previously identified in this plan.
3. Efforts have been made to include disaster-preparedness service projects at every opportunity, most especially during the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Philadelphia (July 2007), and during past and future Martin Luther King Days of Service. In collaboration with the Red Cross, thousands of Emergency Preparedness backpack kits have been equipped and distributed to vulnerable populations, and train-the-trainer events have been conducted in several counties with the assistance of local EMAs.

IV: CONCLUSION

This plan has been developed through an open, collaborative process to provide for maximum participation and input from national service programs within the state and the major partners listed above.

Implementation of the plan is ongoing, and challenges with regard to providing open lines of communication in a state as large and diverse as Pennsylvania will abound. While we understand (with disappointment) that financial support to facilitate collaborative meetings is unavailable, it is our hope that CNCS may provide manpower and technical expertise for the scheduling and conducting of remote teleconferences, web-based communication, data collection apparatus, and information about the successes of states across the nation that may prove replicable. Continued access to T/TA providers through the CNCS contracts is invaluable. And, while a high-quality experience at the National Conference on Volunteerism and Community Service is always important, it becomes crucial when, as in 2007, the conference was held in our home state. Fortunately, it was a huge success.

Pennsylvania is fortunate to have so much national service talent within its borders, and collaboration occurs both naturally and strategically. PennSERVE's AmeriCorps Launch each year invites AmeriCorps members from the state, national direct, and VISTA programs to gather together in an atmosphere of camaraderie and civic engagement to begin the service year by taking the AmeriCorps pledge in unison and devoting themselves to getting things done in a spirit of collaboration. Representatives from each of the named collaborative partner entities, CNCS, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Volunteer Centers of PA, and the Pennsylvania Campus Compact engage as active members of the PennSERVE Advisory Board. Not only do policies such as these lead to the sharing of ideas across streams of service, better use of resources and increased sustainability, they create and perpetuate an atmosphere of mutual respect, and an unparalleled gestalt, that inure to the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.