

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Volunteer Maine
Maine Commission for Community Service

2024 **Annual Report**



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Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service
A Stronger Maine Through Volunteerism



January 31, 2025

To the 132nd Maine State Legislature,

It is my honor to submit the 2024 Maine Commission for Community Service (Volunteer Maine) Annual Report on behalf of the 23 governor-appointed Commission members. The report provides you with an overview of the Commission’s work and the volunteers who have contributed their time, leadership, and expertise for the benefit of Maine’s people.

In 2024, Volunteer Maine delivered almost \$2.3 million in grants and contracts that directly benefit communities across the state. In addition, the Commission launched the Maine Service Fellows, the Maine Climate Corps Network, and awarded the single year allocation of state funds for a Maine Climate Corps program. Through increased funding for volunteer initiatives and efforts to support youth service programs, we expanded our focus on fostering community resilience, workforce development, and climate action.

During this Legislative session, Volunteer Maine will transition from the Department of Education to the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA). MOCA’s purpose is to foster communication and partnerships between the state and Maine’s municipalities to better plan for challenges, pursue solutions, and create stronger, more resilient communities. This is a perfect fit for the commission’s mission to foster community service and volunteerism as a means of meeting critical human, environmental, education, and public safety needs.

I wish to express my deep gratitude for the service of Maryalice Crofton, who has led the Commission for thirty years. She has announced that she will be retiring on March 28, 2025. Because of her leadership and hard work, Volunteer Maine has successfully executed its mission, managed Federal grants responsibly, and expanded opportunities for volunteers and service throughout Maine. Please join us on the morning of March 13, 2025, for our annual Hall of Flags day, where we will host a commitment to service ceremony for new AmeriCorps members and a celebration of Maryalice’s invaluable term of service.

We are thankful for your continued support of volunteerism and community service in your districts and throughout the State of Maine. This support makes our communities more robust, safe, and healthier for all our citizens.

Respectfully yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke C. Shorty".

Luke C. Shorty
Volunteer Maine, Chair

About Us

The Maine Commission for Community Service, is the state service commission. It was established in 1994 and its mission, duties, and programs are described in 5 MRSA CH. 373 §7501 et seq. On October 16, 2019, the Maine Commission for Community Service adopted Volunteer Maine as its new public identity.

Mission

The Commission builds capacity and sustainability in Maine’s volunteer and service communities by funding programs, developing managers of volunteers, raising awareness of sector issues, and promoting service as a strategy.

Vision

We envision a Maine where vibrant and resilient communities thrive through the transformative power of service. Citizens of all ages and backgrounds are engaged in creating opportunities and working together to build a stronger future.

Our Values

The Maine Commission for Community Service is grounded in the belief that service is transformative. It builds bridges, strengthens communities, and fosters personal growth.

We are committed to the following principles:

Service is a Community-Building Strategy

Service harnesses the energy of individuals to create collective benefits, building a shared sense of identity and purpose within and across communities.

Service is a Problem-Solving Strategy

Service complements the work of full-time professionals by leveraging the unique contributions of volunteers to address local, state, national, and global challenges.

Service is a Benefit to Well-being and Personal Growth

Service cultivates skills, mutual understanding, empathy, and lifelong habits of civic responsibility while contributing to improved well-being and resilience for those who serve.

Service is a Force for Shared Understanding

Service brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences, creating opportunities for shared understanding and collaboration.

Service is a Means of Expanding Resources

Service pools efforts and resources, increasing the likelihood of achieving tangible and impactful outcomes.

Service is a Foundation of Social Connection

Service builds meaningful relationships, a sense of mattering, and a shared purpose, which in turn fosters stronger and more resilient communities.

We Serve



Managers of
volunteers



Organizations
seeking to engage
volunteers



Maine
grantees



Agencies seeking to
develop national
service programs



Meet the Commissioners

The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to serve 3-year terms. Members are a diverse, bipartisan group of citizens, actively engaged in community service, and represent every region of the state. The board seats are designated in statute. Each person represents a facet of Maine’s volunteer service sector.

Luke Shorty, Winthrop Chair Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives, Thomas College	Susan Cheesman, Concord, NH Senior Portfolio Manager AmeriCorps Northeast Region Office	Thomas Meuser, Ph.D., Portland Clinical Psychologist, Applied Gerontologist, & Social Scientist GeroPsych Maine LLC
Pamela Proulx-Curry, Old Town Chair-elect Executive Director Maine MultiCultural Center	Kelly Day, Westbrook Director of Volunteer Services Catholic Charities Maine	Kelsey Preecs, Augusta Individual Assistance Officer Maine Emergency Management Agency
William Guindon, Jr., Auburn Vice-chair Mass Care Coordinator Maine Emergency Management Agency	Chelsey Fortin-Trimble, Winslow Associate Commissioner of Policy and Programs Maine Department of Education	Betsy Sawyer-Manter, Portland President and CEO SeniorsPlus
Jenifer Tilton-Flood, Clinton Immediate Past Chair Dairy Farmer Flood Brothers Farm LLC	Jacinda Goodwin, Winslow Program Specialist SERVE Center - North Carolina	Julia Van Steenberghe, Old Town Recruitment and Engagement Specialist Graduate School of Business University of Maine
Scott Adams, Saco President APWU Local 458	Ninette Irabaruta, Yarmouth Senior Director Community Engagement United Way of Southern Maine	Tade Sullivan, Blue Hill CEO/Executive Director Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Maine
F. Celeste Branham, Brunswick VP for Student and Community Services (retired) University of Maine Farmington	Ruben Torres, Portland Communications and Policy Manager Maine Immigrants Rights Center	
Jennifer Burke, Biddeford Assistant VP Communications and Outreach Maine Credit Union League	Diane Lebson, Camden CEO and Co-Founder Evergreen Philanthropic Solutions	Matthew Williams, Ellsworth City Planner City of Ellsworth
	Janet May, Bangor Coordinator of Transition and Adults Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies University of Maine	Michael Williams, Greenbush County Manager Piscataquis County

Commisioners Completing Service

The Commission is grateful to board members completing service:

Gary Dugal, Winslow
Julia Fiori, Portland
Becky Hayes-Boober, Rockport
Will Sedlack, Scarborough
Susan Wiggin, Portland



Volunteers

The Commission involves community members as volunteers on its advisory committees, grant selection task force, grant peer review, and trainers. Their contributions help Volunteer Maine extend its internal capacity.

With appreciation, we recognize:

Michael Moran	Eddie Greyfox Burgess
Abigail Henry	Mary Brayall-Jacobs
Mark Benjamin	Kerry Smart
Kate Klibansky	Shawn Lewin
Stacie Haines	Lisa Reed
Ivan Fernandez	Trisha Mason
Nathan Robbins	Rachel Gallo
Kristen Grant	Emilie Swenson
Rep. Morgan Rielly	Laney Brown
Lisa Morin	Shannon Landwehr
Veronica Kupferman	Kelly Thayer
Alsina Brenenstuhl	Ninette Irabaruta
Anne Louise Rice	Anna Guest
Jay Kuder	Diane Tennes
Tiffany North	Cory Long
Ben Levek	David Gogel
Heather Blackwell	Karin Conn

Regular Staff

Maryalice Crofton Executive Director
Michael Ashmore Program Development and Training Officer
Jamie McFaul Grant Officer
Tilan Copson Public Information Officer

Short-term Staff

Kirsten Brewer Maine Climate Corps Coordinator
Kofi Bofah Financial Assistant
Jake Hurner Maine Service Fellows Coordinator
Nathan McIvor Office Administrator
Colin Marquis-Boutin Summer Intern, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center
May Whelan Summer Intern, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center

Training and Technical Assistance

The Commission serves managers and leaders of volunteer programs, Maine civilian national service grant staff, public and private nonprofit organizations seeking to strengthen volunteer engagement, as well as organizations and agencies seeking to develop service programs.

The goal of all technical assistance and training is to impact the capacity, sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency of Maine’s volunteer sector.

134

Members of the Maine Volunteer Managers Network, which holds monthly meetings for leaders around the state — sessions combine peer advising, guest speakers, and training

170

Volunteer Leadership Conference attendees learned about program evaluation, risk management, youth mental health, and engaging people with disabilities in volunteer roles

388

Number of individual participants who received direct training and technical assistance from Volunteer Maine staff

52

Community organizations received multi-session technical assistance aimed at increasing their ability to effectively engage volunteers



Certificate in Management of Volunteers

Updated in 2024, this course is designed for everyone responsible for planning, designing, implementing, or sponsoring volunteer programs. The 30-hour course runs for 6 weeks, is offered at least twice each year and is based on the Novice Competencies for Managers of Volunteers.

11

Certificates awarded
Individuals register, participate in a course orientation, and then work at their own pace through the six modules.

Micro-credential: Introductory Volunteer Management

The Commission developed an online microcredential in basic volunteer management principles in partnership University of Maine Cooperative Extension. This entry level course is for people who find themselves responsible for leading volunteers but have no human resource background. Since launched in 2023, enrollment in the credential has increased.

24

Micro-badges awarded
Learners earn micro-badges for each level and a micro-credential once all three levels are completed.

90

Pursuing microcredential (enrolled)
Open to working professionals, volunteer leaders, students or other interested community members.

Maine Service Enterprise Cohort Training

Volunteer Maine is the statewide license holder and partner with Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement (ALIVE) on implementation of Service Enterprise (SE), a planning and organizational change process through which local public and nonprofit service providers engage the public in skilled volunteer positions. Unlike training for staff of volunteer programs, SE requires involvement of the chief executive, board members, and senior leadership because the core question is how volunteers can help the agency achieve its strategic goals more effectively and efficiently.

12

Participants representing agency leadership

30

Hours of individual agency consulting

20

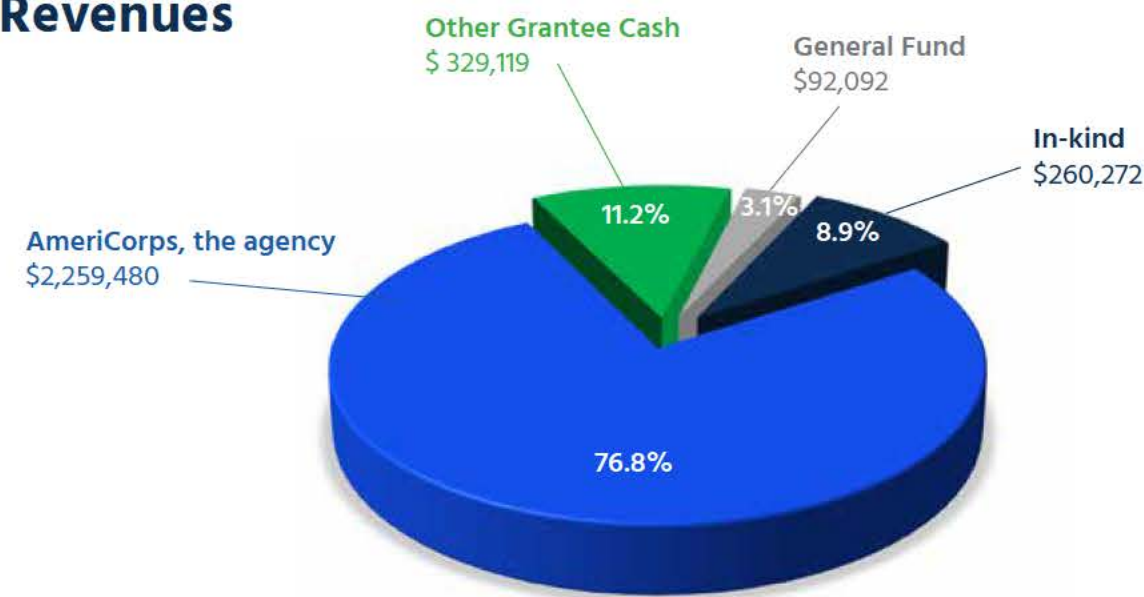
Hours of Service Enterprise training

2

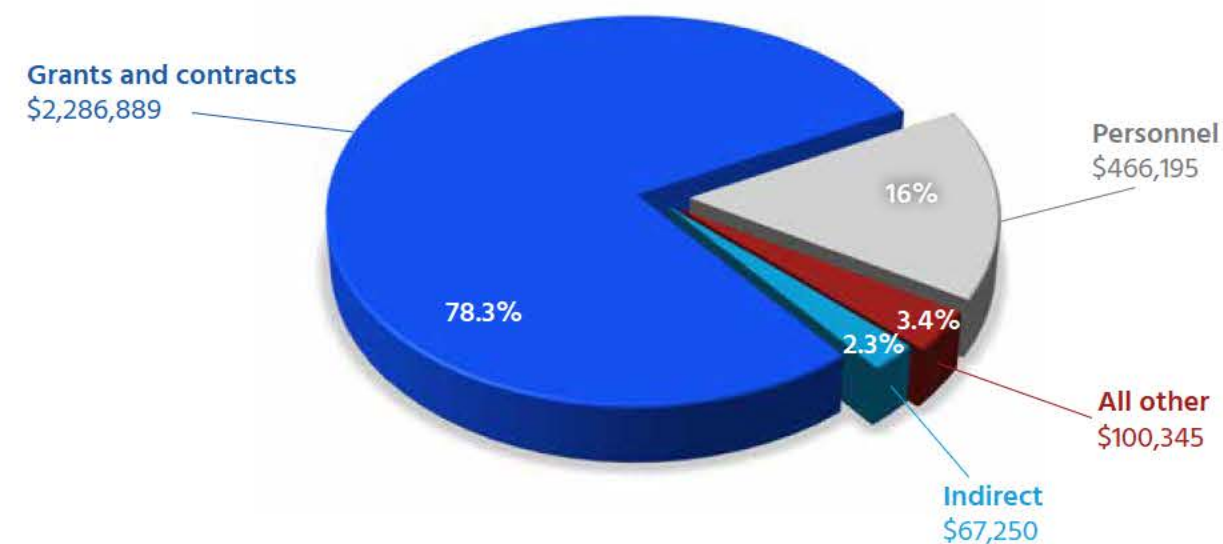
Agencies completed requirements for certification, 2 more pending

Fundamentals and Finances

2024 Revenues



2024 Expenses



Note: This data is for visualization puposes only and is not the Commission’s official financial statement.

Resources

Funding Sources

- ✓ Federal funds from AmeriCorps, the federal agency
- ✓ In-kind donations of services, space, and supplies
- ✓ Registration and fees for training courses, and conferences
- ✓ Private sector funding, sponsorship of events, grants, etc.
- ✓ State of Maine General Fund

Maine Volunteer Foundation

Founded in 2015, The Maine Volunteer Foundation (MVF) is the private nonprofit partner of Volunteer Maine. The Foundation identifies and secures private and philanthropic resources that can be used by Volunteer Maine to expand is mission throughout the state of Maine.



Commission Assets

Maine’s statewide focus on volunteerism	AmeriCorps alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors	Knowledge, thought leadership and innovation	Volunteer manager training and capacity building	Skill in convening diverse stakeholders	Certified trainers and technical assistance capability

Maine Service Fellows

The Maine Service Fellows program was established to help rural communities by assigning someone to devote full-time effort to a critical need. It recognizes that some communities do not have the municipal or nonprofit staff available to research solutions, secure resources, and manage a project. These programs attract and retain people with a passion for public services and increase opportunities for recent college graduates to learn new skills to make a difference.



Community partnerships submit workplans that address needs related to housing, workforce development, climate action, substance use prevention and recovery, public health including mental health and COVID-19 recovery. Eligible communities are in Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington. Towns in Penobscot County that are outside the Greater Bangor region and have populations under 5,000 are also eligible.

Funding for the Maine Service Fellows in 2024 came from the Maine Volunteer Foundation and a one-time allocation from the state. A new award through Resilient Maine, a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, will support five positions in 2025. Fellows will assist towns and municipalities with developing and/or implementing their Community Resilience Plans (CRP).

Sam Gilbert: Addressing Energy Efficiency for Homeowners

Sam Gilbert, highlighted in the 2023 Annual Report finished his term of service in 2024 with the Sipayik Resilience Committee, a community group focused on climate action and resilience serving the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik. His assignment was focused on energy efficiency for homeowners. Upon completion of service, Sam was grateful for the opportunity to help his community by improving their energy literacy. He shared, “It was a rewarding experience to see my community and neighboring communities work together to help each other. I used to count on just myself, but now I see we can get more accomplished if we work together as a team.” Upon completion of his service, Sam had a new-found interest in energy efficiency and weatherization and pursued technical training to receive certifications and licensure to conduct energy audits. He has an interest in serving his local community as an entrepreneur.

James Fagan: Building Climate Resilience

James Fagan completed a year of service as a Maine Service Fellow in Dover-Foxcroft, tasked with advancing climate action and resiliency efforts.

Fagan, who has lived in the area most of his life, served as an Energy Collaborative Climate Fellow, where he worked with the Commons Energy Collaborative, the Climate Action Advisory Committee, and Maine Highlands Window Dressers. His work included planning policy for heating and cooling centers, presenting to the town select board, recruiting volunteers, and hosting workshops on community resilience. Reflecting on his experience, Fagan emphasized the importance of including youth in leadership roles, stating, “Programs like the Maine Service Fellows are vital for engaging often-overlooked groups in decision-making and community-building.”

At the December 2024 Volunteer Maine Board of Commissioners meeting, Fagan was presented with a \$5,349 education award by John Portela, President of the Maine Volunteer Foundation, in recognition of his contributions. James Fagan will renew his service and continue as a Fellow for the 2025 service year with Dover-Foxcroft.



John Portela (left) and Luke Shorty (right) present education award to James Fagan (middle).

Gianluca De Rosas: Engaging and Educating Community



Gianluca De Rosas stands outside polls in November to talk to residents about their climate resilience vision for Norway.

Gianluca De Rosas began as a Maine Service Fellow in August of 2024. De Rosas is working in the town of Norway with the Center for an Ecology-based Economy (CEBE) addressing regional volunteer capacity and coordinating community climate groups and municipal resilience committees.

So far, he has planned and facilitated over ten different climate workshops and community engagement processes as part of the Community Resilience Partnership, the Norway Climate Action Plan, and the CEBE-A Climate to Thrive.

Maine Service Fellows gain valuable hands-on experience as De Rosas experience illustrates. He says, “This fellowships has shown me a transformative learning experience. I’ve worked closely with municipalities to enroll in Maine’s Community Resilience Partnership, facilitating public meetings, helping prioritize projects, and securing funding through grant writing. Leading the planning and writing of Norway’s Climate Action Plan has taught me how to integrate climate research, community input, and equity-based solutions to address resilience challenges.” De Rosas will finish his term in June of 2025.

Maine Climate Corps Network

The Commission manages the Maine Climate Corps Network (MCCN) which includes twelve service programs focused on community resilience, energy conservation, land and water preservation, housing, and resilience planning. All network programs contribute to the goals of the state’s four-year climate action plan, provide individuals with experiences that prepare them for careers, and engage the community in their activities.

Network members

AmeriCorps Resilience Corps	Maine Service Fellows
Augusta Teen Center	Muskie School of Public Service at the
Campus Climate Action Corps (Maine Sites)	University of Southern Maine
Downeast Community Partners Climate Corps	Thompson Lake Environmental Association:
Friends of Cobboosee Watershed Youth	LakeSmart Youth Conservation Corps
Conservation Corps	WindowDressers Community Build Program
Island Institute Fellows Program	Working Lands Climate Corps
Maine Conservation Corps	

Program Development and Support

Maine’s Climate Corps is both a network of community programs and programs funded by the Commission. The service programs tackle the consequences of climate change in Maine through nature-based solutions, community education and demonstration projects, improved tools such as maps and models, and increased local capacity and resilience.

Two examples are operated by the Maine Conservation Corps. Tree Stewards lead municipal forestry projects. Shore Corps Stewards help coastal towns deal with the impacts of ocean storm damage.

Through leadership and brokering partnerships with agencies at all levels, the Commission nurtured the growth of the MCCN and worked to connect programs with financial support.

- In 2024, the Commission helped secure funding to support various network program activities.
- Maine Conservation Corps accessed over \$1.1 million to support new Community Tree Steward placements contributing to workforce development, community resiliency, and local forestry goals.
 - AmeriCorps Resilience Corps accessed \$300,000 to address energy insecurity and climate adaptation for underserved populations in Maine.
 - Secured \$12,000 to support service member training that will increase employability in municipal positions. The funds will be shared among the programs in the Maine Climate Corps Network. This is part of a collaboration between the Commission, the Service Year Exchange, and Maine Municipal Association.

Network programs reported multiple successes in 2024



- ✓ Maine Conservation Corps welcomed the first Community Tree Steward of 2024 in March, Matt Glavin. He collaborates with city personnel and community groups to lead urban forestry management projects at a municipal scale.
- ✓ WindowDressers had twenty-six builds in the state of Maine. These accounted for more than half of the builds across their service area of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.
- ✓ In Spring of 2024, the Augusta Teen Center, Friends of the Cobboosee Watershed Youth Conservation Corps, and the Thompson Lake Environmental Association Youth Conservation Corps received grants to implement environmental corps programming for youth under the age of 18.

American Climate Corps Visits Maine on National Tour



In September the Commission hosted delegates from the American Climate Corps (ACC). Their visit began at Popham Beach to learn about ongoing ecological and sustainability challenges in the area, followed by a policy roundtable with network members. The following day, the group was welcomed by Portland Mayor Mark Dion before embarking on a tour of projects hosted by the Greater Portland Council of Governments, Portland Maine Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department, the City of Portland Sustainability Office, and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. The visit ended with a discussion with Maine-based Service Fellows and AmeriCorps members.

Youth Climate Corps Small Grants

In the Spring of 2024, three organizations received grants to implement corps programming for youth under age 18 in the land and freshwater preservation focus area. Two of the grantees listed here are Youth Conservation Corps.

Maine has an impressive tradition of Youth Conservation Corps, primarily sponsored by lake associations and watershed organizations, in partnership with the Bureau of Parks and Land. These programs were previously funded through state and federal programs. When funding ended, communities continued to privately fund the efforts because of their value and impact.

3,037

Feet of shoreline YCC members protected through engaged outreach

59

Projects completed and property owners educated on further protection measures

7

Miles of unsafe or hazardous recreational trails cleaned and repaired

144

Number of youth who carried out projects they planned

An important age group to support, youth under 17 are not eligible for AmeriCorps programs, though the age group is highly motivated to take action on climate issues.

Augusta Teen Center Summer of Service
Funding: \$10,000
The Augusta Teen Center’s Edge program for justice-impacted youth focuses on programing for teens to access the wider world of work. During the Summer of Service, teens traveled on Mondays to local natural areas (including a community garden) to support natural resource staff on projects such as trail building and repair, gardening, clearing invasive species, etc. The program began in May with the growing season, (after-school), continued as a full day program in the summer, and continued through the last frost after-school. In past years they had to limit participation, but this additional funding allowed up to 40 youth to participate because funds expanded transportation to service sites.

Friends of the Cobbosee Watershed Youth Conservation Corps
Funding: \$10,000
FoCW YCC completed shoreline erosion control projects on lakefront property in the Cobbossee Watershed. This is a long-standing program, a legacy of past federal Youth Conservation Corps and Maine Conservation Corps programs. Ten high-school aged youth completed shoreline erosion projects; this year they dealt with significant storm damage after the winter storms. Members served 30 hours per week for eight weeks.

Thompson Lake Environmental Association Youth Conservation Corps
Funding: \$10,000
TLEA YCC completed projects on lakefront property in the Thompson Lake Watershed. This is a long-standing program, a legacy of past federal Youth Conservation Corps programming. Three high-school aged youth completed 25 shoreline erosion projects. Members served 35 hours a week for eight weeks.



Youth Service Grant Partnership Grants

Hardy Girls
Funding: \$500
Building skills in developing school-community partnerships, creating coalitions, recruiting volunteers, and educating members of the public.

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area
Funding: \$1,500
Addressed youth mental health, and helped highlight the importance of “mattering” as a protective factor.

Lincoln County YMCA
Funding: \$600
Promoted community intergenerational connections and conversations using monthly community meals as a meeting place.

SPACE on the River
Funding: \$1,500
Promoted recycling by community residents through projects that included a 64 square foot mural marking the recycling center at their town transfer station.

Teens to Trails
Funding: \$200
Work with schools to build meaningful relationships between students, caring adults, and the natural world by sharing time together outdoors.

United Church of Christ Belfast
Funding: \$1,500
Youth aged 6-13 amplified the values of Dr. King’s Beloved Community through messages about actions that promote peace, unity, respect, kindness, and justice. The action messages were distributed and a community meal was held.

Recovery Voices Kennebec
Funding: \$1,500
Supported a community youth action day and Naloxone training for youth. Outreach materials in Farsi and Arabic were also distributed to reach all youth in the community.

Recovery Voices Penobscot
Funding: \$1,500
Created a Narcan training curriculum for youth and engaged peers outside the caucus in the development. Used the curriculum at 3 community trainings for youth. Curriculum also used by the Kennebec RV caucus.

Recovery Voices Washington
Funding: \$1,500
Researched, built, and stocked a mini-library with content themes centered around mental health, climate endangerment, and human rights.



Since 1994,
more than
7,600
Maine
residents
have served
approximately
11 million
hours
and earned
education awards
totaling over
\$26.8
million



Commitment to service ceremony in 2024 at the Blaine House.

As part of the nationwide 30-year celebration of contributions made by the millions of AmeriCorps members, Volunteer Maine hosted an anniversary celebration at the Blaine House on September 27th. The event brought together recent Maine AmeriCorps members for a commitment to service and pledge ceremony.

AmeriCorps alumni Clare Davitt, Deputy Director of Constituent Services for the Secretary of State and Jeff McCabe, Director of Maine's Office of Outdoor Recreation, led the commitment to service ceremony.



Then Governor, now Senator Angus King, swears in the first group of AmeriCorps members in 1994 at the Blaine House.

Volunteering Research Data

The Volunteering and Civic Life in America (VCLA) research released on November 19, 2024 is based on a survey conducted by AmeriCorps and the US Census every other year and includes data on formal volunteering, informal helping, and other civic behaviors that indicate how Americans make a difference in their communities and promote the common good. This new research, based on 2023 data, provides an update over previously reported 2021 data.

State-level trends

The state's formal volunteer rate, or the percentage of residents engaged in volunteer activities through an organization or association, has been consistently higher than the national average. Maine's volunteer rate is reported to be 34.9 percent, compared to the national rate of 28.3 percent. The value of volunteer time in Maine in 2024 is estimated to be \$30.55 per hour.

The consistently higher than national rate of volunteering in Maine held throughout the pandemic, when Maine saw less than a percentage point decrease compared to a national decrease of almost 7 percent.

407,511

**Number of residents who
volunteered formally**

25,886,941

Total volunteer hours

\$790.8
million

Economic value contributed

Maine ranks 10th in informal volunteering according to data

703,000

**Residents helped
their neighbors
informally**

More than 703,000 residents volunteered informally, helping neighbors and exchanging favors with each other. This rate of informal volunteering ranks Maine in the top ten in the nation. Research showed more than 62 percent of Mainers informally helped friends, neighbors, or community members at least once a month – an increase of over 5 percent from the last report. This speaks of the significant and impactful ways in which people assist each other in their day-to-day lives within communities across the state, from watching kids, to running errands, or lending a helping hand.

AmeriCorps Planning Grants

Volunteer Maine awards 10-month planning grants so community groups and their partners have the the resources, technical assistance, and support to develop a “shovel-ready” AmeriCorps State program that can be proposed for operating funds in a future Maine AmeriCorps grant competition.

During the planning period, the grantee devotes personnel to training and completing tasks that:

- Clarify the scope and impact of the critical issue affecting their community.
- Research and identify an evidence-based service response to the issue, one that can be implemented by AmeriCorps members and the community volunteers they recruit.
- Develop an operation model to deliver the services effectively.
- Establish effective partnerships to connect with community beneficiaries and acquire needed human, financial, and other resources.
- Develop the human resource policies, systems, and management procedures required to recruit, select, onboard, supervise, evaluate, train, and record accomplishments of both AmeriCorps members and community volunteers.
- Develop data collection systems that will be used for reporting, learning, and continuous improvement.
- Prepare to integrate AmeriCorps financial management requirements into agency policies and procedures.
- Educate financial, human resource, senior leadership, and relevant organizational staff about AmeriCorps grant provisions, regulations, and resources available for new grantees.

Throughout the planning grant, the lead planner and their team members participate in Commission trainings, reviewing specifics aspects of program planning. The organization must also complete critical tasks between training sessions.



\$178,314

Total funds awarded through AmeriCorps planning grants



Planning grantees create an advisory committee with a variety of community stakeholders, including people who will benefit from the service proposed. The Advisory Committee’s mission is to assist in crafting the overall program design by clarifying program goals, identifying members’ service activities and sites, developing roles, and outlining budget and sources of match funding.



As grantees work through the process, some groups realize they do not have the capacity to implement the program. Capacity issues often relate to lack of a staff person who can bring on a team of new people and provide the training, supervision, and record-keeping. The Commission views this as a positive outcome and encourages the grantee to explore whether a partner has the ability, or whether internal work will lead to a future grant application.

Completed in 2024

Maine Prisoner Re-entry Network, Augusta

The grantee proposed developing a statewide AmeriCorps program to support community reintegration after incarceration and reduced recidivism. Partners included the Department of Corrections, the Department of Labor, the Maine Association of Recovery Residences, the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition, mental health providers, and representatives of formerly incarcerated citizens.

Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle

Haystack Mountain developed a FAB Lab that they proposed to extend throughout Hancock County. The AmeriCorps program would increase access to workshops and training programs in coding, computer-aided design, 3D printing, and robotics for youth and underemployed or unemployed adults. The goal was to enhance the employment prospects of local residents.

A Climate To Thrive, Bar Harbor

The grantee proposed development of a statewide AmeriCorps program with a particular focus on communities identified as disadvantaged by the Justice40 rubric and that have the highest energy burdens. AmeriCorps members would help communities - particularly small, rural ones - address energy and resilience challenges.

2024 Maine AmeriCorps Programs

Volunteer Maine awards grants to operate AmeriCorps programs to public and nonprofit organizations using funds allocated to Maine by the AmeriCorps federal agency. Funding amounts are based on federal budget appropriations for AmeriCorps State and National, with allocations made to each state using a population-based formula. New operational grantees receive 30 hours of direct instruction per agency, training participants in best practices in the management of AmeriCorps service members, finances, and general programming.

Monitoring and Support

Volunteer Maine monitors grantee performance, outcomes and compliance, and ensures benefits eligibility.

Funding Period

AmeriCorps Program grants are awarded for 3 years with the option to compete for another 3-year award.

AmeriCorp State Programs By the Numbers

Of AmeriCorps members serving in Maine 87% were from another state and 13% were from Maine.

\$1,342,770

In-kind and cash leveraged by
AmeriCorps investment

91,650 Hours served by AmeriCorps members

7,257 Hours served by community volunteers

1,223 Number of youth ages 1-17 served

134 Acres of land managed and improved

61

Community
locations and
host sites

107

AmeriCorps
members serving
in the state

578

Number of
Community
volunteers

Maine Resilience Corps

Grantee: Greater Portland Council of Governments

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) hosted 12 AmeriCorps members who enabled increased capacity and impact of municipalities and agencies throughout Cumberland and York Counties, Maine via systems development, project implementation, data collection, planning, outreach and community engagement.

At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members were responsible for increased municipal and regional capacity for community and environmental resilience, with specific focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation. AmeriCorps members also supported environmental stewardship by providing education, outreach, and training to residents in Cumberland and York Counties on climate impacts and vulnerabilities, solutions, and environmentally conscious practices and increasing volunteer recruitment and retention within municipalities and agencies where applicable.

Since 2020, cohorts of Resilience Corps Fellows have served 9- and 11-month terms and added a tremendous amount of capacity to organizations in the region working to make Maine more resilient. While placed in varying roles internally at GPCOG or with external partners, the Resilience Corps Fellows together form a cohort that learns from and with each other – participating in professional development and community service days together, weekly cohort meetings, and are encouraged to share resources, collaborate, and support one another

The AmeriCorps investment of \$276,000 was matched with \$220,142 - \$193,592 in public funding and \$17,950 in private funding.





Skowhegan Outdoor Recreation Program

Grantee: Main Street Skowhegan

Main Street Skowhegan hosted five AmeriCorps members who coordinated and execute no-cost outdoor recreation programming designed to increase physical activity and engagement with nature for local community members in Skowhegan, Maine. At the end of each program year, the AmeriCorps program will have increased participation rates in outdoor recreation programming by 8.8 percent (725 individuals). In addition, the AmeriCorps members leverage an additional 30 volunteers who are engaged in and lead community outdoor recreation programming.

The AmeriCorps investment of \$130,000 was matched with \$43,000 in private funding.



Maine Conservation Corps

Grantee: Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

The Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) hosted 88 AmeriCorps members who gained marketable skills and experiences, while completing vital environmental stewardship and capacity building activities. MCC has two AmeriCorps service options: Environmental Stewards and Field Teams. Team based placements focus on trail rehabilitation and construction as well as habitat restoration; individual placement members engage in host site specific objectives, such as ecological monitoring, environmental education, community engagement, and expanding volunteer management practice. At the end of each program year, the AmeriCorps members are responsible for treating or constructing 200 miles of trail and providing capacity building services to 15 host site agencies. In addition, the AmeriCorps members leveraged 600 community volunteers who were engaged in skill development activities to perpetuate the stewardship efforts of members.

The AmeriCorps investment of \$952,200 leveraged \$1,350,049 - \$962,219 in public funding, and \$387,830 in private funding.



The Game Loft/I Know Me

Grantee: Maine Youth Alliance

The Game Loft is a Maine Rural State program based in Belfast, that hosted four AmeriCorps members who were providing mentoring to RSU #3 students, ages 12 to 15, in Waldo County, using the “I Know ME” curriculum. Each year during the program, the members were responsible for preparing 36 at-risk students for success in the classroom, within their peer groups and beyond the school walls. Additionally, the AmeriCorps members engaged local volunteers in developing new mentoring relationships with the students and developed the host agency’s capacity to better manage volunteers.

The AmeriCorps investment of \$115,200 was matched with \$140,000 in private funding.

*Program finished in 2024.



Trekkers Aspirations

Grantee: Trekkers

The Trekkers mission is to cultivate the inherent strengths of young people through the power of long-term mentoring relationships. It is a unique six-year experiential learning program for students, starting in 7th grade and lasting through 12th grade that connects young people with caring adults. Throughout the school year, teams of up to 20 students meet to plan their annual expedition and participate in activities, such as exploring the outdoors, volunteering, learning about new cultures, and more. Student voice and choice is essential, so every program looks a little different. The AmeriCorps members leveraged an additional 60 community based volunteers who were engaged in mentoring.

The AmeriCorps investment of \$86,400 was matched with \$23,400 in private funding.

*Program finished in 2024.



Program and Event Supporters

The Commission appreciates the support from the following partners and sponsors:

- Alumni TIES, U.S. Department of State
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