

**Ohio Sunset Review Committee  
Testimony 2/25/20**

Chair Roegner and Members of the Committee:

My name is William Hall and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism, which is more commonly known as ServeOhio. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you this afternoon to discuss our mission and work.

Established in 1994, ServeOhio is charged with administering AmeriCorps programs and supporting volunteer engagement in Ohio. Under the federal National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993, states are required to have a state service commission to ensure that states and local communities have a key role in determining the allocation of national service resources. ServeOhio functions as Ohio's state service commission.

**AMERICORPS**

The commission's primary role is the funding and administration of AmeriCorps programs in Ohio. ServeOhio makes AmeriCorps local by working with Ohio communities to define critical needs and develop AmeriCorps programming as an intervention to address those critical needs. In addition, ServeOhio sets policy and program priorities; competitively awards grants to local organizations; provides training and technical assistance to program staff and AmeriCorps Members; monitors and evaluates grantees to ensure quality and compliance with federal and state laws.

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to serve their communities as AmeriCorps "members" in projects developed to address locally-defined problems. A fulltime AmeriCorps Member serves 1,700 hours within in a 10-12 month service term – earning a modest living allowance and education award upon successful completion.

In the current program year, ServeOhio is investing \$8.7 million in local AmeriCorps programming focused on education, economic opportunity, healthy futures and environmental stewardship. Over 900 AmeriCorps Members will provide 1.3 million hours of service at over 600 service sites across the state.

In addition to providing intensive service, AmeriCorps is a proven workforce development strategy – providing a pathway to employment for thousands of Ohioans over the past 25 years. This service year, Ohio AmeriCorps Members will receive over 130,000 hours of professional development and earn over \$4.6 million in education awards that can be used for post-secondary education or qualified student loans.

**VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

ServeOhio also works to increase the quantity and quality of community volunteer engagement throughout Ohio. Our National Days of Service Project Grants – MLK Day (January), Global Youth Service Day (April), ServeOhio Day (June) and Make A Difference Day (October) – provide over \$60,000 annually to support 60+ locally-defined community projects that engage thousands of volunteers.

Developing and sustaining high-quality volunteer programming is challenging work – ServeOhio engages volunteer administrators throughout the state in professional development that builds and recognizes effective volunteer management practices. Last year, ServeOhio launched a skills-based volunteerism training program (ServeOhio SBV) that provides advanced training and ongoing support to Ohio nonprofits in the effective engagement of skilled volunteers in highly-defined projects that increase organizational capacity and impact.

## **COMMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Commission consists of 21 non-compensated 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.
- 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 is primarily funded by our federal grantor – the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). All of our AmeriCorps program funding originates at CNCS; such funds are distributed to state service commissions through a combination of formula and competitive processes. In addition, CNCS provides funding to ServeOhio to support the development and administration of AmeriCorps programming (Commission Support Grant and Commission Investment Fund) and to increase community volunteer engagement (Volunteer Generation Fund). The state investment in ServeOhio -- \$307,176 in the current fiscal year – is also utilized for program development and administration, as well as, the primary source for our required federal match.

We anticipate expansion of both our AmeriCorps portfolio and volunteer engagement programming over the next few years. AmeriCorps enjoys strong bipartisan support at the federal level and has secured consistent increases in funding during recent federal budget cycles. ServeOhio is accessing such resources to expand AmeriCorps programming in alignment with state priorities relative to the successful transition of foster-care youth; local support for organizations working on the opioid crisis; suicide prevention; and workforce development. We anticipate that our AmeriCorps program portfolio will expand to over 30 programs supporting more than 1,000 AmeriCorps members in the next program year. In addition, we anticipate expansion in our volunteer engagement programming as we work closely with the administration and other state agencies on effectively harnessing the power of community volunteers to further statewide priorities.

Over the past 25 years, more than 35,000 Ohio residents have served as AmeriCorps Members – providing 56 million hours of service and earning over \$118 million in education awards. ServeOhio looks forward to providing AmeriCorps service opportunities and increasing volunteer engagement over the next 25 years.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to share this information. I would be happy to answer any questions at this point.