

Volunteer Program Fact Sheet



Oregon Volunteers Volunteer Program

From the date of our formation in 1994, promoting and supporting volunteerism has been the driving force behind our programming. For the period from 1994-2001, our efforts to strengthen volunteerism focused on utilizing AmeriCorps members to facilitate community projects in which local residents could become engaged. In the 2001 legislative session, Oregon Volunteers was given legislative authority to support achievement of Oregon Shines Benchmark 30, one of two civic engagement benchmarks still measured by the Office of the Secretary of State. In 2007, the Oregon legislature passed the Oregon Volunteerism and Service Act, assigning statutory responsibility for Oregon Volunteers for strengthening volunteerism across the state and providing a bi-annual report to the legislature on the volunteer sector at the beginning of each legislative session.

Commission's Volunteer Program Goal

More Oregon residents are mobilized to meet local needs identified by communities.

Current Programs

The assigned responsibility for Oregon Shines Benchmark 30 led to the development of the Oregon State Plan for Volunteerism, which is the Commission's blueprint for the Volunteer Program. The Plan resulted from a series of surveys to and statewide focus groups with volunteers and volunteer program coordinators to identify their needs for support. The following needs were identified:

- professional development for volunteer managers
- a statewide volunteerism conference
- regional training & networking for volunteer managers
- statewide volunteer recognition
- volunteerism website serving the state
- network for volunteer managers
- statewide clearinghouse for information
- information on training and resources on volunteering opportunities available to staff
- promotion of service through advocacy
- publicity through a media campaign (with corporations, communities and governments)

Using this information, Oregon Volunteers developed the Oregon Plan for Volunteerism. The plan identified the following priorities:

1. Promote national and community service.
2. Build a statewide infrastructure to support volunteerism.

Our Programs

Statewide Volunteer Recognition Program: In 2006, Oregon Volunteers sponsored the first Governor's Volunteer Awards event since 1992. Regional and statewide winners in six categories were honored at an annual luncheon attended by more than 200 people. Since then, the recognition program has flourished and in 2010 the Governor's Volunteer Awards honored 30 regional and statewide outstanding volunteers and volunteer programs in eight categories as well as welcomed nearly 500 attendees to the event.

State Committee on Volunteerism: The state committee on volunteerism is composed of representatives from volunteer centers, volunteer administrators' organizations, statewide nonprofit organizations utilizing volunteers, local, state and federal government volunteer coordinators, as well as representatives from education and other faith- and community-based organizations. Committee members are selected through an application process and appointed to 2-year terms by the Commission Chair. The committee focuses its work through work groups responsible for three areas: recognition, training, and promotion. These work groups drive the implementation of the State Plan for Volunteerism.

Online Resources for Volunteer Managers: Oregon Volunteers developed and now maintains a website of resources for volunteers and volunteer managers: <http://www.oregonvolunteers.org>

Oregon Network of Volunteer Centers: Oregon's certified Volunteer Centers did not have a mechanism for collaboration until 2005, when they came together in support of the State Committee on Volunteerism. As a result of those early meetings, Oregon Volunteers has served as a resource and support for the development of a statewide network. The network provides training and technical assistance to current volunteer centers and serves as the resource to new volunteer centers in formation. Since its inception, we have been successful in developing two additional volunteer centers, bringing the state's total to six, with another in early stages of development.

State Agency Volunteer Managers' Network: In 2007, in response to requests from state agency volunteer coordinators, we began convening quarterly meetings to which volunteer managers in state agencies are invited. Historically, these positions lacked mechanism for interaction. This network provides opportunities for sharing best practices, training and networking to a previously under-served group of volunteer management professionals.

Volunteer Management Training: More than 30 volunteer management professionals have been trained to deliver Volunteer Management 101 training in Oregon. Currently, the Training and Technical Assistance Work Group of the State Committee on Volunteerism is working to expand the current curriculum and add a Volunteer Management 201 curriculum as well as a trainer certification process. The program uses a volunteer management trainer certification process and nationally renowned training curriculum. The Training and Technical Assistance Work Group of the State Committee on Volunteerism is working to expand the curriculum.

Oregon Forum on Volunteerism: Beginning in 2006, Oregon Volunteers presents an annual Forum on Volunteerism for volunteer administrators and leadership volunteers to review new statewide data on volunteerism and trends in volunteering, and to hold discussions on next steps in strengthening volunteerism statewide.

Online Volunteer Database: We have completed research and planning for a statewide online portal that will allow people to search for volunteer opportunities from our website. We are currently pursuing implementation funding to support public, private and non-profit organizations that utilize volunteers.