



Ohio Sunset Review Committee
Testimony 12/7/15

Agency Name: Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism (more commonly known as ServeOhio)

Point of Contact: William Hall, Executive Director

- The Ohio Legislature established The Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism in 1994, under the original name of the Governor’s Community Service Commission. ServeOhio is purposed specifically to administer grants in Ohio under the federal National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993. States are required to have a state service commission to receive federal AmeriCorps funding. ServeOhio operates as the State Service Commission for Ohio.
- Working with local partners, ServeOhio builds AmeriCorps programs that meet critical local and state challenges. In the current program year, ServeOhio is funding 20 local AmeriCorps programs engaging over 800 AmeriCorps members who are providing over 1.1 million hours of service. AmeriCorps funding priorities include education; economic opportunity; healthy futures; environmental stewardship; disaster services; and veterans and military families. AmeriCorps programs provide opportunities for Ohioans to make an intensive commitment to service in their community – 1,700 hours over a 10-12 month service term for a fulltime member. Through this unique federal-state-local partnership, ServeOhio is able to address local needs while also providing a valuable service experience for the AmeriCorps member – building skills and increasing employment opportunities for thousands of Ohioans.
- The vast majority of our AmeriCorps programs focus on education. ServeOhio improves academic achievement by supporting 692 AmeriCorps members serving in 334 schools across Ohio. AmeriCorps members tutor, mentor, and teach more than 50,000 students– increasing attendance rates and course completion – helping students build successful strategies for high school graduation, targeted higher education pursuits, and meaningful employment opportunities to achieve long-term life goals.
- ServeOhio builds skills and increases employment opportunities for the 800 individuals now serving as AmeriCorps members. Ohio AmeriCorps members will receive over 112,000 hours of professional development and training, and will earn over \$3.8 million in education awards that can be used to pay for post-secondary education or qualified student loans. Since the inception of AmeriCorps in 1994, Ohio residents have qualified for more than \$93 million in AmeriCorps education awards – a valuable resource that significantly reduces student debt.
- ServeOhio invests in local volunteer mobilization through AmeriCorps and National Days of Service project funding. Last year, Ohio AmeriCorps members mobilized over 15,000 community volunteers to support the organizations they serve. Through a longstanding public-private partnership with Honda Manufacturing of America and AEP Ohio, ServeOhio provides funding for local service projects on MLK Day, Global Youth Service Day, and Make A Difference Day. In the most recent annual funding cycle, over \$19,000 was granted to support 22 service projects that engaged 3,220 Ohio volunteers. In addition to funding volunteer mobilization, ServeOhio champions outstanding volunteers via our ServeOhio Awards which honors high-impact service in local Ohio communities. ServeOhio also convenes Ohio volunteer administration professionals in high-quality professional development at our annual Ohio Conference on Service and Volunteerism and through targeted dialogue on improving volunteer infrastructure.
- The major driver of workload is our primary mission of administering the AmeriCorps program for the State of Ohio. Federal funds flow to the local projects via state service commissions like ServeOhio; the commissions also are responsible for ensuring projects comply with federal AmeriCorps regulations. The AmeriCorps workload is best

explained in terms of a “grant cycle”, with five distinct phases: Application, Pre-Award, Award, Project Management/Operation, and Closeout. The complete grant cycle runs 24 months; a new cycle starts every calendar year. This means the first three phases of one cycle overlap the last two phases of the prior cycle, so at any given time staff are working across two cycles (sometimes three cycles, if projects receive extensions.) Three staff work full-time on AmeriCorps, and all of the other three staff spend part of their time on AmeriCorps (estimated 4.25 total FTE’s), making the AmeriCorps workload the most significant determinant of overall agency workload. We project the AmeriCorps workload will remain stable over the next few years, with approximately 20-25 sub-grants under management during each grant cycle, accounting for approximately 800 AmeriCorps member service opportunities for Ohioans each year.

- The secondary driver of agency workload is our ServeOhio program initiative to encourage and support the overall field of volunteerism and community service in Ohio. It includes management of the ServeOhio website and social media, oversight of the annual ServeOhio awards program, planning and management of the annual ServeOhio Conference, and the National Days of Service Mini-Grant program encompassing three grant competition/award cycles annually. Present workforce allocation is three staff and 1.0 FTE. The ServeOhio workload is projected to remain stable over the next year, with no changes in services or key processes that would significantly alter staff time for this program.
- Lastly, agency administration also impacts workload. This includes all functions relative to overall agency operations, including finance, human resources/payroll, policy/planning, and office infrastructure. Much of this effort is coordinated through the Department of Administrative Services and Office of Management and Budget. Present workforce allocation is two staff and 0.75 FTE. No significant changes in workload or staff allocations are anticipated over the next several years. Our present staffing level of six full-time FTE’s allows us to adequately fulfill our mission and achieve compliance with federal grants management requirements.
- The primary source of funding for the Commission is federal grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service. This includes operating funds for the Commission of approximately \$385,000 per year (subject to a dollar-for-dollar match requirement) and pass-through funds to support AmeriCorps projects throughout the state. Commission support funds and about 60% of the pass-through funds are determined via population-based formula; the remainder of the pass-through funds come from a competitive pool awarded by CNCS on the basis of outstanding program quality. Strong AmeriCorps programs in Ohio have historically leveraged competitive funding of nearly \$2.5 million per year over the past few years. General Revenue Funds support commission operations, and are used as the primary matching source against the federal commission support funds.
- The Commission consists of 23 members as defined in Ohio Revised Code 121.40, which composition is intended to be broadly inclusive and non-partisan, in compliance with federal statute (42 USC 12638). Four (4) voting members represent state agencies as follows: Department of Aging, Department of Higher Education, Department of Education, and Department of Youth Services. Members are designated by and serve at the pleasure of the Agency directors. Two (2) voting members represent the education committees of the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate. Members are the committee chairs or their designees; designees serve at the pleasure of the committee chairs. Fifteen (15) voting members are appointed by the Governor. Federal legislation requires representation of the following constituencies: community volunteer sector, program development, faith-based sector, national service programming, youth sector, business sector, community organizations, older adult sector, local government, and local labor. Two (2) non-voting members serve ex officio as follows: The Director of the State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Director of the Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. ServeOhio Commissioners receive no compensation, but are eligible to receive reimbursement for travel expenditures related to meeting attendance.
- ServeOhio appreciates the opportunity to testify before this committee and respectfully requests reauthorization to continue our work to expand and support national service and volunteer engagement in Ohio. We would be happy to address any questions you may have at this time.