

**NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – STATE
COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICE**

State of North Dakota

State Service Plan

2006 - 2009

Corporation for National and Community Service

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I. INTRODUCTION TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS IN NORTH DAKOTA:

The federal contribution to volunteer service in North Dakota began in 1964 with the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act, which saw the creation of the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program developed. VISTA volunteers have served a myriad of organizations throughout the state since that time. That was later followed by a Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) grant to the North Dakota Developmental Center, Grafton, in 1967. Those programs were transferred in 1971, with the creation of the ACTION agency during the Nixon administration. Later, that year, a grant was made from ACTION to the State of North Dakota's Social Services Department, Division of Human Services to begin Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (R&SVP) services. In 1981, a Senior Companion Program (SCP) grant was provided to Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota funded under ACTION SCP Demonstration Criteria.

North Dakota is an extensive (70,665 square miles) land area containing some of this nation's finest agricultural lands. Its people are innovative, dependable, and hospitable and experience problems that are unique to the area. The plight of the farming/ranching community is still subject to uncertainty and personal income still remains below average, even in such non-farm occupations as education and the service industry.

The State continues to play key roles in our nation's agricultural economy. The over 680,000 residents may not have the representation of more populous states, but they continue to support the principles of the country. Their problems are usually resolved through their own efforts, with a little help from their friends and neighbors. Consequently, CNCS resources are ideal for the Dakotas. These people get things done!

Communities fortunate enough to have a CNCS program, deeply appreciate them! North Dakota allows a 1-mill tax to be levied by its counties for Senior Citizens' programs which, when revenues permit, is matched by the State.

North Dakotans continue to develop their recreation and tourist industries, given this state is blessed with large bodies of water, clean air, and people who believe in a strong work ethic.

In summary, volunteerism comes easily to North Dakota. For most of their residents it has been a way of life, even survival, since before recorded time!

- ◆ Learn and Serve America
- ◆ AmeriCorps
- ◆ Senior Corps

LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA is a network of programs – Learn and Serve School Based, Community-Based and Higher Education – that provides resources to programs to support service-learning in schools and community organizations.

North Dakota has two Learn and Serve School based programs (Bismarck and Fargo). This type of learning, called service learning, improves communities while preparing young people for a lifetime of responsible citizenship. In addition to providing grants, Learn and Serve America serves as a resource on service and service-learning to teachers, faculty members, schools, and community groups.

AMERICORPS is a network of national service programs – AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), and AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) – that meets critical needs in areas such as education, public safety, health, and the environment through partnerships with public agencies, non-profits, faith-based, or other local organizations.

This year AmeriCorps will provide more than **150** individuals the opportunity to provide intensive, results-driven service to meet education, environmental, public safety, and other pressing needs in communities across North Dakota. Roughly three-quarters of all AmeriCorps grant funding goes to the Governor-appointed ND Dept. of Commerce, which in turn awards grants to non-profit groups to respond to local needs. Most of the remainder of the grant funding is distributed by the Corporation directly to multi-state and national organizations through a competitive grants process. Other individuals will serve through AmeriCorps*VISTA, whose members help bring individuals and communities out of poverty by serving full-time to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses and increase housing opportunities, and AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), a 10-month, full time residential program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members earn an education award of up to \$4,725 that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans.

SENIOR SERVICE CORPS is a network of programs – RSVP, Foster Grandparents Program (FGP), and Senior Companion Programs (SCP) - that uses the experience, skills, and talents of volunteers age 55 and older to meet community needs.

More than **3,400** seniors in North Dakota contribute their time and talents in one of three Senior Corps programs. Foster Grandparents serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to more than **2,700** young people who have special needs. Senior Companions help more than **770** homebound seniors and other adults maintain independence in their own homes. Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteers conduct safety patrols for local police departments, participate in environmental projects, tutor and mentor youth, respond to natural disasters, and provide other services through more than **610** groups across North Dakota.

II. STRATEGIC PLAN NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

On June 1, 2004, a "Community Service Needs Assessment Survey" was sent to 2,700 community-based, faith-based, and non-profit organizations throughout North Dakota. The survey was sent electronically and electronic responses were accepted. NDInfo.org coordinated the survey tabulation for the State Commission. A total of 62 non-duplicated survey responses were received back. Organizations responding represented communities with between 100 and 5,000 population. Over 76% of the responses were from communities with 2,500 population or more. 40% of the responses were from the southwest quadrant of the state. Responses from the remaining three quadrants were fairly equal.

During the spring and summer 2006, this "Community Service Needs Assessment" was updated using both a mail survey and personal contact with non-profits, faith-based, and community-based organizations and public agencies. Over 100 Needs Assessment Instruments were mailed out to organizations across the state. The response rate was very low.

For the North Dakota State Commission, Community Needs Assessments will be an ongoing initiative. The State Commission will gather information on community service needs during scheduled "Town Hall Meetings" which are conducted across the state each fall prior to announcing our Request for Proposal for the AmeriCorps*State formula funding. The Town Hall Meeting input will be supplemented by mail surveys to non-profits, faith-based and community organizations. We are in the process of developing an electronic mailing list of these groups to insure geographic equity in the input process.

Community service needs for the elderly and youth were identified most frequently as having the greatest need and current lack of adequate community resources or services.

Community service needs for the elderly which were most frequently identified was availability of home healthcare assistance to allow seniors to live independently in their home and adequate transportation to obtain healthcare, do shopping, etc. The rising cost of transportation was identified as a major concern.

Community Service Needs for Children and Youth which were most frequently identified was availability of quality daycare for children of working parents, availability of structured pre and after school programs for children who need such programs and a lack of tutoring and adult mentoring for children who need it. Another issue identified was the lack of youth involvement in community leadership and meeting needs of the community.

Communities Capacity to Respond to Service Needs of Citizens most frequently identified were the lack of services available to special populations, inadequate coordination and partnerships between community resource agencies, lack of ability to adequately respond to disasters, and a lack of awareness about Corporation for National and Community Service Programs. Other community service issues identified were lack

of housing for individuals with mental health problems and transition funding to support special needs people.

Based on the responses, the primary community service gaps occur in meeting the needs of the elderly and meeting the needs of the youth. These gaps are manifested in the need for qualified volunteers in all areas.

III. FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIC GOALS FOR THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE SERVICE PLAN:

The North Dakota State Commission on National and Community Service participated in a Retreat on July 31 and August 1, 2006. During this Retreat, the State Commission participated in strategic planning around both workforce and community service needs within North Dakota. The State Commission adopted a set of major outcome goals, organizing pillars and principles, volunteer initiative strategies, and identified areas for continuous improvement.

Major Outcome Goal:

- Increase the quantity and quality of North Dakota's volunteer force.

Organizing Pillars, Principles, and Priorities:

- Attract new volunteers for North Dakota
- Retain volunteers in North Dakota
- Expand the pipeline of volunteers in North Dakota

Volunteer Initiative Strategies:

- Quality Volunteer Intelligence
- Volunteer Cluster Support and Partnership
- Vertical (Operational) Alignment with Demand
- Horizontal (Community) Alignment with Demand
- System Expansion and Partnership
- Public and Stakeholder Awareness

Eight Areas for Continuous Improvement:

1. Ensure **Commission leadership** in attracting, retaining, and expanding volunteers by
 - making all decisions based community service and volunteer availability intelligence,
 - seeking both vertical and horizontal alignment with demand,
 - building strategic partnerships with the nonprofit & faith-based sector and targeted community service clusters,
 - forging service system partnerships to achieve success in all community service initiatives, and
 - developing broad public awareness and understanding of North Dakota's community service and volunteer needs.
2. Develop a **dynamic community service and volunteer intelligence system** with the vital information needed to confront North Dakota's community service crisis and to assess progress in ameliorating it.
3. **Disseminate key community service and volunteer intelligence to all stakeholders and partner organizations and staff** so all North Dakotans may take appropriate actions to meet the service needs of individuals and communities.
4. Focus on **volunteer and civic engagement improvement, preparation through lifelong learning** by improving the quality and quantity of training for volunteers, ensuring the offerings respond to community needs and volunteer skill demand to address these needs.
5. **Increase the volunteer participation rate and expand the available talent pool of volunteers** by reaching, serving, preparing, and connecting those not currently volunteering, including target populations.
6. Give **emphasis to the emerging volunteer talent pipeline by focusing on young people**, improving the connections between school and volunteer opportunities, and encouraging them to stay in North Dakota.
7. Build **even stronger volunteer system partner-ships to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability** through the reducing duplication, sharing resources and adopting a common action agenda and strategies for volunteer attraction, retention, and expansion.
8. **Promote North Dakota as a great place to live by attracting and retaining volunteer talent.**

The North Dakota Community Service and Volunteer Initiative adopted by the North Dakota State Commission on National and Community Service is a bold undertaking which will require support of all Commission Members and expansion of the State Commission's role as:

- Being the *champion* for community service issues;
- Being the state's *convening* agent;
- Being the state's *change* agent; and
- Being the state's *accountability* agent.

In this role, the North Dakota State Commission will work closely with all public agencies, non-profit, community-based, and faith-based organizations to begin the process of clearly establishing the community service priorities for communities, the infrastructure of the volunteers to support work of the partner organizations in addressing community service needs, and a common vision and plan to approach expanding the pipeline of future volunteers through engagement with students at the K-16 level, attraction of new volunteers by focusing on the skills and qualifications of the retiring baby-boomers, and retention of current volunteers through recognition for their work and opportunity to participate in life-long learning to advance their skills and opportunities for higher level volunteer activities.

The North Dakota State Service Plan will respond to the identified community service gaps by supporting the goals of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The State Service Plan goals will be to expand the network of volunteers and to prioritize the meeting of community service gaps identified for the elderly, children, and youth.

In addition, the State Commission will continue to insure compliance with all requirements for the AmeriCorps*State formula funding and to continue to work with subgrantees on improvement of overall performance.

Goal One: Mobilizing More Volunteers in North Dakota.

The North Dakota State Commission and the Corporation for National and Community Service partners will promote the expansion of volunteerism and civic engagement by making it easier for North Dakotans to volunteer and become involved in meeting service needs which will maximize the use of their talents and interests.

Each of the Corporation for National and Community service programs will place an emphasis and provide training to program members on mobilizing volunteers in their community. In order to help manage and coordinate volunteers in communities, the State Commission and Corporation programs will work to expand on a network of Community Volunteer Centers across the state.

Goal I.		2007 Target	2007 Actual	2010 Target
Mobilizing more volunteers to meet community services needs.	Develop a community resource map of all current community volunteer centers with a goal of having a minimum of one Volunteer Center in each of the State Eight Planning Regions by 2010.			Completed
	Through outreach to non-profits and community-based organizations and implementation of public information campaigns will increase the volunteering rate in North Dakota.	37.5%		40%

Goal Two: Expand adult mentoring services to help ensure a brighter future for all of North Dakota's youth.

North Dakota youth need support from caring adults in their families, schools, and communities. Many North Dakota youth from low income families, foster children, single parent households, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, or who have delinquency problems do not have a support structure of caring adults to serve as role models and mentors. This increases their likelihood of failure in school, persistent poverty, and criminal behavior. The State Commission and Corporation programs will support children in need by providing opportunities for adult mentoring for at-risk youth across the state.

Goal II.		2007 Target	2007 Actual	2010 Target
Expand adult mentoring services to help ensure a brighter future for all North Dakota's youth.	Work with the NDDOC to establish the number of children of prisoners who are receiving mentoring services through Corporation programs.		Completed	
	Through encouraging an emphasis on AmeriCorps project focus and integration of Corporation-sponsored programs increase the number by 10% of children of prisoners receiving mentoring or other services through Corporation programs.			10%

Goal Three: Engaging Students in Communities through Volunteering to help meet community service needs.

North Dakota Education institutions (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary) play a key role in guiding students on their path to becoming responsible citizens and leaders in their communities. Volunteering and service are powerful factors that support and enhance the learning experience.

Goal III.		2007 Target	2007 Actual	2010 Target
Engage a greater number of students in meeting community service needs.	Through outreach, increase the volunteer rate of youth between the ages of 16–22 who actively engage in formal volunteer activities with non-profits, community-based organizations, their community, or through Corporation sponsored programs.	28%		35%

Goal Four: Engage the Baby Boomer population in North Dakotans to a lifetime of volunteering and service.

North Dakota has an aging population that is highly talented, highly motivated, and could drive solutions to many of the community service needs in communities which they reside. Through volunteerism and civic engagement, Baby Boomers can stay active and connected to their communities improving the quality of life for themselves and others. The Needs Assessments have identified many areas such as services for the elderly, transportation, and adult mentoring for youth which could be tackled by the Baby Boomer population.

Goal IV.		2007 Target	2007 Actual	2010 Target
Engage North Dakotans in a lifetime of volunteering and service.	The State Commission and Corporation program partners will develop a tool kit of promotional and marketing news releases to make citizens aware of the contributions of volunteerism, importance of non-profits, and community-based organizations and contributions each citizen can make in filling gaps in community services.		Completed	
	The State Commission and Corporation programs will coordinate with the State Office of Faith-Based Initiatives to help expand the volunteer rate of	43%		46%

	individuals age 55 – 64 actively engaged in addressing community needs.			
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IV. SPECIAL INITIATIVES:

The following describes the ongoing efforts and the special initiatives to enhance the collaboration and coordination of the State Commission with the Corporation State Office, State Education Agencies, state network of volunteer centers, and other service organizations within the state.

Program Development and Technical Assistance Training:

Annually, the State Commission in conjunction with the State Office and the State Education Agency conducts a formal Needs Assessment to identify the training and technical assistance needs of AmeriCorps subgrantees and Corporation sponsored programs. This Needs Assessment is used to develop the State Commission’s PDAT Plan and to plan Cross Stream Training Events in the State.

Joint Educational & Planning Retreat of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council and the State Commission on National and Community Service:

In August 2005 and again in July-August 2006, the North Dakota State Commission on National and Community Service sponsored a Joint Educational and Planning Retreat with the North Dakota Workforce Development Council.

The purpose of the Joint Retreat was to provide orientation and training to Commission and Council members on their roles and responsibilities, share data on community service and workforce needs, and identify and prioritize workforce and community service issues for the Council and State Commission to work on. In attendance were members from the Councils and Commission, representation from the Corporation State Office, the Administrator from the USDOL-ETA Regional Office, Governor’s Office, and members of the North Dakota State Legislature. The Joint Retreat funding was shared by the State Commission and the North Dakota Workforce Development Council and supplemented with state general funds and private funding.

North Dakota’s Faith-Based and Community Organizations Initiative:

The 2005 Legislature created an Office of Faith-Based Initiatives which is assigned to the North Dakota Governor’s Office. There was no funding provided with the legislation to create the office. The State Commission started working with the Governor’s Office on the new, legislative-created North Dakota’s Faith-Based and Community Organizations Initiative.

Two meetings were held to explore the relationship between AmeriCorps and Faith-Based organizations. As a result of these meetings, the State Commission’s program

Officer was asked to be on a panel of speakers at the North Dakota Association of Non-profit Organization sponsored “Dakota’s Annual Leadership Conference” in May 2006. The panel discussed the options of federal funding, AmeriCorps being a viable opportunity.

From these meetings and the conference relationship, the State Commission intends to build on the partnerships formed with the Governor’s Office Faith-Based and Community Organizations Initiative and the North Dakota Association of Non-profit Organization.

Cross Stream Training Events:

In June 2006 the State Commission co-coordinated a Cross Stream Training Event that brought together the North Dakota AmeriCorps state projects and Senior Corps projects. For the first time state projects and Senior Corps projects were able to explore what services each has to offer and how the other projects could enhance their project.

The State Commission will continue to co-coordinate this annual event to continue to explore personnel and service support issues along with the ever-changing Corporation funding issues. In building such relationships we intend to assist faith-based and non-profits organizations in building capacity and providing services to help meet community needs.

V. CORPORATION TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE COMMISSION:

The following describes the non-monetary support the State Commission believes would be needed from the Corporation and Corporation State Office in order for our State Service Plan to be successful.

The greatest challenge in working with the Corporation for National and Community Service stems from the informality of the communication process. Issues related to Administrative Standards compliance and Grant Closeout need to be formally communicated to the State Commission. We have a number of examples where issues related to Grant Closeout and Administrative Standards compliance have been informally called to our attention, usually because it could impact an award, only to find after research that the issue was addressed on our part, but had not be conveyed to all parties in the Corporation.

The current Program Officer at CNCS is very responsive and appears to have a handle on her program responsibilities. This is big improvement from the State Commission’s point of view. Having the Program Officer visit our State and meet with the State Commission periodically would enhance the working relationship between our State Commission and CNCS.

The State Commission will look to the Corporation for supporting the AmeriCorps state project training needs as it has in the past. The State Commission will continue to assess

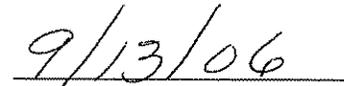
the state projects on an on-going basis to determine the necessary and appropriate training needed to build strong projects. In building strong projects, the State Commission's emphasis is on assisting projects to develop services that can be offered long after the AmeriCorps funding has ended.

The State Commission will also seek the assistance of the Corporation in helping to assure everyone that we are doing our best to meet the AmeriCorps standards. The State Commission is well aware of the ever-changing AmeriCorps standard requirements and is doing everything possible to be in compliance. At every opportunity the State Commission will investigate what services and products the Corporation offers that can assure the State Commission is meeting standards.

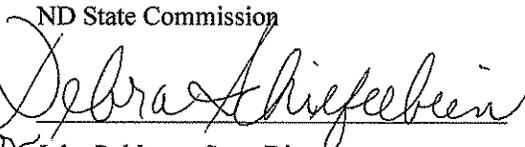
I certify that the State of North Dakota State Service Plan for the Corporation for National and Community Service was jointly developed and accepted. I further certify that we will operate our Corporation for National and Community Service funded programs in accordance with this Plan.



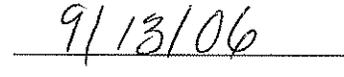
Rosella Grant, Chairperson
ND State Commission



Date



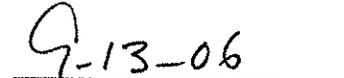
for John Pohlman, State Director
Corporation for National and Community Service



Date



David Massey, Assistant Superintendent
State Education Agency



Date