

Civic Engagement Fact Sheet



Oregon Volunteers Civic Engagement Program

Civic engagement has been a cornerstone of AmeriCorps member development since the program's inception. For the period from 1994-2003, our efforts were focused on ensuring that all AmeriCorps members in the state had access to training and information to ensure their continued community involvement after their year of service.

Since 2004, Civic Engagement has been a separate program of the Commission. We have extended our activities in this arena beyond AmeriCorps to include stronger partnerships with Oregon's service learning professionals, as well as other organizations working to engage more Oregonians in their communities.

Commission's Civic Engagement Program Goal

Increase citizen involvement among Oregon residents to build connections within and across communities.

Our Projects

Seasons of Service

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning, Global Youth Service Days, National Volunteer Week, Make a Difference Day, and Family Volunteer Day:

These seasons of service are all opportunities for people to volunteer at one-day service projects and activities. Each day of service focuses on a theme that targets a specific group of Oregonians. Each day is an opportunity to promote volunteerism in communities and to provide opportunities for project-oriented problem solving, planning, teaching, researching, networking, and increasing community awareness.

Oregon Volunteers provides statewide promotion, technical assistance, and limited mini-grants to local communities implementing these days of service. Partners include national service programs, volunteer centers, schools, and faith and community-based organizations.

State Civic Engagement Committee

The Commission's Civic Engagement Committee has been created in an effort to bring together organizations committed to increasing the voice of Oregon residents in the varied issues being discussed and activities being held across the state in efforts to strengthen Oregon communities. Amongst others, the Committee includes representatives from CampFire USA-Portland Metro Council, the Corporation for National and Community Service Oregon state office, The Ford Family Foundation, League of Women Voters of Oregon, National Policy Consensus Center, Nonprofit Association of Oregon, Oregon AARP, Oregon AfterSchool for Kids (ASK), Oregon Campus Compact, Oregon Center for Public Policy, Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Public Broadcasting, OSU Extension Service, Portland State University, University of Oregon, Volunteer Insights, and World Affairs Council of Oregon.

State Civic Engagement Conference

The state's first Civic Engagement Conference was held in Salem in early 2007, and is now held biannually. Attendance at the October 2009 conference was five times higher than the first. More than 600 representatives from diverse groups of organizations who are successful in building collaborative partnerships through open communication and dialogue, participated. In addition, educators and volunteer administrators added to the rich discussion by exploring ways to link their programs more closely with the wider community. The 2011 conference is scheduled for November 3-5 in Salem, Oregon.

Civic Engagement Curriculum

A Civic Engagement curriculum for AmeriCorps members and the organizations in which they serve was developed by the Commission and is utilized across the state. The curriculum focuses on the federal Bill of Rights and provides an overview of some of the civil rights issues in our nation's history. In the future, we would like to share this curriculum with others outside the AmeriCorps program family.

Varsity Volunteer Program

Oregon Volunteers is working with students, schools, and organizations throughout the state to develop a Varsity Volunteer Program for Oregon high schools. The goals of the program are to help students make volunteering a part of their lives, provide support and recognition for student volunteers, and give students the means to translate volunteer efforts into successful job and college applications. Participation in the program will be optional for high schools and students across the state.