



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

2019-2021 STATE SERVICE PLAN

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UNITED WAY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA
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Note: The 2018-2020 State Service Plan is an excerpt of the United Way Association of South Carolina Strategic Plan.

INTRODUCTION

By the Governor's 2007 Executive Order, The United Way Association of South Carolina acts as the governing authority of the South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service (the Commission). The primary function of the Commission is to help to strengthen the impact of National Service programs in South Carolina. The Commission accomplishes this by implementing a competitive and evidence-informed grant review process to determine the best candidates for funding and enforcing strong data collection practices coupled with ongoing program monitoring and evaluation. The Commission is federally-funded by the Corporation on National and Community Service (CNCS), and it is considered the primary *grantee* of AmeriCorps State funds in South Carolina. The Commission allocates its federal funding to *subgrantees* who consist of community nonprofits, educational agencies, faith-based organizations, and governmental agencies. In addition to providing AmeriCorps grant funding and monitoring, it is the duty of the Commission to encourage volunteerism for everyone from youth to seniors to people with disabilities, as well as to promote community-driven solutions for disaster preparedness and response.

The Commission's mission is to improve South Carolina communities through promoting volunteerism and strengthening National Service programs. Our vision is to promote and increase:

- an ethic of service and volunteerism in the state of South Carolina,
- the capacity of faith-based, tribal, and community organizations within the state to better compete for funding opportunities, and
- collaboration among communities and organizations that are trying to meet the greatest needs of the Palmetto State.

STATE SERVICE PLAN BACKGROUND

Federal law provides that State Commissions must prepare a State Service Plan for their state, which:

- is developed through an open and public process,
- covers a three-year period,
- includes measurable goals and outcomes for the state's National Service programs,
- ensures outreach to diverse community-based agencies that serve underrepresented populations,
- provides effective coordination of funding applications submitted by the state and other organizations within the state under the National Service laws,
- is updated annually with a formal and publicly available addendum,
- ensures outreach to, and coordination with, municipalities (including large cities) and county governments regarding the National Service laws, and
- contains information that the Commission considers to be appropriate or as CNCS may require.

In addition, federal law notes that the Commission must work with appropriate state agencies and private entities to develop a comprehensive State Service Plan for service by adults age 55 or older.

DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN

This plan has been developed through an open and public process that provided for maximum participation and input from local non-profit organizations, National Service programs, businesses, elected officials, communities of faith, state agencies, foundations and other interested members of the public. The South Carolina Service Commission will be responsible for updating the progress of this plan on an annual basis through the life of this document.

STRATEGIC SERVICE

According to South Carolina Executive Order (No. 2007-24), the Commission is responsible for:

- Recruiting and mobilizing citizens for volunteer service by identifying service opportunities throughout the state and by recognizing citizens for the contributions they make as volunteers and participants in public service programs,
- Serving as South Carolina's lead agency for community service and volunteerism, informing the public of the value of and need for greater community service and volunteerism in South Carolina, calling upon all South Carolinians to become involved in community service, and challenging public and private institutions to create and support community service and volunteer opportunities, and
- Partnering with other public agencies at the state, county and local levels and with the private and nonprofit sectors to leverage greater resources and create more opportunities for service and volunteerism; and complying with the duties outlined in 45 C.F.R. § 2250.00.

AMERICORPS SOUTH CAROLINA GRANT ADMINISTRATION

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the AmeriCorps State Formula competition is publicly announced to initiate each Commission-run grant competition. All eligible organizations are encouraged to apply. Commission staff and a grant review committee of Commissioners and outside reviewers from diverse geographic locations, professional expertise, and knowledge of National Service programming review all grant applications with a keen eye for priorities and values articulated in this State Service Plan.

It is of the utmost importance that the process of awarding grants to operate National Service programs includes checks and balances in order to remain fair. To the best of its ability, Commission staff and volunteer Commissioners select programs that are suited to make the most impact for our state through a process described below.

Several factors are taken into account when reviewing applications including, but not limited to:

- Geographic location of the program,
- Focus and scope of the proposed program,
- Cost-effectiveness,
- Strength of program model, and
- Program sustainability

The Commission prioritizes funding programs with evidence-based and evidence-informed design. Each applicant submits an application that cites academic research supporting its proposed intervention and theory of change, which points to the program’s broader goal. Grant applicants must develop formal *Performance Measures*, and selected programs report regularly on progress made to meet these goals. Following a program’s initial year of its three-year grant, the Commission encourages the program to refine its approach, processes, and Performance Measures to effectively and sustainably grow their scope of work. Although the Commission values evidence-based program design, it also supports innovation and looks to support nuanced strategies to affect positive change in our communities. Innovative program design must be well-researched, rooted in logic, and based on proven success.

PROGRAMMING PRIORITIES

The South Carolina Service Commission embraces all six focus areas set forth by CNCS for funding priorities of National Service programs – Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Disaster Services. For each focus area, the National Service priority and relevancy to South Carolina have been addressed below and are used by Commissioners and Commission staff to make effective funding decisions.

EDUCATION

National guidelines: CNCS believes that all students can thrive when given the chance. The Corporation abides by a simple strategy: Create the conditions that make children and youth want to learn, and give them the opportunity to achieve. Strategies that help students learn include extended-day and school-year programs, tutoring, mentoring, family involvement, and teacher support. They also involve service-learning opportunities that give students the chance to experience meaningful lessons that teach them about their world inside and outside the school’s classrooms or campus. Rigorous independent evaluations have demonstrated that CNCS programs: improve school readiness, increase reading and math achievement, improve school attendance and behavior, and increase access to college and careers.¹

South Carolina relevancy: According to the U.S. News and World Report’s 2017 “Best States for Education” study, South Carolina ranked 50th in the nation in the state’s K-12 educational outcomes.² The study focused on 11 categories to score public education systems. Some notable categories of low rank include:

¹ Corporation on National and Community Service. “Focus areas: Education.” Accessed from <<http://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/education>>

² Pan, Deanna. “South Carolina ranks last in education in U.S. News & World Report study.” Post and Courier. 1 Mar 2017. Accessed from <https://www.postandcourier.com/news/south-carolina-ranks-last-in-education-in-u-s-news/article_5a7d26c8-fe9d-11e6-9644-2bab813ed6f7.html>

CATEGORY	RANK (OUT OF 50)
Preschool Enrollment	43
Math and Reading Scores	40
College Readiness (based on the ACT)	48
Two-Year College Graduation Rate	48
Affordability of In-State Tuition Fees	43

Table 1. South Carolina’s rank among all 50 states in key areas of quantifiable education outcomes.²

Working in conjunction with the Governor’s Office, the South Carolina Department of Education has made it a priority to graduate students with world class knowledge, skills and strong character traits. AmeriCorps funding is an excellent resource that can be leveraged to assist the State’s goal of not only improving academic achievement, but also to support the development of life skills and strong character traits.

Commission approach: Educational-focused AmeriCorps programs in South Carolina have been effective in meeting the national and statewide goals by bringing expanded interventions to underserved communities. The Commission will continue to rely heavily upon educational research and state government goals to determine funding priorities within this programming area and strive for innovation consistent with leading academic research.

Bodies of research support programming with the following foci:

- reading on grade level by third grade,
- implementing mentoring and tutoring programs, and
- increasing after-school opportunities.
- kindergarten readiness

The SC Service Commission references these focus areas in conjunction with data on school performance by district as well as poverty data by county to identify where federal funding would be the most effective in our State. Based on ongoing research that proves the need and success of AmeriCorps programs in these areas, the **Commission will continue to focus on two main educational program models in its funding decisions: early educational interventions and mentoring programs.**

Research by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, originally published in 2011 and updated with increased evidence in 2012 and 2013, found that “students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma than proficient readers.”³ Third grade reading proficiency

³ Annie E. Casey Foundation. “Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters.” 2013. Accessed from <<https://ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/policy/special-report-executive-summary>>

remains a significant milestone in a student’s educational and life trajectory. According to the National School Boards Association, this is the point when students transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*.³ Without the fundamental skill, students play catchup with their peers. This leads to lower educational outcomes, deleterious social and psychological effects, and ultimately lower graduation rates and earning potentials.³

Along with poor outcomes for the students, research indicates that student retention causes financial burden for school districts. Brookings Institute calculated a national average cost of \$10,700 per retained student per year.⁴ The Read to Succeed Act was passed in South Carolina in June of 2014, and it requires schools to retain third graders who failed to demonstrate reading proficiency on the 2017-2018 school year State Summative Reading Assessment.⁵ In the first year of retentions alone, 4059 students—one out of every fifteen students—scored low enough to be held back in the third grade in South Carolina.⁶ However, after considering other factors in the students’ academic success and with the Act’s built-in long list of exemptions, only 354 students were held back for the start of the 2018-2019 school year.⁷ According to the South Carolina Department of Education, rates of third graders who face being held back due to reading test scores were highest in Jasper (17.4%), Allendale (18.3%), Barnwell (17%), Florence District 4 (23.1%), and Lexington District 4 (19.1%) school districts.

Poverty and race also compound issues of education. Students who have lived in poverty are three times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate than their more affluent peers.⁸ A national study assessing student outcomes, which used free and reduced-priced lunches as a proxy for family income, found that students who receive subsidized lunches achieved just a 21 percent reading proficiency by grade three.⁹ Students not on this income-based program achieved 52 percent reading proficiency by the same time.⁹ Further, the same study indicated that African American and Latino students were far more likely to test at *non-proficient* standards compared to their Caucasian peers. Over 82 percent of African American third graders and 79 percent of Latino students displayed non-proficient mastery of reading comprehension by third grade, while less than 60 percent of South Carolina’s white students in public schools test below proficient standards.⁹ A multitude of studies recommend implementing early-grade literacy programming that aligns with grade-level standards, focuses on the developmental and health needs of young students, and provides work-training and other programs that will help lift families out of poverty. Based on this growing body of evidence-based research, the ongoing struggle of South Carolina’s education system, and the evidence that shows a strong socioeconomic and racial divide of education outcomes in the state, the

⁴ West, Martin R. “Is retaining students in early grades self-defeating?” 16 Aug 2012. Brookings Institute. Accessed from <<https://www.brookings.edu/research/is-retaining-students-in-the-early-grades-self-defeating/>>

⁵ South Carolina General Assembly 120th Session 2013-2014. *Read to Succeed Act*. A284, R313, S516. Signed 11 June 2014. Accessed from <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120_2013-2014/bills/516.htm>

⁶ Bowers, Paul. “Up to 4,000 SC third-graders could be held back for failing reading test.” 22 June 2018. Post and Courier. Accessed from <https://www.postandcourier.com/news/up-to-sc-third-graders-could-be-held-back-for/article_fdd378ec-73c5-11e8-910e-8b151b3166a2.html>

⁷ Bowers, Paul. “South Carolina spent \$214 million on child literacy. It didn’t work.” 8 Sep 2018. Post and Courier. Accessed from <https://www.postandcourier.com/news/south-carolina-spent-million-on-child-literacy-it-didn-t/article_9cac411e-aa1d-11e8-b1e9-c3c96397b663.html>

⁸ Lowe Vandell, Deborah. “Expanding learning & afterschool: opportunities for student success.” 2015. University of California Irvine. Accessed from <<http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/The%20Achievement%20Gap%20is%20Real.pdf>>

⁹ Yow, Dana. “2018 Statistics.” South Carolina Education Oversight Committee. Document sent over email.

Commission intends to continue its support programs that are focused on early grade reading, particularly in high-poverty areas.

The National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University supports Mentoring and Tutoring as an effective strategy in preventing dropouts.¹⁰ Mentoring breaks institutional boundaries within communities and allows mentee’s greater access to opportunities through relationship building. Most mentoring programs have a variety of concurrent goals such as:

- Increasing student academic achievement,
- Increasing graduation rates,
- Improving self-esteem,
- Reducing chronic school attendance and truancy,
- Encouraging community service,
- Securing entry-level jobs, and
- Decreasing disciplinary referrals.

Although strategies and program models vary significantly, the National Mentoring Partnership has created evidence-based tools for designing, operating and evaluating effective programming. The Commission will work with grantees selected to serve in this focus area to ensure that programming remains consistent with these standards. AmeriCorps programs across the nation and in South Carolina frequently have a tutor/mentor relationship in their program design.

Several AmeriCorps programs employ a tutor/mentor approach proven to be effective based on research conducted by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) published in 2015.¹¹ The study found statistically significant evidence that the program produces growth in three areas of literacy. In addition, the program model is a cost-effective option for literacy intervention, as schools only bear about 20 percent of the operating costs—half of which are in-kind contributions. In light of the research findings, **the SC Service Commission will prioritize programs with concurrent tutoring and mentoring approaches as an effective strategy for increasing academic achievement and increasing community engagement.**

Increasing the number of educational opportunities available outside of the traditional school day is also supported by growing bodies of research. Among those opportunities are after-school, weekend, and summer learning programs. Extended learning opportunities help close the achievement gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.¹² Extended learning opportunities often take the place of unsupervised time at home, which is associated with absenteeism, misconduct, lower academic performance and inconsistent work habits. Conversely, high participation in extended learning opportunities is associated with greater gains in academic and behavioral outcomes, increased attendance and prosocial behavior with peers.¹⁰ The National Dropout Prevention Center cites research conducted by

¹⁰ National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. Mentoring / Tutoring. Accessed from < <http://ndpc.sites.clemson.edu/effective-strategies/mentoring/tutoring>>

¹¹ Tepper Jacob, Robin, Catherin Armstrong, and Jacklyn Altuna Willard. “Mobilizing volunteer tutors to improve student literacy.” March 2015. MDRC. Accessed from < https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/ReadingPartners_2015_FR.pdf>

¹² Lowe Vandell, Deborah. “Expanding learning & afterschool: opportunities for student success.” 2015. University of California Irvine. Accessed from < <http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/The%20Achievement%20Gap%20is%20Real.pdf>>

Peterson and Fox¹³, which suggests four essential components to effective program design for extended learning opportunities including:

- academic offerings (homework assistance, tutoring, hands-on-learning, etc.),
- enrichment and accelerated learning (field trips, character education, exposure to visual and performing arts, technology, foreign language, etc.),
- supervised recreation through organized sports, and
- community service opportunities.

Therefore, the Commission also intends to focus on funding programs that serve youth in the extending learning opportunities space, particularly in areas of high poverty and crime.

VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

National guidelines: CNCS is committed to increasing its focus and efforts for our veterans and military families. Not only is there increased focus on serving veterans and military families through programming, but also tapping into the vast skillsets that veterans possess as AmeriCorps Members. AmeriCorps and Senior Corps serve and engage the talents of veterans and military families across the country. Our programs and members are committed to this mission and thank those who have served.¹³

South Carolina relevancy: Research by the South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs reports that there are 420,968 documented veterans residing in the state of South Carolina as of 2018.¹⁴ This demographic represents over 8% of the State's population. This number rises when considering military families as a whole, rather than the individual veteran. The U.S. Census Bureau¹⁵ revealed that:

- Fewer than 28% of veterans in the State hold bachelor's degrees,
- In 2016, the unemployment rate of veterans in South Carolina was 8.6%,
- The percent of South Carolina's veterans living in poverty in 2016 was 7.6%,
- Over 27,000 of South Carolina's veterans (7%) received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in 2016,¹⁶
- 40% of the veterans in South Carolina are over the age of 65,
- More than 700 veterans are homeless in South Carolina, and
- 60,693 South Carolina veterans' homes have one or more major problems of safety, quality, cost, or crowding.

¹³ Corporation on National and Community Service. "Focus areas: veterans and military families." Accessed from <<https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/veterans-and-military-families>>.

¹⁴ South Carolina Division of Veterans' Affairs. Accessed from <<http://va.sc.gov/>>.

¹⁵ United States Census Bureau. "Veteran statistics | South Carolina". U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration. 2014. Accessed from <<https://www2.census.gov/library/infographics/2015/comm/vets/sc-vets.pdf>>

¹⁶ Cai, Lexin. "SNAP helps almost 1.5 million low-income veterans, including thousands in every state." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 9 Nov 2017. Accessed from <<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-almost-15-million-low-income-veterans-including-thousands-in>>

Although some of these numbers are not staggering in their own right – they align closely with the State averages – Sammy Lewis, the Anderson County Service Officer for the South Carolina Division of Veteran Affairs, notes that most of these statistics do not include veterans not receiving Veteran Affairs assistance.¹⁷ Those who are eligible for, but do not seek Veteran Affairs assistance are often far worse-off than those who do. Therefore, the numbers above are likely modest estimations, and they may not indicate the actual struggle faced by veterans residing in the State.

Further, the population of veterans in South Carolina is expected to rise in the coming years. The Department of Veteran Affairs estimates that over 20 percent of all military personnel who will be released because of reduction in force plan to relocate to South Carolina.¹⁷ South Carolina is seen to be a friendly state to veterans – they receive exemptions on income tax in the State, disabled veterans receive property tax exemptions on homes, the cost of living is well-below the national average, there is a high concentration of Veteran Affairs facilities (18 throughout the State), there are small business benefits for veterans in South Carolina, and many organizations support veterans’ reintegration into civilian life.¹⁷

Commission approach: South Carolina is doing great work with its veteran population, but as the demographic ages, and the population increases, the need for services will likely also increase. The importance for holistic supportive services for South Carolina’s veterans is underscored and understood by the Commission. Reintegration issues, including employment readiness and training, education, legal assistance, housing, and health, are at the forefront of priorities of the Commission. **In consideration AmeriCorps funding, the Commission looks to programming that has a peer-to-peer model for veterans to serve alongside one another.** AmeriCorps programming that uses veterans as AmeriCorps Members allows veterans to continue to serve their country, but in a different capacity, with a different mission, and with a new unit. Many veterans from a previously-funded AmeriCorps program in South Carolina shared that the continuity helped their reintegration to civilian life process go more smoothly.

VetCorps is a standout AmeriCorps program, which not only hires veterans as AmeriCorps Members, it also serves veterans as the beneficiaries. Some program successes include:

- establishing veteran resource centers,
- connecting veterans to emergency assistance, and
- reading partnerships with colleges and universities to support Student Veteran Centers.

Demographics among post-9/11 veterans are significantly different than their predecessors. Among veterans, this cohort is expected to enter South Carolina the fastest in coming years. This cohort is/has:

- The youngest group of veterans in the country,
- The most racially diverse
- The largest population of unmarried individuals,
- The most likely to be living in poverty, and

¹⁷ Hardesty, Abe. “A team: how many veterans live in Anderson County.” Anderson Independent Mail. 18 Jan 2018. Accessed from <<https://www.independentmail.com/story/news/local/2018/01/18/team-how-many-veterans-live-anderson-county/1044563001/>>

- The largest number of uninsured individuals.¹⁸

However, in comparison to the general public, post-9/11 veterans earned more on average than their non-veteran counterparts. Male veterans make about \$3,500 more for full-time, year-round work and female veterans make about \$5,000 more for full-time, year-round work.¹⁹ **As more post-9/11 veterans return home or move to South Carolina, it will be important for the Commission to modify programming goals and strategies to meet specific needs as they arise.**

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

National guidelines: The Corporation for National and Community Service contributes to economic and workforce development through its focus on economic well-being and the security of economically disadvantaged people. For more than 50 years, national service has proven to be a catalyst when combined with community-based economic opportunity resources. Members provide services and resources to increase financial literacy, assist new and existing affordable housing efforts, and foster improved employability for long-term economic solutions.²⁰

South Carolina relevancy: South Carolina’s Governor, Henry McMaster, sees economic opportunity and prosperity not only as the way out of the State’s high levels of poverty, but he also sees it as the solution to the poor health and education outcomes.²¹ South Carolina’s tourism industry continues to thrive, and the new tax structure for *Opportunity Zones* in the State should continue to attract businesses to invest in the Palmetto State.

The Opportunity Zone program gives financial incentives aimed to encourage investors to locate businesses in one of the 135 areas identified by Senator Tim Scott and Governor McMaster.²² The zones make up some of the poorest and most rural areas around South Carolina, and each of South Carolina’s 46 counties has at least one Zone within it.²² The program offers businesses to defer capital gains taxes for up to seven years if they provide job opportunities for the Zones’ inhabitants. Senator Scott anticipates this bill, which is part of a \$1.3 trillion spending bill in the Senate, will catalyze growth in struggling local economies and spur a drastic increase in job growth and employment opportunities. Further, Kendra Stewart, the director of the Joseph P. Riley Center for Livable Communities at the College of Charleston, reports that she is hopeful that this bill will finally work to uplift citizens in our State’s poorest areas, rather than just benefitting major corporations.²²

¹⁸ National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. “Profile of post-9/11 veterans: 2015” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Mar 2017. Accessed from <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Post_911_Veterans_Profile_2015.pdf>.

¹⁹ National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. “Profile of post-9/11 veterans: 2012” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. July 2015. Accessed from <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Post_911_Veterans_Profile_2012_July2015.pdf>

²⁰ Corporation for National and Community Service. “Focus areas: economic opportunity.” Accessed from <<https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas>>

²¹ Wilks, Avery G. “McMaster says SC could see an economic explosion.” The State. 1 Jun 2018. Accessed from <<https://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article212292114.html>>

²² Lovegrove, Jamie. “South Carolina proposes 135 ‘Opportunity Zones’ to spur development in struggling communities.” Post and Courier. 23 Mar 2018. Accessed from <https://www.postandcourier.com/politics/south-carolina-proposes-opportunity-zones-to-spur-development-in-struggling/article_bb5abce0-2e9d-11e8-8415-9f3e20d049c8.html>

However, the issue may not be in the amount of jobs available in the State. South Carolina continues to struggle to provide a skilled workforce for the job opportunities that continue to arise. At a community forum held in January 2018, Governor McMaster explained that there are 60,000 jobs vacant in the State.²³ The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics finds that South Carolina is consistently below the national average for workforce participation,²⁵ and the female participation in the workforce is especially low in the state.²⁴ Further, the percent of potential workers in the State has decreased steadily in the last decade.²⁵

Research from the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business suggests that the State has made progress towards female inclusivity in the workplace, but it has a long way to go, and a significant amount to gain from improving employment outlooks for South Carolina's women. Some key findings include²⁴:

- Paying women fairly and equitably increases female participation in the workplace. South Carolina has begun to close the gender pay gap, but women's wages still lag far behind male counterparts. By 2017, full-time female employees in South Carolina made \$0.73 to every \$1 earned by their male counterparts, and African American women only earned \$0.53 to every \$1 earned by their white male peers. This amounts to a \$15,861 pay discrepancy for full-time employees over a one-year period when controlling for other variables besides gender. However, the pay gap closed by six percentage points since 2005.
- South Carolina is projected to have continued growth in the manufacturing industry, which will come with a large number of job opportunities. Record unemployment has already made it difficult for companies to find qualified workers. Further incorporating females into the workplace would be a great way for new talent to be injected into prospective employee applicant pool. It was found that increasing female participation in the workforce from 48.3% (current participation) to just 54% by 2025 could bring \$5.2 billion of growth to the South Carolina economy. Investing in women and their upward mobility can begin to alleviate the state's workforce shortages.

It was also found that women need several key things to further incentivize participation in the workforce, including²⁴:

- Equitable pay,
- Increased access to paid leave,
- Increased access to affordable childcare, and
- Investment in female leadership.

²³ Mitchell, Anna B. "Skilled worker shortage threatens SC's development, state leaders say." 24 Jan 2018. Greenville News. Accessed from <<https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/money/2018/01/24/skilled-worker-shortage-threatens-scs-economic-development-state-leaders-say/1054010001/>>

²⁴ University of South Carolina Darla Moore School of Business. "Solving the South Carolina labor shortage – the economic impact of increasing women's participation in the workforce." April 2017. Accessed from <<http://www.scwren.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Click-here-to-see-the-full-report..pdf>>

²⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Databases, tables & calculators by subject." 8 Oct 2018. Accessed from <<https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS11300000>>

Research shows that volunteering is a proven pathway to employment. Volunteers are 27 percent more likely to secure a job than non-volunteers.²⁶ This statistic transcends race, gender, age, and geographic location, but the positive effect of volunteering is strongest in two populations:

- Those without a high school diploma see a 51 percent increase in their likeliness of finding a job, and
- Volunteers who live in rural areas see an increase of 55 percent in their likeliness of finding a job.

Volunteers learn new skills, gain experience, and expand their networks. An intensive service experience like AmeriCorps could help Members get a foothold in a sector where they want to work. The South Carolina Commission believes that service is a pathway to opportunity.

Commission approach: In statistics released in August, 2018 from the Department of Labor, South Carolina has a seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate of 3.4%, which has been decreasing steadily over the last three years.²⁷ For continued progress in the unemployment rates and the growth of area businesses, employees not only need job skills, they also need soft skills to be effective in a working environment. **The Commission plans to continue to fund programs that provides workforce development for its beneficiaries. In addition, all AmeriCorps programs in SC are expected to develop robust professional development curricula to advance career prospects of the programs’ own AmeriCorps Members.**

As mentioned, Governor McMaster sees the interconnectedness of economic opportunity and prosperity to many other factors for his constituents. The Commission also supports economic success as a way to improve other outcomes, and will look to fund programs that also understand economic hardship as a root cause to their beneficiaries’ hardships. **The Commission supports a holistic approach to improving economic opportunities in South Carolina.** Supporting economic growth in South Carolina will continue to be a priority of the Commission.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

National guidelines: CNCS places funding priority on proactive and reactive environmental stewardship. CNCS administers energy and conservation programs that focus on responsible stewardship of the environment and prepare communities for challenging circumstances. The Corporation focuses on programs that:

- conserve natural habitats,
- protect clean air and water,
- maintain public lands,
- support wildland fire mitigation,

²⁶ Spera, Christopher, Robin Ghrtnr, Anthon Nerino, and Adrienne DiTommaso. “Volunteering as a pathway to employment.” Corporation for National and Community Service Office of Research and Evaluation. June 2013. Accessed from <https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/employment_research_report.pdf>

²⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Local area unemployment statistics.” United States Department of Labor. Aug 2018. Accessed from <<https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>>

- cultivate individual and community sufficiency, and
- provide reforestation services after floods and fires.

South Carolina relevancy:

Conservation and Access to Public Lands

A study conducted by professors of forestry and environmental conservation at Clemson University reported that South Carolina’s natural resources contribute \$33.4 billion dollars to the State’s economy.²⁸ This figure increased by 15 percent between 2009 and 2016.²⁷ Further, the sector was responsible for 218,719 jobs (8.6 percent of all jobs in South Carolina) in 2016.²⁷ The study focused on six major natural resource-based industries in the State—fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing, coastal tourism, commercial fisheries, boating, and mining and forestry. Missing in the report is any analysis on the contribution of water resources. The researchers stated that they chose to omit this natural resource in their report because there is not a clear way to quantify how much this resource contributes to the South Carolina economy – without it, there simply would not be any economy because water is the basis of the whole economy. Therefore, their report is conservative.

The benefits of environmental education are abundant:

- It helps build critical thinking and relationship skills by encouraging questions, investigating, and analyzing data.
- It is lauded for the ways it helps integrate academic disciplines and provides context and relevancy to other book-based learning subjects.
- It promotes conservation.
- There are strong correlations with environmental education and reduced rates of obesity.
- Studies indicate that it fosters leadership skills and cooperative team dynamics.
- It tends to engage even apathetic learners and promotes self-motivated learning.²⁹

Further, the head of Clemson’s Department of Forestry and the Environment indicates that between 2013-2016, 100 percent of all of the students graduating from their major had jobs lined up prior to graduation.²⁷ Environmental education leads to professional development and teaches employable skills, which aligns with South Carolina’s workforce development strategies.

Improving access to nature would benefit South Carolinians in many ways. Children and adults’ health is shown to improve immensely from contact with nature, therefore environmental stewardship is also a tactic for improving public health outcomes. The rates of obesity in South Carolina rank well-above the national average. Over 34% of South Carolina’s adults are obese, which is the tenth highest among all fifty states and Washington D.C.²⁸ About 33% of our children ages 10 to 17 are obese, which ranks us 17/51.²⁸ Increasing rates of obesity in children and teens has led to an increase in the number of youth who are afflicted with Type 2 Diabetes.²⁸ It is proven that children who spend more time outdoors and who have

²⁸ Willis, David B. and Thomas J. Straka. “The economic contribution of natural resources to South Carolina’s economy.” Clemson University. Dec 2016. Accessed from < https://www.clemson.edu/cafls/departments/fec/news/files/fw_13-economic_contributions_of_natural_resources_2.pdf>

²⁹ National Environmental Education Foundation. “Benefits of environmental education.” 2018. Accessed from <<https://www.neefusa.org/nature/water/benefits-environmental-education>>

more exposure to green environments at home tend to be more physically active. Children who moved into a green neighborhood, or their neighborhood was improved while they continued to live there saw reduced Body Mass Indexes (BMIs) within two years of the adjustment.²⁸ The authors of this study attribute this finding increased physical activity or time spent outdoors.

Although our State has a robust system of parks and protected lands, there are backlogged projects in South Carolina.³⁰ It is reported that there are over \$11.3 billion worth of maintenance projects backlogged throughout the country,²⁹ and South Carolina is home to many of them. AmeriCorps Members are well-positioned with grit and youth to address these problems in a cost-effective manner. South Carolina is also prone to disaster, particularly regarding hurricanes and ice storms. AmeriCorps Members can be trained responders to help mitigate the harmful environmental impact of these storms.

Clean Energy

Among all sectors, energy efficiency measures in the "built environment" - homes and commercial buildings - represent the greatest and most cost-effective potential for reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings account for about 74% of U.S. electricity consumption and 40% of U.S. carbon emissions - a larger share than either transportation or industry. In SC, the warm and humid climate results in high demand for air conditioning. Furthermore, according to Move.org South Carolina ranks in the top ten nationally for cost for utilities. A heavy reliance on electricity for both heating and cooling needs along with an older and inefficient building stock, all contribute to SC's high per-capita energy consumption. This greater consumption results in much higher energy costs for families, resulting in economic despair for many. Thousands of families, particularly those that live at or near the poverty level, struggle to afford these high (and rising) energy costs and often face monthly energy bills that are second only to monthly mortgage or rent payments.. Homes also lose efficiency as they become older; and houses and many of South Carolina's aging homes are now faced with HVAC, ductwork, appliances, and other systems that are outdated, non-compliant, and have surpassed their life expectancy.

Commission approach: AmeriCorps Members can be used to help maintain public land by providing invasive species management, trail maintenance, prescribed burns and public education. South Carolina has many state parks and protected lands that benefit from this service provided by AmeriCorps NCCC Members and state-funded AmeriCorps Programs. Additionally, programs that focus on clean energy home retrofits are considered to be highly effective models because of their ability to serve multiple needs (energy efficiency, cost savings to low-income communities, and job training).

Because of potential environmental, educational, public health, and economic benefits indicated above, the Commission anticipates support of programs who focus on:

- **Experiential environmental education,**
- **Public lands preservation and improvement, and/or**
- **Environmental mitigations after natural disasters strike.**

³⁰ Kays, Holly. "Breaking the backlog: deferred maintenance in the billions for national parks." Smoky Mountain News. 24 Jan 2018. Accessed from < <https://www.smokymountainnews.com/archives/item/21580-breaking-the-backlog-deferred-maintenance-in-the-billions-for-national-parks>>

- Access to public space,
- Low-income home energy retrofit

HEALTHY FUTURES

National guidelines: Every day, millions of Americans face health problems that reduce their quality of life. Nearly half of U.S. adults don't get needed preventive health services, and many of our nation's children and youth have unhealthy eating habits and don't get enough exercise. CNCS provides much-needed services to underserved areas to help citizens improve their health through a three-pronged approach of assistance, prevention, and intervention. The Corporation administers programs that connect youth to fresh produce and seniors to warm meals, build community gardens, assist local farms, and bridge the gap between community members and a wide range health services, all with long-term and sustainable health in mind.³¹ Successful programs increase the ability of individuals and communities to address their specific health concerns.

South Carolina relevancy: South Carolina is ranked 44 out of the 50 in overall public health outcomes.³² Among the statistics measured, some of the most concerning rankings from the United Health Foundation's 2017 Annual Report are included below.³¹

CATEGORY	RANK (OUT OF 50)	RATE
Obesity	39	32.3 (percent of adults affected)
Physical Inactivity	39	26.9 (percent of adults inactive)
Rate of Smoking	39	20.0 (percent of adults who smoke)
Children Living in Poverty	44	22.6 (percent of children affected)
Rates of Infectious Disease	47	Not available in this format for this aggregated category
Cardiovascular-Related Deaths	36	Not available in this format for this aggregated category
Diabetes	45	13.0 (percent of adults affected)
Frequent Mental Distress	42	13.7 (percent of adults affected)
Low Birth Weight	45	9.5 (percent of live births)

Table 2. Public health rankings and rates for South Carolina in key quantifiable categories.³¹

³¹ Corporation for National and Community Service. "Focus Areas: Healthy Futures." Accessed from <<https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/healthy-futures>>

³² Americas Health Rankings. "South Carolina Overall Health Outcomes 2017 Annual Report." United Health Foundation. Accessed from <<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Overall/state/SC>>.

South Carolina also struggles with drug abuse, and exceeds the national average in both deaths due to opioid overdose and overdose death due to all drugs.³³ Furthermore, according to the Center for Disease Control, South Carolina experienced the largest increase in the nation (57%) in heroin death rate between 2014 and 2015.

To compound all of the aforementioned concerns, South Carolina has a high rate of uninsured individuals. Our State ranks 39/50 in this category.³¹ About 10.5% of the State's population was uninsured as of 2017.³¹

Commission approach: AmeriCorps programs have the potential to decrease the lifestyle-related illness noted above through education and interactive programming. AmeriCorps programs across the nation have educated people on nutrition and prevention, improved access to primary and preventative health care, engaged the community in physical activity, and provided support services.

Proper nutrition education is among the chief goals of AmeriCorps Members' service within this focus area. There are resources available that can fit within modest programmatic budgets, and which can help people gain access to nutritious foods and important health-related knowledge. FoodCorps is a standout AmeriCorps program that teaches children, builds school gardens, and connects the farm to the school. If the general public was better informed about their food consumption, there is potential to not only positively impact health, but also the local economy.

Because of the growing opioid crisis in South Carolina, which causes deaths and burdens workplaces, the health care systems, communities, and families, the SC Service Commission is also interested in investing in drug prevention, education, reduction, and recovery programs. National examples of this type of programming can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/healthy-futures/ameri-corps-and-senior-corps-respond-nations-opioid-epidemic>

The Commission will prioritize health-focused AmeriCorps programs with evidence-based successes that focus on categories outlined in Table 2, or which focus combatting and/or preventing drug abuse.

DISASTER SERVICES

National guidelines: CNCS programs have provided critical support to millions of Americans affected by disaster since the Corporation's creation in 1994. Reflecting the agency's growing expertise and commitment in disaster services, the CNCS board of directors made Disaster Services one of the agency's focus areas for its 2011-2015 strategic plan. AmeriCorps and Senior Corps help communities across the country prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made disasters. AmeriCorps Disaster

³³Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2017 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 2018. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2017, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html> on January 10, 2019.

Response Teams (A-DRTs) are AmeriCorps programs that have a heightened focus and commitment to disaster response and recovery. A-DRTs engage in activities and trainings year-round, are a nationally deployable resource, and are recognized in the emergency management community as leaders in volunteer management.³⁴

South Carolina relevancy: According to the SC Emergency Management Division (SCEMD), disasters include: hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires, thunderstorms, wildfires, dam failure, earthquakes, terrorism, hazardous materials, droughts, nuclear power plants, severe winter weather and extreme heat.³⁵ Preparation and planning are needed in order to best react to such events. Plans are developed at the state and local levels to help mitigate preventable disasters and effectively respond once a disaster occurs.

In response to the 2015 Columbia Floods, and 2016 Hurricane Matthew, SC 2-1-1 was able to take on Crisis Cleanup calls in addition to their referral services. However, at this time South Carolina 2-1-1 does not have the capacity to offer surge staffing during a disaster, should one strike South Carolina. The need for call reception and volunteer coordination is particularly great in the State of South Carolina and the Commission can play a large role to fill this need. A Memorandum of Understanding has been made between SCEMD and the United Way Association of South Carolina (the Commission's host agency) to properly disseminate information to the influx of *Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteers* regarding suitable volunteer opportunities, which surges following a disaster.

Commission approach: During disaster response and recovery, the Commission's main roles and responsibilities are to:

1. **Mobilize in-state and out-of-state National Service resources** to assist with disaster response and recovery by coordinating with CNCS and its Disaster Services Unit (DSU) to mobilize such resources, provide updates, and request additional national service resources such as AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (A-DRT) deployments if necessary.
2. **Facilitate and support utilization of Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteers (SUVs) during disaster.** The Commission will assist SCEMD under Emergency Support Function 18 (ESF-18) with matching unaffiliated/unsolicited volunteers from both within and outside the state with third-party host agencies during a disaster or emergency event. For a maximum period of fourteen days past ESF-18 activation, Commission representatives will be present during daytime operating hours. Following the initial 14-day period, the Commission will virtually assist for an additional 60-90 days. This schedule is dependent on the severity of the disaster and response and SCSC's staff capacity at the time of the occurrence.
3. **Disseminate current information & messaging** via UWASC's and SCSC's social media sites, website, newsletter, and press releases.

³⁴ Corporation for National and Community Service. "Focus Areas: Disaster Services." Accessed from <<https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/disaster-services>>.

³⁵ South Carolina Emergency Management Division. Accessed from <<https://www.scmd.org/>>

Our desired outcomes are to effectively maximize utilization of National Service Members and unaffiliated volunteer resources to better meet the needs of South Carolina residents impacted by disaster, and to coordinate with key partners to match the voluntary resources available.

Some AmeriCorps programs have all of their members serve as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members if the AmeriCorps members are tasked with related duties during peacetime. It is a priority of the SC Service Commission to identify the most appropriate ways for each branch of service to volunteer following a disaster and determine a coordination strategy, using guidance from the CNCS Following a disaster, the SC Service Commission will prioritize the coordination and strategy of how to best use AmeriCorps members' services. The Commission will also assist CNCS's Disaster Response Unit and NCCC Regional Office in coordinating outside teams of AmeriCorps members trained in disaster response that deploy to the State.

In coordination with several partner agencies, the Commission enacted a new initiative in 2018 titled the Palmetto Disaster Corps. The Primary function of the Palmetto Disaster Corps is crisis call reception and data aggregating in Crisis Cleanup—database that provides live feeds indicating needs of survivors. In the event of an emergency, the Director of the Commission will send out a notice to Disaster Corps programmatic staff. Members would be trained “just in time” by a representative of Crisis Cleanup to serve as hotline responders. Members would answer incoming survivor calls, process needs assessments, among other duties assigned.

In response to Hurricane Harvey, OneStar's AmeriCorps*Texas saw success using this model with 428 members from 18 different programs within their portfolio served with Crisis Cleanup, answering phones from disaster survivors and logging information into a database so that VOADs could provide immediate property cleanup services to those individuals. Although the primary function of Palmetto DisasterCorps is call reception, following the initial response, should additional AmeriCorps assistance be required, SCSC will consider additional member placement in other areas of recovery. **The Commission intends to continue to fund this initiative and to support organizations that build space for their AmeriCorps Members to join the Disaster Corps and best-serve our State's most pressing needs.**

South Carolina Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (SCVOAD) has committed to using Crisis Cleanup in immediate response. By filling this need, The Palmetto Disaster Corps will directly support SCVOAD. Should we consider activation out of state the SCSC would need to have initial contact with the state VOAD to ensure they are using Crisis Cleanup and that we would be filling a critical need.

55+ PLAN

In conjunction with the State Service Plan, the South Carolina Service Commission has a special emphasis on involving South Carolinians who are age 55 and above in service. This emphasis is based in national research and consistent with the priorities of the SC Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging. National

research conducted by CNCS indicates numerous benefits to volunteering for older adults.³⁶ A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment that an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities.³⁷ Volunteering can provide a sense of purpose, as found in a study of older adults. According to this study, formal volunteering mitigated the loss of a sense of purpose among older adults who had experienced the loss of major role identities, such as wage-earner and parent. Participation in community service is found to be more strongly correlated with life satisfaction for retirees than for those individuals who continued to work for pay.³⁷ The Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging develops a four-year plan regarding South Carolina's aging population. Included in the plan is a section on volunteerism and employment for seniors. The most recent plan covers the years of 2017-2021 and an excerpt from which has been included below.³⁸

As South Carolina's population ages dramatically, future, available resources will continue to be a major concern for policymakers, providers of services, families, and individuals needing care and assistance. Funding will be stretched, and federal, state and local governments will not be able to provide for all needs of the aging population. Seniors currently living in South Carolina and seniors moving to South Carolina offer a wealth of knowledge, skills and abilities. Through volunteerism and employment, these older adults contribute to quality of life for other seniors and to their communities. Many of South Carolina's lifelong residents have lived in rural communities with below-the-national-average income levels. Many native South Carolina seniors are ineligible for federal financial assistance, and with skyrocketing health care costs, must continue to work in order to afford the basics. Thus the goals of our State's senior population are reflected in both a greater need for additional income for many, while others look for volunteer services for a type of enrichment and satisfaction that previous employment may not have permitted. The SUA and the Aging Network are committed to both assisting seniors needing additional income and utilizing the skills and abilities of those who wish to volunteer. The State of South Carolina currently uses senior volunteers and Title V workers in many activities throughout the State. With limited resources, the SUA must continue to utilize seniors in these activities, and seek ways to further utilize seniors' assets. Many of these opportunities have been presented through Federal funding made available through a partnership of local aging services providers, Area Agencies on Aging, and the State Unit on Aging.⁴⁴ Consistent with national research and South Carolina demographic changes, promoting volunteerism among individuals 55 and older is a high priority of the South Carolina Service Commission. National service can provide a unique blend of volunteerism and slight compensation that allows seniors to benefit in numerous ways. In addition, it is our mission to help organizations using senior volunteers to understand the full potential that this demographic can provide. Their experience and commitment can be utilized to grow an organization substantially. While seniors are steadfast in their responsibilities, it is important to provide flexible opportunities to allow time for other commitments. Providing skill-building opportunities is critical as some seniors may use volunteerism as a pathway to

³⁶Spencer, Wendy. "The benefits of volunteering for seniors and our nation." 9 Jul 2015. President Barack Obama's White House Administration. Accessed from <<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/07/09/benefits-volunteering-seniors-and-our-nation>>

³⁷ Tabassum, Faiza, John Mohan, and Peter Smith. "Association of volunteering with mental well-being." 2016. US National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health. Accessed from <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4985873/>>.

³⁸ McMaster., Henry D. "South Carolina State Plan on Aging, 2017-2021." State of South Carolina Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging. Accessed from <https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/21638/LGOA_SC_State_Plan_on_Aging_2017-2021.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

employment. Personal fulfillment and increased social connections are very important aspects of mental health among seniors and organizations should keep this in mind when designing volunteer opportunities.

In addition to our moral obligation to care for the elderly South Carolinians, there is also a financial benefit that accompanies helping our most vulnerable citizens. The Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging spends, on average, \$1,400 per client each year to help keep them out of nursing homes, which costs Medicaid approximately \$52,000 annually per senior.³⁸ By providing simple services to older folks as beneficiaries, we are saving a tremendous amount of money. By placing urgency on AmeriCorps programs to engage with the 55 and over population, we are giving that demographic ongoing purpose and independence. Further, the state's share of funding for the Office of Aging has been cut by 48% since 2007.³⁸ This poses major problems especially as we witness South Carolina's population aging. By using creativity and leveraging AmeriCorps funding, this need can be met.

MEASURABLE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The Commission will be responsible for the meeting goals outlined below.

1. **Stewardship of Funding** – The Commission will facilitate a competitive grants process, with Commissioners reviewing and scoring applications. This process is designed to critically review proposals and award subgrantees to host AmeriCorps Programs where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact.
2. **Ensure Effective Programming** – The Commission will:
 - a. Lead applicants through training to ensure high-quality applications,
 - b. Provide in-person training for new program directors and new programs,
 - c. Host monthly conference calls for all Program Directors to provide updates, build community and distribute programmatic best practices,
 - d. Monitor program sites for operational compliance in relation to:
 - i. Member eligibility,
 - ii. Data collection and progress towards achieving Performance Measures,
 - iii. Reporting, and
 - iv. Fiscal regulations,
 - e. Hold programs to high standards of performance by requiring and facilitating an AmeriCorps Program evaluation every three years of funding, and evaluations will include:
 - i. Community feedback to ensure programs are effectively addressing a critical community need,
 - ii. Programs will use a tool to assess their readiness for a full impact evaluation
 - iii. Programs will include three year goals in re-compete applications for continuous improvement
3. **Leverage Additional Resources**—The Commission will:
 - a. Develop programs to operational excellence, and subsequently submit these top programs to the National Competitive competition
 - b. Maintain step-up schedule for grantees' to increase their share of the operating budget as their grant matures.

4. **Increase Awareness of National Service and the Value of Volunteerism**—The Commission will:
 - a. Develop a Marketing Plan, and:
 - i. Distribute marketing material to institutions of higher education, including technical colleges, community colleges, universities, and trade schools highlighting the AmeriCorps programs in South Carolina. Materials will cover an overview of AmeriCorps service, benefits, and how to apply.
 - ii. Distribute print material to employment centers highlighting the value of volunteerism as a pathway to employment.
 - iii. Attend job fairs to highlight the opportunity of AmeriCorps to give back to the community and simultaneously build job skills.
 - iv. Continue to increase social media presence to improve the widespread knowledge of AmeriCorps.
 - b. Partner with nonprofit and volunteer leadership organizations within the state to convene and co-sponsor conferences, trainings, and events that seek to increase the knowledge and capacity of organizations that could potentially leverage national service resources to better serve South Carolina communities. Specifically, the Commission will play an active role in convening the Together SC and South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Administrators annual conferences.
5. **Commissioner Education**—The Commission will:
 - a. Provide initial in-depth onboarding training to Commissioners upon appointment as a Commissioner, which will include information about the history of AmeriCorps and CNCS, current programs operating in South Carolina, and the value of volunteerism,
 - b. Provide annual refresher-training to ensure Commissioners to review core concepts and to provide training on updates in regulations or programming,
 - c. Distribute annual pocket-guides to Commissioners with speaking points for each of the programs, and
6. **Recognizing Volunteers**—The Commission will:
 - a. Highlight member experiences through engaging *Brand Ambassadors* to tell their stories of service and
 - b. Honor one AmeriCorps Member as the “Lanneau Seigling Member of the Year”

7. **Disaster Response**—The Commission staff will:
 - a. Prioritize safety and wellbeing of all AmeriCorps Members during the time of a disaster. Commission Staff and Program Directors will communicate to ensure all members are accounted for and in a safe environment. This procedure will be outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan.
 - b. If activated, the Commission will be responsible for coordinating spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers following a disaster. This will be facilitated through the use of the online system, Get Connected, which is specifically engineered to handle this situation.
 - c. Attend regional and state Voluntary Organizations Active during Disaster (VOAD) meetings to develop relationships and facilitate trainings on using the system.
 - d. Attend relevant trainings hosted by South Carolina Emergency Management Department on volunteers following a disaster.
 - e. Maintain relationships with CNCS Staff responsible for deploying the Disaster Response unit and NCCC teams.
 - f. Identify scenarios for utilizing AmeriCorps teams following various disasters as a preparation tactic.
 - g. Prepare messages informing all AmeriCorps SC members of specific updates pertaining to their role and functionality to be sent via the Program Directors.