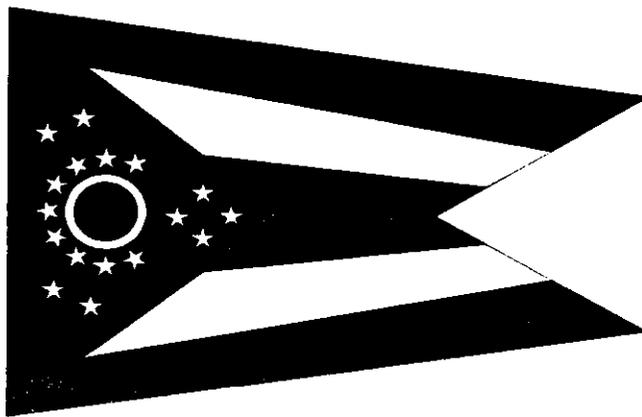


Ohio's

Unified State Plan



to further...
Volunteerism, Service, Learning,
and Giving

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I. Introduction

A. The Process

The Ohio Governor's Community Service Council (GCSC) is the state governmental unit responsible for administering the AmeriCorps national service program and promoting community service and volunteerism within the state. The Council saw their mandate to provide a "Unified State Plan" to the Corporation for National Service as an opportunity to bring the CNS-funded organizations and other volunteer and service organizations across Ohio together to create a shared vision and commitment for a statewide volunteerism and service infrastructure. Before beginning the broad planning process, the GCSC, the State Office of the Corporation (SOC) and the State Education Agency (SEA) formed an Administrative Work Group to recommend a planning process, to monitor progress of plan development, to determine how the three offices would work together in implementation, and to review the final document.

In March 1997, a steering committee was formed composed of representatives of the major organizations in the volunteerism and service fields to guide the process of developing Ohio's Unified State Plan. (Attachment 1) To ensure that the plan would be representative of all of the streams of service, the Steering Committee invited individuals from across the State identified as leaders in the volunteerism and service field to also participate in the process.

To begin the planning phase, the Steering Committee and the GCSC hosted a "Kick-Off" meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to ask for help in developing a comprehensive plan that would advance each stream of service throughout Ohio. Nearly 200 representatives from each of the major areas of service were invited to join one of 15 working groups. The areas of service included AmeriCorps, Business, Civic Groups, Community Development, Government, Higher Education, Labor, Media, Philanthropy, Religious Organizations, Service-Learning, Senior Adults, Youth, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Volunteerism. Later, Civic Groups, Labor and Religious Organizations were removed from the list of working groups because they had no representation. While the steering committee was disappointed that individuals from these groups did not participate in the process, it believed their needs could be represented through individual group members' experiences. (Attachment 2)

Over 100 individuals attended the Kick-Off on August 7, 1997. The agenda included an overview of the process and an opportunity for each working group to meet and to plan for the next four months. Their charge was to explore the benefits and barriers to volunteerism and service, to create strategies to strengthen Ohio's volunteerism and service infrastructure and to identify the resources needed to produce the desired outcomes. Each working group was asked to compose a position paper that would detail the results of their exploration of the issues and the group's recommendations to advance volunteerism and service statewide.

The members of the working groups chose a facilitator, whose role was to call regular meetings and to guide the discussions and a writer who would write the group's position paper. Participants were given an outline to guide their discussions and were asked to respond to the outline's questions from their unique point of view. (Attachment 3) Each attendee made a commitment to meet with his or her working group three to five times between August and December 1997. To facilitate the process, the Council retained a consultant whose role was to provide administrative support to the working groups and to assist them as they developed their position papers. The position papers were received at the Council on December 15, 1997. (Attachment 4)

On January 15, 1998, the Council hosted a *Grand Finale*. Seventy-five (75) people attended to review the working groups' themes and strategies for advancing service and volunteerism, decide on an implementation plan and to celebrate their achievements. Despite initial cynicism, the majority of the participants indicated that they felt the process was a worthwhile experience. Many commented that they expanded their network of contacts, increased their knowledge of the other streams of service and were pleased that "their

voice had been heard.” The outcome of that planning process plus the goals and strategies for AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and National Senior Service Corps make up Ohio’s Unified State Plan.

B. Definitions

Throughout the planning phase of Ohio’s Unified State Plan there was discussion about using the word “service” to define the many ways that citizens can be involved in their communities. Many groups believed that using such a general term would be misleading and confusing. To assure that each stream of service is recognized and appreciated for its unique contributions, the phrase “**volunteerism, service, learning and giving**” will be used throughout Ohio’s Unified State Plan. The terms are defined as follows:

Volunteerism

A volunteer is one who gives time, energy or talents to an individual, group or organization for which he/she is not paid.

Service

A comprehensive term that includes:

Service-Learning – an educational strategy where the participants learn and develop skills through active involvement in a community service project which meets an established human, educational, environmental, or public safety need of their community. The service project must be integrated into and enhance the participants’ academic curriculum or the educational components of the service program in which they are enrolled. The service project must be organized, planned and coordinated with one or more community organization(s) and/or an elementary or secondary school, institution of higher education, or national, state or local service program. Finally, the participants must be provided with structured time to prepare for, reflect on and synthesize the learning gleaned from their experience.

Community Service – encompasses many forms of service, both voluntary and involuntary. These types of service include; school-based projects for credit toward graduation, projects that fulfill organizational (like fraternal or professional group) requirements, corporate service projects, and court-referred community service.

National Service – (which broadly encompasses AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*NCCC, AmeriCorps*State and National, Learn and Serve America and National Senior Service Corps) is the national movement that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to address the most critical problems in our nation’s communities in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs. National service programs except for Lean and Serve America provide living allowances, educational awards or reimbursement of travel expenses.

Learning

To gain knowledge, understanding or skill by study or experience.

Giving

A financial contribution to a charitable organization.

Streams of Service

A comprehensive term that includes volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

II. Where are We Now?

Every day in Ohio thousands of people of all ages are making real differences in the lives of others. AmeriCorps members are working to improve public safety and the environment. They are addressing human needs and are working to assure that each child is provided a quality education. National Senior Service Corps participants are providing support, training, knowledge and mentoring to those who need it, increasing literacy among children and adults, and working to enhance the safety of people of all ages by providing safe spaces for children after school and working to prevent domestic violence. Students of all ages are participating in service-learning projects, learning first hand about the world around them. Individuals are volunteering at local nonprofit organizations, participating in corporate volunteer programs and giving to charitable organizations.

Volunteerism, service, learning and giving play a large role in improving the quality of our lives. Studies show that people who are involved in their communities are generally healthier, physically and emotionally. Feelings of isolation decrease as people are more connected to others. Community involvement adds to one's knowledge of community needs. This awareness can lead to greater compassion for others, increase "ownership" in one's community, and enrich the lives of both the volunteer and the recipient of that volunteer's time and energy.

Projects that are developed and implemented by the community itself, and allow time for reflection and learning are usually the most successful and the most meaningful to the server and the served. These kinds of opportunities allow participants to appreciate diversity, address critical needs and break down stereotypes. By encouraging youth to take a more active role in leadership positions, adults see that young people are capable of accepting responsibility and following through on assignments. Senior adults can demonstrate their expertise in working with children and parents and keep active in their communities. Projects that link server and served across ethnic, socioeconomic and religious lines increase awareness of the diversity of the community and provide opportunities for personal growth.

The educational and training benefits of community involvement are undeniable. This is especially evident when the involvement is connected to an academic or other learning curriculum and gives the volunteer time to reflect upon his or her experience. Community involvement can help people gain confidence and learn good work habits, which leads to a stronger work force.

While the benefits of volunteerism, service, learning and giving appear to be self-evident; there are many barriers to getting involved. First is a lack of time. Our lives are increasingly busy. Many people want short-term, yet meaningful opportunities that will fit into a hectic schedule; preferably after work or on weekends. Many organizations have found it difficult to adapt to the needs of the "new volunteer." They struggle to find people willing to make an ongoing commitment to traditional programs and opportunities. While some businesses are beginning to allow their employees to volunteer during work hours, organizations that want to utilize volunteer efforts must begin to create opportunities that fulfill their needs while honoring the time restraints of today's volunteer.

The working groups believe that volunteer organizations need to be more flexible about the hours that individuals can volunteer their time and to develop more short-term positions. To engage youth, more after-school and summer opportunities need to be created. Opportunities that offer families time to work together toward a shared goal create a larger pool of volunteers, and create an ethic of service in children that result in a life-long commitment to helping others. By designing these kinds of positions, more people will be able make a contribution in their community.

Greater public awareness of opportunities and recognition for the services provided by volunteers is needed. When polled, most people say that they became involved in a volunteer opportunity because someone asked them. To increase the number of people who donate their time, energy and money, we need to find ways of making the connection between the volunteer and the volunteer organization as uncomplicated as possible.

This includes better publication of opportunities and making administrative tasks, like background checks, less cumbersome.

We must break down other barriers to volunteerism, service, learning and giving. These include potential volunteers' fear of the unknown, concerns about personal safety, liability issues, lack of transportation, (especially for youth and senior adults), negative past experiences and childcare issues, and the lack of financial and human resources that support volunteerism service, learning and giving programs.

Legislation that addresses liability issues for volunteers and volunteer organizations, accessible and affordable training on the effective utilization of volunteers, and ongoing financial support of volunteer, service-learning, community and national service programs is needed. We must show the business community that corporate-sponsored community involvement *can* add to the "bottom line." To do this we must restructure the relationship between the private sector corporation and the nonprofit organization in ways that will further relationships. Research in the form of a survey should be conducted to determine the reasons that some corporations are not involved. Finally, volunteer, service learning, community and national service and giving programs must collaborate more effectively, decrease duplication of services and develop better working relationships among each stream of service.

The resources that do exist to support the administration of volunteer, service, learning, and giving programs in Ohio must be made accessible throughout the state. Resources include volunteer centers, local networking organizations for volunteer administrators, corporate volunteer and giving programs, private foundations, the United Way, the Ohio Donors Forum, federal and state service programs including AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, the Ohio Campus Compact, VISTA, and the National Senior Service Corps, the Points of Light Foundation, learning institutions including grade schools and schools of higher education, service organizations, and most important, the individual volunteers themselves.

III. Where Do We Want to Go?

A. Vision Statement

Ohio's vision for service is a connected state and local system that promotes a culture of life-long volunteerism, service, learning and giving that strengthens communities and benefits those who are served and those who serve.

To realize Ohio's vision for service, we must:

- *Embrace the uniqueness of each stream of service*
- *Instill an ethic of service and giving in our youth*
- *Find or develop financial, material and human resources that will sustain and enhance existing programs and provide funding for new programs*
- *Encourage collaboration*
- *Promote the benefits of volunteerism, service, learning and giving and the programs that currently exist to the general public and to legislators*
- *Strengthen the volunteerism, service, learning and giving infrastructure*
- *Advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving through advocacy and legislation*
- *Unite different generations of volunteers*
- *Conduct research on trends, activities, and best practices*
- *Provide training to create a better understanding of the streams of service and managing volunteers effectively*
- *Make volunteerism, service and giving easier*
- *Make volunteerism, service, learning and giving a part of the corporate culture statewide*
- *Create evaluation tools that will measure desired outcomes*

B. Action Plan

1. Program Activities

During the planning phase of the Unified State Plan, the 12 working groups met to explore the benefits and barriers to volunteerism, service, learning and giving, to create strategies to strengthen Ohio's infrastructure and to identify the resources needed to produce the desired outcomes. Each working group was asked to compose a position paper that would detail the results of their research on the issues and their recommendations to advance each stream of service statewide. The working groups' exploration resulted in the identification of 13 common themes or goals to advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving throughout the state. Over the next three years, all program activities will revolve around these 13 goals, the foundation of Ohio's Unified State Plan:

Embrace the uniqueness of each stream of service

- Clearly define volunteerism, national and community service, service learning and giving.
- Use precise and distinctive language when promoting opportunities for citizen participation.
- Promote volunteerism as a distinct form of citizen participation.
- Bridge philanthropy and community service.
- Foster cross-programming among the streams of service to encourage better understanding of programs.

Instill an ethic of service in our youth

- Encourage volunteerism, service, learning and giving as part of a total educational program.
- Create more opportunities for youth to serve—kindergarten through college and beyond.
- Create more opportunities for families to volunteer and give together.
- Promote intergenerational service.
- Encourage more short-term or after school, weekend, evening and summer opportunities.

Find or develop financial, material and human resources that will sustain and enhance existing programs and provide funding for new programs

- Secure university support for volunteer, service, and learning programs by encouraging institutes of higher education to match educational grants for AmeriCorps, use universities for training, research, coordination and administration of local programs.
- Secure corporate support for volunteer, service, learning and giving programs.
- Encourage foundations to create funding to strengthen service infrastructure for each stream of service.
- Develop government support of programs and encourage funders to consider each stream of service when making funding recommendations.
- Increase local fundraising for service projects among all streams of service.
- Recruit future members by encouraging AmeriCorps graduates to promote AmeriCorps to high school and college students.
- Reach into neighborhoods and encourage people to serve within their own community.
- Create a web-site that will match community contributors with community needs. For example, a corporation can list tangible contributions like computers on a web-site. A community agency could then contact the business if it needs computers. Agencies could list volunteer opportunities. This would require hardware and training for agencies that do not have access to technology.
- Promote individual giving.

Encourage collaboration

- Build local and regional coalitions by engaging the "stakeholders" in the community.
- Reduce duplication of services
- Create Corporate Volunteer Councils where they do not currently exist
- Strengthen the Statewide Association of Government Volunteer Program Administrators.
- Use and build upon the existing network of the Ohio Campus Compact

Promote the benefits of the volunteerism, service, learning and giving programs that currently exist to the general public and to legislators.

- Develop a public awareness campaign about the benefits of each stream of service and how to help.
- Create and publish a volunteer bill of rights.
- Create a web page describing opportunities and volunteerism, service, learning and giving news.
- Establish toll-free number to link people with volunteer, service, learning and giving opportunities.
- Use foundations as PARTNERS in promoting each stream of service.
- Distribute best practice information to non-profits.
- Publish “good news stories” to emphasize and recognize volunteer accomplishments.
- Develop materials on how corporations have “added to their bottom line” through volunteer, service, learning and giving efforts.
- Provide FACT BASED information and options to business leaders to promote community involvement.
- Stress the value of each stream of service--involvement leads to the overall betterment of the community.
- Engage local churches in volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

Strengthen the service infrastructure

- Form regional/local collaboratives.
- Create volunteer centers or clearinghouses in each county that can provide information about volunteer, service and learning opportunities where appropriate.
- Provide training for non-profits or organizations who might utilize students, volunteers.
- Secure funding for schools or agencies that need a coordinator but can't afford one.
- Develop a structure to provide technical assistance (computer, volunteer administration, working with corporations, etc.) to new and existing organizations.
- Create a standards process for volunteer programs and provide funding for the programs that comply.
- Create a current events newsletter on legislation, best practices.
- Support a university-based multi-disciplinary curriculum in volunteer administration for private, public and nonprofit managers to teach the role and value of volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- Create written directives to be mandated by military volunteer programs in local communities.
- Continue to develop appropriate administrative collaboration between and among the SEA, the SOC and GCSC.

Advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving through advocacy and legislation

- Leverage funds to support volunteerism, service, learning and giving programs.
- Educate legislators of the contributions of volunteers and need for volunteers.
- Make volunteer administration “easier” by providing free, 24-hour background checks.
- Advocate for legislation that decreases liability issues experienced by volunteers and organizations.
- Find ways to have government officials offer more credibility to volunteer programs.
- Provide incentives or tax breaks to businesses that donate time and human and material resources.
- Provide training to non-profits about safe and effective public policy advocacy.

Encourage intergenerational opportunities

- Create more opportunities for older adults.
- Create more opportunities for youth.
- Create opportunities for families to volunteer or serve together.
- Create intergenerational volunteer opportunities.

Conduct research on trends, activities, and best practices

- Research what's currently done with the media.
- Avoid the duplication of services.
- Conduct a statewide business survey that would examine the economic and competitive pressures of the business sector, training or professional development methods for next level managers, and concerns facing businesses as they move toward the year 2000
- Conduct surveys on "best practices."
- Create statewide planning sessions and invite representatives concerned with each stream of service.
- Conduct community needs assessments.

Provide training to create a better understanding of the streams of service and managing volunteers effectively

- Provide training for AmeriCorps members, coordinators, agencies, and partners.
- Provide training for community members, policy makers, business leaders and agencies on the benefits of volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- Create technical assistance corps for service learning consisting of experienced instructors, learners, and Ohio Youth Action Council members.
- Help non-profits understand the needs of corporations and to how to develop opportunities that will meet "bottom line" needs (training, PR, etc.).
- Fund free or affordable training sessions.
- Provide training for non-profits on the "new volunteer."

Make volunteerism easier

- Provide transportation for seniors and youth (reimbursement, bus tokens, etc.).
- Help volunteer organizations develop more short-term volunteer opportunities.
- Help volunteer organizations develop more family volunteer opportunities
- Advocate for legislation that addresses liability issues for volunteers and that makes volunteer administrative tasks (like background checks) easier.
- Get the word out about opportunities.
- Create "one-stop shopping" for volunteer, service, learning, and giving opportunities.

Find ways to make volunteerism, service, learning and giving a part of the corporate culture statewide

- Create tax credits or incentives for corporations who promote service and encourage their employees to volunteer.
- Create more "adopt-a-school" projects that link corporations with youth.
- Develop materials for businesses to add to the bottom line through volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- Conduct a survey that examines the economic and competitive pressures of the business sector.
- Encourage more short-term volunteer opportunities.
- Create Corporate Volunteer Councils where they do not currently exist.

Create Evaluation Tools that will measure desired outcomes.

- Encourage the measurement of desired outcomes rather than only the number served.
- Measure volunteer program impact.

To address the unique needs of each region in Ohio, implementation of the Unified State Plan will be coordinated on two levels, regionally and statewide. The Steering Committee believed that setting general goals for the entire state might not meet the unique needs of each region. Some regions have a highly functioning structure to support volunteerism, service, learning and giving while others do not. To address this issue, the Committee decided to support the development of regional implementation teams, sanction each team's choice of strategies to advance service and to create a process to coordinate regional and State activities.

The State will be divided into 12 regions to accommodate this plan. (Attachment 5) Each regional implementation team will choose the goals and strategies from those listed above that will best advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving *within its region*. (Attachment 6) The State will coordinate the implementation of its goals and strategies with the regions.

To facilitate regional implementation, one organization from within each region will be responsible for assembling a team broadly representative of each stream of service. Ideally this team will include at least one representative from each of the original working groups and from each county in the region, key players from around the region connected with volunteer, service, learning and giving programs. Representatives connected to the Presidents' Summit for America's Future and literacy initiatives will also be invited to assure that the regional implementation plan advances the goals of the Summit and America Reads. The coordinating organization will be responsible for calling regular implementation team meetings and overseeing the implementation process.

To maintain ongoing communication among the regions and the State, regional coordinators will attend quarterly meetings at the Governor's Community Service Council. The purpose of the meetings will be to share ideas, to provide progress reports and most important, build good relationships among the streams of service. The Council will retain a contract staff position to provide ongoing support and development assistance to the regions throughout the implementation phase of the plan. Special attention will be paid to the regions with little or no existing infrastructure.

A state-level implementation team will also be formed to coordinate the following activities identified by USP participants as important to be undertaken at the state-level:

1. Strengthen the regional infrastructure by providing technical assistance and support to regions.
2. Conduct statewide research to determine resources, needs, and best practices.
3. Develop a public awareness campaign that will promote volunteerism, service, learning and giving to the general public.
4. Work to find ways to make volunteerism, service, learning and giving programs "easier" for both program administrators and volunteers through advocacy efforts with the State Legislature.
5. Leverage funds to advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
6. Create a corporate culture of volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

While the GCSC, the SOC and the SEA will be members of the state-level implementation team, the three CNS partners will also continue to meet as an Administrative Work Group to expand and refine administrative collaboration.

The implementation plans for the next three years for the 12 regions, the state-level and the CNS partners are outlined below:

Goal: Twelve (12) economic development regions will choose and implement goals and strategies that will advance each stream of service within their regions.

1998-1999

- Each region will form an implementation team made up of leaders and representatives from each stream of service, literacy initiatives and America's Promise to identify goals and strategies from those developed by the working groups that will best advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving within its region.
- Each region will choose an organization that will serve as the coordinating body and applicant for the Regional Infrastructure Development Challenge Grant and will complete the application process.
- Each region will identify the major needs within its region that can be addressed through volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- Each region will meet quarterly to monitor implementation, evaluate progress and develop new strategies.
- Each region will leverage existing resources and identify additional resources to support regional infrastructure development.
- Regional coordinators will participate in quarterly meetings with the state-level implementation team to share ideas, progress and to help with the advancement of the state-level activities.
- Each region will submit bi-annual reports.
- Each region will work toward integrating existing networks i.e. the Regional Service-Learning Collaborative, the Regional Inter-Corps Council, the Coalition of National Service Programs and the USP Implementation Team.

1999-2000

- Each region will choose goals and strategies to be accomplished during the year.
- Each region will choose at least one goal to be achieved by the end of 2000.
- Each region will meet quarterly to monitor implementation, evaluate progress and develop new strategies.
- Each region will leverage existing resources and identify additional resources to support regional infrastructure development.
- Regional coordinators will participate in quarterly meetings with the state-level implementation team to share ideas, progress and to help with the advancement of the state-level activities.
- Each region will submit bi-annual reports.
- Each region will continue to work toward integrating existing networks i.e. the Regional Service-Learning Collaborative, the Regional Inter-Corps Council, the Coalition of National Service Programs and the USP Implementation Team.

2000-2001

- Each region will choose goals and strategies to be accomplished during the year.
- Each region will choose at least one goal to be achieved by the end of 2001.
- Each region will meet quarterly to monitor implementation, evaluate progress and develop new strategies.
- Each region will leverage existing resources and identify additional resources to support regional infrastructure development.
- Regional coordinators will participate in quarterly meetings with the state-level implementation team to share ideas, progress and to help with the advancement of the state-level activities.
- Each region will submit bi-annual reports.

Goal: Implement state-level strategies

1998-1999

- The GCSC in conjunction with the SOC and the SEA will assemble and support a state-level implementation team
- The state-level implementation team will further develop the state-level activities identified by the working groups and determine implementation priorities for year one.
- The state-level team will assist in the coordination of regional activities.
- The GCSC will host quarterly meetings with regional coordinators and the state-level team to share ideas and progress.
- The state-level team will develop and modify as necessary a process to evaluate both the implementation structure and the activities taking place.
- The GCSC and the SEA will continue to fund and support the Regional Service-Learning Collaboratives.
- The GCSC and the SEA will continue to work with representative of the service and volunteerism field to develop acceptable legislation re a service requirement for high school graduation.
- The GCSC will assist regions in integrating existing networks i.e. the Regional Service-Learning Collaboratives, the Regional Inter-Corps Councils, Local Coalitions of National Service Programs and USP Implementation Teams.
- The GCSC will assist regions in advancing the goals of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future and America Reads.
- The sponsoring organizations will continue to hold annual statewide conference on volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

1999-2000

- The state-level implementation team will determine implementation strategies for year two.
- The state-level implementation team will continue to support regional activities.
- The GCSC will host quarterly meetings with coordinators and the state-level team to share ideas and progress.
- The state-level implementation team will evaluate the effectiveness of the process and the activities throughout the state.
- The GCSC and the SEA will continue to fund and support the Regional Service-Learning Collaboratives.
- The GCSC and the SEA will work with representatives of the service and volunteerism field to implement acceptable legislation re the service requirement for high school graduation.
- The GCSC will continue to assist regions in integrating existing networks i.e. the Regional Service-Learning Collaboratives, the Regional Inter-Corps Councils, Local Coalitions of National Service Programs and USP Implementation Teams.
- The GCSC will continue to assist regions in advancing the goals of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future and America Reads.
- The sponsoring organizations will continue to hold annual statewide conference on volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

2000-2001

- The state-level implementation team will determine implementation strategies for year three.
- The state-level implementation team will continue to support regional activities.
- The GCSC will host quarterly meetings with coordinators and the state-level team to share ideas and progress.
- The state-level implementation team will evaluate the effectiveness of the process and the activities throughout the state.
- The sponsoring organizations will continue to hold annual statewide conference on volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

Goal: Continue to expand collaborative activity between and among the SEA, the SOC and the GCSC.

Note: This goal is addressed under Administration on page 17.

2. Public Awareness

A common theme among the working groups throughout the planning process was the need for a unified effort to advance each stream of service through a public awareness campaign. Ohio will launch a statewide effort to educate the general public and policy makers about the benefits of volunteerism, service, learning and giving and how to get involved. The Governor's Community Service Council will take the lead in coordinating implementation of the following goals:

1998-1999

Goal: Conduct an assessment of the public relations activities, best practices and volunteer needs among each stream of service.

- Develop a Public Relations/Marketing Advisory Committee at the State Level. This Advisory Committee will meet quarterly.
- Establish a funding base to cover the expenses necessary to conduct research.
- Secure support from an institute of higher education to assist with a research project that will:
 1. Conduct a statewide media analysis.
 2. Conduct statewide focus groups with agencies that utilize volunteers to determine their promotional needs.
 3. Survey volunteers throughout the state to determine why, and for whom they volunteer.
 4. Conduct surveys among broadcasters and other media to determine best practices and trends.

Goal: Develop a "public awareness infrastructure" that will provide information on volunteers and volunteer operations.

- Present the Unified State Plan at the Forging New Links Conference to educate and seek the response/support of conference participants and the candidates for the 1998 gubernatorial election.
- Establish working relationship with new Governor and First Lady of Ohio.
- Provide training for community members, legislators, business leaders and agencies on the benefits of volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- Develop a "Volunteer Press" (VP) wire service that would feature good news type stories related to volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- Establish a working relationship with the Ohio Newspaper Association.
- Begin developing a statewide Media Action Plan.
- Encourage collaborative efforts and develop closer relationships with existing programs and organizations that are currently promoting individual streams of service (United Way, American Red Cross, Volunteer Ohio).

Goal: Provide volunteer organizations, volunteers, and the media with the resources necessary to advance each stream of service.

- Develop a generic volunteer brochure for statewide distribution that describes the benefits of "getting involved" and how.
- Market and maintain Council's "1-888-767-OHIO" number (a toll-free number for volunteer information).
- Further develop, maintain and advertise Ohio's Volunteer Information Web Site, www.state.oh.us/ohiogcsc
- Develop a "Unified Theme" to promote volunteerism, service, learning and giving throughout Ohio.
- Create and distribute public service announcements statewide to promote the "Unified Theme."
- Continue to distribute the previously produced videos: "Picture of Service in Ohio" and "Making Magic" (Senior Corps Video), "Learn and Serve Ohio".

1999-2000

Goal: Assess the promotional needs among each stream of service.

- Review the results of the research and refine promotional materials to reflect needs.
- Release information gleaned from the statewide poll on volunteerism.

Goal: Continue the development of a “public awareness infrastructure” that will provide information on volunteers and volunteer operations.

- Involve the new Governor and First Lady of Ohio in various promotions.
- Develop a Speaker's Bureau with collaborative partners and new friends from “year one.”
- Establish a statewide service initiative and help to promote “Serve Ohio Month” projects throughout the state during April.
- Conduct a statewide public service campaign to promote each stream of service. Distribute posters, public service announcements and brochures.
- Continue to collaborate with volunteer organizations and agencies.
- Continue updating the V.P. (Volunteer Press) Wire service.
- Create an action plan for a statewide public service campaign in 2001.
- Continue collaborative efforts with existing programs and organizations that promote individual streams of service (United Way, American Red Cross, and Volunteer Ohio).

Goal: Provide volunteer organizations, volunteers, and the media with the resources necessary to advance each stream of service.

- Prepare sample media kits for distribution to organizations that utilize volunteers.
- Continue advertising and updating Ohio's Volunteer Information Web Site.
- Develop a newsletter for statewide distribution to community leaders and volunteers.
- Release Media Press Kits.
- Provide training to agencies about how to link with various media resources.

2000-2001

Goal: Evaluate the results of the public relations efforts put forth

- Conduct a statewide media analysis.
- Conduct statewide focus groups with agencies that utilize volunteers to determine promotional needs.
- Survey volunteers throughout the state to determine why, and for whom they volunteer.
- Conduct surveys among broadcasters and other media to determine best practices and current trends.

Goal: Continue the development of a “public awareness infrastructure” that will provide information on volunteers and volunteer operations.

- Continue updating the VP (Volunteer Press) Wire Service.
- Explore the utilization of other types of media in addition to television, radio and larger newspapers. Broaden the media base to include suburban newspapers, in-house publications, and religious organization's newsletters.
- Continue updating, developing and advertising the Council's Web Site.
- Market and maintain the Council's “1-888-767-OHIO” number.
- Continue collaborating with volunteer organizations and agencies statewide.
- Conduct second phase of the statewide public service campaign.

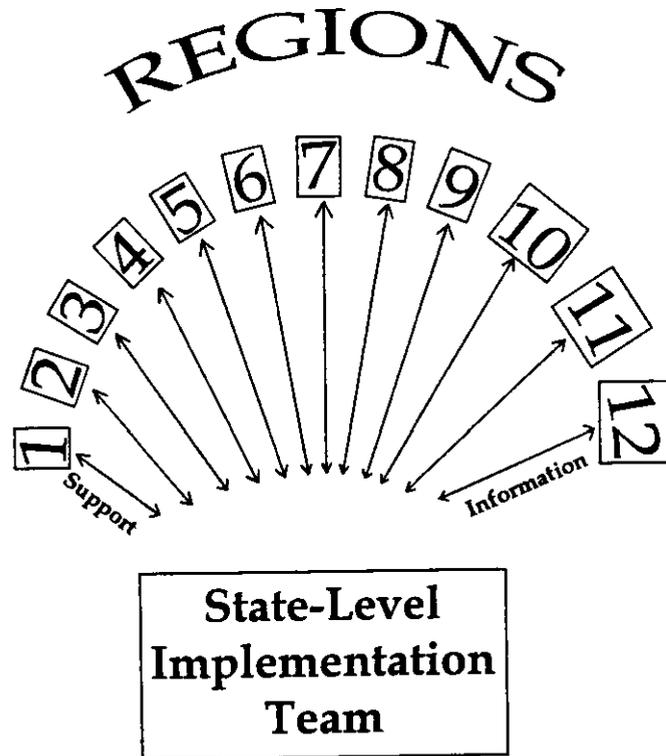
Goal: Provide volunteer organizations, volunteers, and the media with the resources necessary to advance each stream of service.

- Distribute press kits to the media and sample press kits to agencies and organizations that utilize volunteers.
- Continue to support agencies and help them link with various media resources. Release television and radio public service announcements.

3. Strengthening Infrastructure

To strengthen the state infrastructure, coordinate the streams of service, build good relationships and coordination among the Corporation programs and other volunteer efforts throughout the State, Ohio's Unified State Plan will be implemented regionally and at the State level. This innovative implementation plan will increase collaborative efforts while educating the public and individual service providers about each stream of service and its particular contributions. It will address the unique needs of individual communities and will encourage cross-programming activities across the state.

Regional implementation will encourage ongoing communication and interactive program activities among the regions and the State. To assure that the regions and State are working cooperatively, each regional team will select a coordinator who will attend quarterly meetings at the Governor's Community Service Council. The purpose of the meetings will be to share ideas, to provide progress reports and most important, build good relationships among the streams of service.



GCSC recognizes that implementing the Unified State Plan is going to take time and energy. To encourage regions to develop regional infrastructures, GCSC will award a one-year "Challenge Grant" to an organization willing to support key players in its region connected with volunteerism, service, learning and giving. Funding for this grant will come from the Council's Administrative Budget. An organization eligible for this grant (non-profit, community-based or school-based organizations, local government entities or institutions of higher education) must be able to demonstrate through letters of commitment that it has the support of other key players in its region. The \$12,500 grant must be matched by cash and/or in-kind. The SOC will develop a VISTA project that places a VISTA member in each regional coordinating organization to work on infrastructure development.

Further, the Council will provide staff support to the regions throughout the implementation phase of the plan. Special attention will be paid to the regions with little or no existing infrastructure.

Goal: To strengthen the volunteerism, service, learning and giving infrastructure by creating and supporting regional implementation teams within each of Ohio's 12 economic regions.

1998-1999

- SOC will develop a VISTA project that will place an AmeriCorps VISTA member in each of the 12 regions to assist in the development of regional infrastructure.
- GCSC will award Regional Infrastructure Development Challenge Grants to each region.
- The GCSC will retain a consultant whose role will be to assist regions in assembling an implementation team broadly representative of its regions' key players in volunteerism, service, learning and giving and to help regions form action plans.
- The GCSC will host quarterly meetings with coordinators and the state-level team to share ideas and progress.
- The state-level implementation team will assist regions to identify and/or develop additional resources to support regional infrastructure development to continue the implementation process.
- The GCSC, in conjunction with the state implementation team, will review regular progress reports and a final report that includes plans for years two and three.

1999-2000

- The state-level team will evaluate year one goals, objectives and implementation activities to advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving regionally.
- The GCSC will host quarterly meetings with regional coordinators and the state-level team to share ideas and progress.
- The state-level team will assist regions to identify and/or develop additional resources to support regional infrastructure development to continue the implementation process.
- The GCSC, in conjunction with the state-level team, will review regular progress reports and a final report that includes plans for year three.
- The SEA will explore the possibility of providing additional federal and/or state funds to support regional infrastructure development.

2000-2001

- The state-level team will evaluate year two goals, objectives and implementation activities to advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving regionally.
- The GCSC will host quarterly meetings with regional coordinators and the state-level team to share ideas and progress.
- The state-level team will assist regions to identify and/or develop additional resources to support regional infrastructure development to continue the implementation process.
- The state-level team will review regular progress reports and a final report.

4. Sustainability

Goals for sustaining national and community service in Ohio are:

Goal: Encourage and assist current national service programs to become sustainable.

- The GCSC will present quarterly workshops for all streams of service on aspects of sustainability.
- The GCSC will require AmeriCorps State programs to develop a sustainability plan and report on progress made in quarterly progress reports.
- The GCSC will explore possibility of funds through Service As Strategy Initiatives.

Goal: Ensure sustainability of GCSC.

- The GCSC will attempt to broaden legislation governing GCSC to allow fundraising.
- The GCSC will develop a Resource Development Plan.
- The GCSC will explore option of a non-profit foundation to generate funds for Council activity.

Goal: Facilitate support for USP implementation.

- The GCSC will make infrastructure development challenge grants to each region.
- The SOC will place VISTA member in each region to support infrastructure development.
- The GCSC will require each region, in order to receive a challenge grant, to identify existing resources and develop additional resources to support USP implementation.
- The GCSC will link commitment makers from the Presidents' Summit for America's Future with Ohio organizations and activities.
- The GCSC, the SOC and the SEA will present Unified State Plan to gubernatorial candidates at Forging New Links and seek their support.

Note: Two activities identified as state-level priorities in the USP are:

- leveraging funds to advance volunteerism, service, learning and giving.
- creating a corporate culture of volunteerism, service, learning and giving.

The state-level implementation team will determine specific strategies for these areas and a timeline for implementation.

5. Training and Technical Assistance

The goals and strategies for providing training and technical assistance are contained in the 1998 PDAT application. (Attachment 7)

In addition to the PDAT plans, Ohio will undertake two activities with anticipated Special Initiatives funds:

a. Member Development: A Member Development Specialist will work jointly with GCSC and SOC to:

- Assess cross-stream training needs of Members.
- Supervise the AmeriCorps/VISTA Leaders' InterCorps Council activities.
- Plan cross-stream trainings in identified needs area.
- Identify appropriate local trainers.
- Develop training component for the "All Member Gathering" and the Kick-off events.
- Develop/implement the Ohio AmeriCorps Alumni Association.

b. Ohio Volunteer Center Association Project

In order for AmeriCorps programs to achieve and maintain sustainability, it is necessary that local community volunteer corps be mobilized and maintained. The Volunteer Centers of Ohio have been successfully engaged in this process for some years. They have developed and refined programs in the areas of volunteer recruitment, retention, management and recognition. The GCSC will contract with the Ohio Volunteer Center Association to provide four 3 day regional training opportunities on the above mentioned topics. This cross-stream regional training will be available to AmeriCorps USA/*VISTA, Learn and Serve America, the National Senior Service Corps and NCCC.

GCSC and the SEA will continue to jointly provide training and technical assistance to the 12 Regional Service Learning Collaboratives.

The GCSC will also fund a part time contract staff person to support the development of the regional implementation teams and through the quarterly meetings with regional coordinators and the state-level implementation team will provide additional training and technical assistance.

6. Coordination of Program Activities

The three CNS partners will continue the practice of encouraging coordination by asking the question in their respective applications: "How are you or will you coordinate with other national service programs in your area?"

In 1998 the Council will continue to fund Local Coalitions of National Service Programs while at the same time assisting them to become part of the larger regional infrastructures that will be emerging throughout the state.

Cross-stream training, the activities of the InterCorps Council, the continuation of "The Communicator" and the development of joint GCSC/SOC program monitoring teams will also encourage coordination of program activities.

C. Processes

1. Ongoing Communication

To ensure ongoing communication between the state level and the regional implementation teams, each regional coordinator will attend quarterly meetings with the other regional coordinators and the state-level implementation team. The quarterly meetings will be an opportunity to share ideas, provide progress reports and build good relationships among the streams of service. The two-tiered implementation structure for the USP is designed to facilitate communication within a region, among all of the regions and between the regions and the state level. The presence of the contract staff person hired by GCSC will also facilitate the flow of consistent and timely information to and from all regions.

The three CNS partners will meet regularly through the Administrative Work Group to ensure communication and coordination of activities and information.

2. Annual Review and Update of Plan

The annual statewide conference, *Forging New Links*, will provide the arena for the annual review and update of the Unified State Plan. In addition, each region will provide an annual report of its activities and its plan for the next year. The state-level implementation team will do the same. GCSC Members will also review the accomplishments and direction of the Plan annually.

3. Evaluation

a. National Service Programs

Goal: Develop a system of joint GCSC/SOC program monitoring.

- Establish teams of SOC/GCSC staff to monitor and evaluate programs.
- Develop a corps of volunteer monitors to augment the monitoring done by SOC/GCSC staff.

Goal: Introduce the concept of Programming for Impact using the Senior Corps model.

- Offer one session on Programming for Impact at *Forging New Links* in 1999.
- Assist six CNS-funded programs with additional training and technical assistance to implement Programming for Impact.

b. Unified State Plan

Goal: Evaluate the implementation structure, activities and impact of the Unified State Plan.

- Utilize the evaluation committee to further develop the evaluation plan of bi-annual regional and state-level reports, analysis and modification.
- Utilize the evaluation committee to develop/implement plan for measuring impact of USP implementation activities.

Goal: Develop a plan to evaluate progress in meeting the goals of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future.

- Assemble an evaluation committee to work as a subset of the State-level implementation team.
- Seek information from America's Promise re its evaluation mechanism.
- Develop or modify evaluation mechanism as needed.

4. Administration

a. Governor's Community Service Council and State Office of the Corporation Administrative Plan

In order to : 1) enhance the existing collaborative activities between GCSC and SOC, 2) maximize the opportunities for advanced collaboration provided by co-location and 3) ensure the most efficient and effective use of administrative resources, the GCSC and SOC will develop and implement a plan for the blending of program and support staff. The planning will formally begin at a joint staff retreat to be held March 25-27, 1998 at Deer Creek State Park. The retreat, facilitated by Aguirre International Project TASC consultants, will focus on designing the plan, developing implementation strategies, and on preparing staff for changes in the way work gets done. After the retreat, a formal plan will be submitted to CNS for review, comment and approval.

Key components of the plan may include:

Development of a comprehensive volunteer program strategy to support both offices whereby the talents and skills of practitioners will be available to provide technical assistance to funded projects and to staff.

Development of a comprehensive public relations plan supporting all streams of service.

Organization of teams of program staff responsible for monitoring and for providing training and technical assistance to funded projects.

Division of the state into geographic clusters and assigning a program team to each cluster. This approach to programming which will make maximum use of the capacity to deliver technical assistance, train, monitor, and encourage program collaboration at the local level.

Development of a comprehensive integrated training plan which includes the hiring of a training specialist to serve all streams of service.

Development of a comprehensive strategy to provide support services to AmeriCorps Members including the hiring of a Member Development Specialist.

Organization of clerical staff to provide maximum support to project operations and program staff.

Production of an Ohio annual report on the status of volunteerism, service, and service learning.

b. Ohio Department of Education and Governor's Community Service Council Collaboration.

ODE and GCSC will continue to collaborate on the funding and support of 12 Regional Service-Learning Collaboratives. The Collaboratives initially funded in 1997, are composed of school-based and community-based service-learning programs. ODE and GCSC jointly share the costs and responsibility for training and technical assistance monitoring and oversight and evaluation.

c. Administrative Work Group

The three CNS-funded partners will continue to meet at least monthly to identify and explore new possibilities for collaboration.

d. Implementing the Unified State Plan

The GCSC, the SEA and the SOC will be members of the State-level Implementation Team. Sub-grantees of the three organizations will be members of the regional implementation teams.

GCSC will make funds available for Regional Infrastructure Development Challenge Grants. One organization in each region will be funded to coordinate regional implementation activities. The SOC will place one VISTA Member with the coordinating organization in each region to assist in infrastructure development. The SEA has committed to exploring the possibility of additional state or federal funds for infrastructure development in years two and three.

IV. Conclusion

The process of developing Ohio's Unified State Plan has been enthusiastically embraced by the Steering Committee and the Working Groups. The resulting plan has been affirmed by those who participated in its creation and those who are hearing about it for the first time. The benefits of this year-long effort reach far beyond the "road map" that has been created. For example, the Volunteer Centers formed a formal association in order to participate at the Steering Committee level, the volunteer community feels its' issues have been heard, new connections between organizations and individuals have been made, and philanthropy has become more closely linked to service and volunteerism. Through this effort too GCSC has become recognized and accepted as an important member of the service and volunteerism community. As we collectively begin implementation, we remain committed to our vision and hopeful that in the months and years ahead volunteerism, service, learning and giving will become an even stronger force in the lives of all residents of Ohio.

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A Picture of Service in Ohio

