



## **HAWAI‘I STATE SERVICE PLAN 2019-2021** *A Blueprint for Building on Hawai‘i’s Ethic of Service*

The Hawai‘i Commission’s **goal** is to foster volunteerism and community service throughout Hawai‘i, and is guided by the following **principles**:

- **Manuwahi** (to give freely),
- **Kōkua** (to support, give, assist),
- **Laulima** (to work cooperatively),
- **Lōkahi** (to strive for unity, harmony) and to
- “Serve Hawai‘i with Aloha.”

Given the state of Hawai‘i’s concepts of aloha and kuleana (responsibility), our state’s cultural values foster and add an extra dimension to community service and volunteerism. Our risk of natural disasters--whether tsunamis, lava flows, or hurricanes--as well as the socioeconomic difficulties many of our residents face in both urban and rural areas, makes community service and a strong volunteer base vital for our state. Hawai‘i faces a unique geographical challenge, being a state comprised of 8 main islands. This makes innovative and comprehensive planning, as well as collaboration among various partners and stakeholders and a wise use of resources, extremely important.

The Hawai‘i Commission’s role is to identify, foster, and create opportunities to promote volunteerism throughout our state through our AmeriCorps State and National program. This program is separate from the AmeriCorps programs that are *directly* funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, for example, AmeriCorps VISTA. There is a wide variety of ethnic diversity in our volunteers, so in the next three years we will work on increasing and supporting age diversity through inclusion of volunteers 55+ in age.

The Hawai‘i Commission works closely with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and is the liaison between CNCS and the State of Hawai‘i. The Hawai‘i Commission is the only way for Hawai‘i to receive federal funds dispersed by CNCS. The Hawai‘i Commission is administratively attached to the University of Hawai‘i, via the Vice- President of Student Affairs. The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state Senate. Commissioners must represent various cross sections of our population as identified by CNCS. There are 15 to 25 commissioners on the Hawai‘i Commission.

This State Service Plan is a three (3) year blue print to foster and guide Hawai‘i’s ethic of community service. It shall be evaluated every three years and assessed annually.

## HAWAI‘I AT A GLANCE

Due to the cultural concepts explained earlier--*manuwahi*, *kōkua*, *laulima*, *lōkahi*, and *aloha*—Hawai‘i is permeated in a spirit of giving and responsibility. These values manifest themselves as a spirit of service in our volunteers, as a love of our ‘āina (land) in the hearts of our volunteers, and as an inspiring force that kindles a zeal for service in the hearts of volunteers who might be lukewarm about the work that they do.

In 2017, over 3,600 Americans of all ages and backgrounds worked together to help make Hawai‘i a better place through AmeriCorps. The CNCS invested over \$8.1 million dollars into community solutions. Hawai‘i AmeriCorps has over 300 locations across the Hawaiian Islands, locations which include food banks, homeless shelters, schools, youth centers, health clinics, and nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Last year, over 600 AmeriCorps members worked across Hawai‘i through AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC. Examples of such programs are the Summer Bridge Enrichment Program at Waiākea High School in Hilo; Building Stability in Housing Hawaiian Community Assets-AmeriCorps VISTA in Urban Honolulu area; Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii Equal Justice Works in Honolulu, and Leeward District ELL Program: Safe Haven in Waipahu. In total, there are 360 service sites in Hawai‘i for all AmeriCorps programs, including the Senior Corps.

For fiscal year 2017, the Hawai‘i Commission’s AmeriCorps State and National program had a total of 554 state members, and received a grand total of \$5,167,095 in federal funding. For fiscal year 2018, we currently have 570 state members and have received a total of \$5,239,133 in federal funding.

We want to build and expand upon the success of 2017, which is why we have carefully identified six priority areas to implement over the next three years in addition to continuing work in all the areas in which we are currently experiencing success.

## PRIMARY FOCUS AREAS

CNCS has identified as part of the current strategic plan, five priority areas to implement or strengthen between now and 2021.

- 1) **Increasing Service for Adults 55 and Older** – *Creating a broad range of new or existing service and volunteer programs that will utilize volunteers ages 55 plus, and training for these volunteers.*

Out of the many service opportunities available in Hawai‘i, incorporating a broad range of new or existing service and volunteer programs that will utilize volunteers ages 55 plus is vital. Older volunteers bring a wealth of diversity and experience that will benefit the people they serve as well as inspire existing young volunteers and gain more volunteers aged 55 plus. These volunteers can serve as peers to large sections of the population they serve and will have a firm understanding of the challenges faced by the people they are helping.

We know support of volunteers is important, which is why we will work on having educational programs and training for volunteers ages 55 and up to help them serve the community with all the tools needed to succeed.

### **Priorities in Increasing Service for Adults 55 and Over**

- Identify key areas, programs, and stakeholders in need of service from adults 55 and older.
- Establish additional training and programs for adults ages 55 and older. Initial areas to explore include academic tutoring and mentoring, family literacy, after school programs, disaster relief support, elderly care, and more.
- Marketing to reach, attract, and enlist volunteers ages 55 and older.

### **2) Developing New Service Opportunities - *Finding increased suitable programs on each island for volunteerism.***

Currently the island of Oahu has the most volunteer opportunities. It is our goal to increase the amount of service opportunities on each island. This is a challenge given the different needs and sizes of each island in Hawai‘i, but having enough volunteer opportunities on each island is important to attract and retain volunteers, as well as best serve each island.

In particular, Kaua‘i needs a more substantial base for volunteer opportunities, so we’ll be working on increasing opportunities on Kaua‘i. We will look to see if we can identify any programs that need improvement on any of the islands, and if problems are identified, they will be targeted and remedied. The other islands will be accessed to be sure they have enough programs and enough program diversity for volunteering.

Creating more focus areas in existing programs, and acquiring new programs, will allow our State to offer a broader range of volunteer opportunities. Our state programs heavily focus on conservation. While this is an important community interest to focus on, there are so many other community needs where more volunteers are desperately needed--for example, education, homelessness, and emergency preparedness.

### **Priorities in Developing New Service Opportunities**

- Identify community programs and nonprofits willing to accept volunteers and work on establishing programs with them in various community needs.
- Evaluate the number of existing programs on each island and after evaluation come up with specific benchmarks to reach with increasing opportunities and networking between each island.
- Creation of volunteer opportunities on Kaua‘i and other neighbor islands.
- Evaluation and creation of enough programs on each island.

- Creation of opportunities by forming relationships with stakeholders and nonprofits.
- As a result of our evaluation of existing programs in previous focus area, the Hawai'i Commission will identify key areas where volunteer opportunities are lacking.
- Identify how many programs are needed in the sectors identified, such as homelessness and education.
- Establishing additional programs with new and existing stakeholders to increase opportunities in these underserved areas.
- Creation of a wider array of programs across vital community areas to address various community needs.
- Evaluation and creation of enough volunteer programs in non-conservation areas.
- A wider base of volunteers with broader experience they can take to other volunteer opportunities or the career world.

**3) Encouraging/educating existing and new volunteers about new focus areas in programs** – *Enabling volunteers to help the community, gain valuable employment experience, and diversify their experience.*

It's important to educate volunteers about the array of choices they currently have or will have for service. Volunteers could be matched with their passion from the start, or they could choose to go into a program where they could build skills that they desire to later take into the workplace once their term with AmeriCorps ends. After we develop new focus areas, we can move volunteers or bring in new volunteers to fill these new programs. Allowing volunteers to change programs if their current program isn't the right fit could reduce the risk of volunteers leaving their service commitments early.

**Priorities in Encouraging and Educating Existing and New Volunteers about New Focus Areas in Programs**

- As a result of identifying areas lacking volunteers and creating opportunities to volunteer in these areas, it will be necessary to recruit incoming volunteers for some of these positions, and possibly move some existing volunteers from areas with too many volunteers.
- Encourage some volunteers to move from conservation into one of these new programs in an underserved sector, if they are willing and have interest in one of the new volunteer positions.
- Reassign willing volunteers from areas with too many volunteers to areas that have too few

volunteers (i.e., encourage some volunteers to move from conservation into one of these new programs in an underserved sector).

- Proper advertising of new programs and having enough info about them so incoming volunteers have a wide variety of choices to pick from.
- More volunteers in more diverse programs.
- Volunteers with more experience.
- Choices to attract volunteers with different interests than what is currently offered.

**4) Creating a separation and clarification between state and national levels of AmeriCorps** – *Helping volunteers and community members to understand their role from both a state and a national level.*

There is some confusion amongst volunteers and community members about the role AmeriCorps plays on a state and national level. It will be our goal to educate volunteers and the public about what work AmeriCorps does at the state level, what AmeriCorps does at the national level, and what people should expect from our organization. The best way to clear up myths and misunderstanding is through education.

**Priorities in creating a separation and clarification between state and national levels of AmeriCorps:**

- Outline the main differences between state and national levels in a clear, concise manner.
- Develop a plan for implementation – explaining to current and new volunteers.
- State goal and values will become more prominent and understood better by all volunteers.
- Volunteers will have a clearer idea of their impact on a state and national level

**5) Increasing AmeriCorps Hawai‘i’s social media presence** – *To have a strong presence on social media, particularly Facebook and Instagram.*

According to the Pew Research Center, roughly two-thirds of U.S. adults (68%) use Facebook, and about three-quarters of these users access Facebook on a daily basis. 71% of 18-24 year-olds use Instagram, 45% use twitter, and 71% use Snapchat. Given the ubiquitous nature of social media, it is absolutely vital to have a strong social media presence because it will result in increased visibility and relevance in the local community and the nation. Having posts that look good and that garner attention will result in increased volunteer pride, visibility of projects, and possible attraction of more millennial and youth interest in AmeriCorps to increase the number of volunteers and supporters. At this point in time, we can’t afford to *not* have a social media presence.

**Priorities in increasing AmeriCorps Hawai‘i’s Social Media Presence**

- By 2020, to have a formidable presence on Facebook and Instagram, with other possible platforms to be explored, and to have posts done daily or at **minimum** no less than one posting a week.
- Evaluate the pros/cons of having one social media channel for the entire state OR if it's better to have a channel for each island.
- Find a social media manager in the organization to handle approved marketing, posting, etc. and form a marketing plan.
- Develop a plan and train volunteers in different organizations to send pictures to social media manager so he/she has a wide variety of content to choose from.
- Update web site and include programs on the Commission website. More interactive and relevant information updated on a regular basis.

**6) Increasing Disaster Preparedness** – *To continue building upon our disaster preparedness and plans.*

Due to Hawai'i being more prone to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and lava, disaster preparedness is extremely important for the safety and wellbeing of both our volunteers and the communities we serve on the islands. A volunteer organization can never be too prepared for a state or national emergency.

Last year, over a course of two days we trained our volunteers on setting up a Volunteer Reception Center when there is a natural disaster. We want to continue giving educational opportunities like this and make sure our volunteers and staff know the best practices and latest developments in disaster preparedness.

**Priorities in increasing AmeriCorps Hawai'i's Disaster Preparedness**

- Identify the disaster preparedness areas volunteers are most and least trained to handle.
- Strengthen training in any weak areas identified.
- Hold additional training sessions or disseminate written information/plans to volunteers to train in disaster preparedness and relief.
- Do random testing or drills to ensure volunteers are retaining their disaster preparedness training.
- Evaluate plans and locations with community partners to ensure our processes will run smoothly in case of a natural disaster or emergency.

## CONCLUSION

Since 1994, Hawai'i Residents have served 7.4 million hours through AmeriCorps. As our historical record and last year of service illustrate, AmeriCorps is still going strong in Hawai'i. We model the benefits of an ethnically diverse group of volunteers who are strong, enthusiastic, and passionate about making Hawai'i a better place through service for young and old alike. The Hawai'i Commission is ready to evaluate, improve, and grow over the next three years through the six primary focus areas identified and described above, as well as respond to local emergencies when they arise. Hawai'i is the Aloha state, and AmeriCorps is based in Aloha and cultural values that will sustain us for years to come as we work cooperatively to make our islands, our state, and our nation a better place to work, live, and thrive.