

# VOLUNTEERNC

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### 2026-2028 VolunteerNC State Service Plan

#### **VolunteerNC Overview**

The North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service (VolunteerNC) is the oversight organization for national service in North Carolina. VolunteerNC supports AmeriCorps programs and encourages civic engagement to improve the quality of life in North Carolina communities. VolunteerNC develops a three-year State Service Plan aimed at utilizing service and volunteerism as a solution to the most pressing needs facing North Carolina communities. This plan reflects the strategy of VolunteerNC with regard to the coordination of national service, connection of volunteer organizations, promotion of youth engagement, collaboration for disaster response and recovery, and fostering senior service opportunities.

#### **VolunteerNC History**

State service commissions date back to the creation of the Corporation for National and Community Service with the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. On May 12, 1994, the NC Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service (VolunteerNC) was established as a division within the Office of the Governor.

#### **NC Service Landscape**

In 2025, VolunteerNC supported 19 AmeriCorps State Programs that served in 89 of North Carolina's 100 counties. AmeriCorps NC program focus areas include education, economic opportunity, capacity building for nonprofits and local governments, environmental stewardship, access to healthcare, and addressing food insecurity. These programs supported more than 500 AmeriCorps members serving in their communities across the state.

AmeriCorps and the U.S. Census Bureau's *Volunteering and Civic Life in America* found that 22.8% of North Carolinians, or 1.9 million people, formally volunteered in 2020-2021, contributing a total of 139.5 million hours of service. According to the NC Center for Nonprofits, this volunteer support is equivalent to the work of about 67,000 full-time employees.

## **Purpose of State Service Plan and Overview of Process**

VolunteerNC's 2026-2028 State Service Plan is a three-year plan which outlines the Commission's priorities and goals. The plan is effective January 1, 2026, and will guide the work of commissioners and staff through December 31, 2028.

The State Service Plan was developed over the course of six months by VolunteerNC commissioners and staff. Public input was critical in the development of the plan. Input was gathered through an electronic survey with more than 140 respondents from all regions of the state providing feedback on state volunteer engagement and AmeriCorps priorities. In addition, nearly 20 individuals participated in a series of 90-minute virtual focus groups.

As part of the public input process, respondents shared their pride in being North Carolinians, and particularly the willingness of neighbors to assist one another in times of need. Further, respondents noted the diversity of the state both in geography and population, which is viewed as another strength of the state. In addition, the recent influx of economic development activities in the state is viewed as an emerging leverage point for service and volunteerism activities.

Respondents noted that a strong and resilient national service and volunteerism infrastructure has been built in the state that addresses community needs and builds local capacity, particularly in the nonprofit sector. Although there is a strong foundation in place, there continues to be opportunity to expand and deepen the work, particularly in rural communities where capacity is limited, and in disaster response and recovery activities. In addition, respondents noted the ongoing need to raise awareness regarding national service and volunteerism opportunities with potential participants but also the necessity of sharing the impact of these activities with elected officials throughout the state. Finally, respondents suggested the need to provide additional incentives for individuals to serve, particularly in national service programs.

## **Goals and Objectives**

*VolunteerNC staff will monitor the strategic plan on a quarterly basis and share updates with commissioners at each commission meeting. In addition, on an annual basis, the VolunteerNC staff and commissioners will revisit the plan to make any necessary revisions given external or internal changes. The VolunteerNC staff will develop an annual operational plan.*

From January 1, 2026-December 31, 2028, VolunteerNC will:

Goal #1: National Service – Build the capacity of organizations to expand national service opportunities through training and technical assistance.

1. Objective #1: Conduct an **annual AmeriCorps grantmaking process** to include outreach and technical assistance, NOFO development, peer and staff review, and decision-making.
2. Objective #2: Develop and implement an **annual training and technical assistance** plan, including the annual member gathering and sustainability planning, that results in 90% of VolunteerNC programs indicating that training received prepared them to effectively manage their program.
3. Objective #3: Conduct **annual risk assessment and monitoring activities** so that 100% of VolunteerNC programs will receive monitoring during the annual monitoring process geared towards improving program efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Objective #4: In partnership with other key state government agencies, leverage previous work with the National Governor’s Association (NGA) to identify and develop intentional **service to workforce pathways** in key industries, such as healthcare, education, and government service.
5. Objective #5: By 2027, begin quarterly check-in calls for **AmeriCorps Seniors programs and VISTA sponsors** to provide timely updates regarding national service in North Carolina and to identify training and technical assistance needs.

Goal #2: Volunteer Engagement – Increase the number and quality of volunteer opportunities in North Carolina through training and technical assistance.

1. Objective #1: In partnership with statewide partners, convene an in-person event to develop an **annual training and technical assistance plan regarding volunteer engagement** to include training opportunities and other non-financial resources to expand volunteer engagement in North Carolina.
2. Objective #2: Support **National Days of Service** to increase awareness of service and volunteerism opportunities in the state.
3. Objective #3: Increase participation in **Governor’s Volunteer Service Award** programming to recognize volunteers and national service members across the state.

Goal #3: Youth Service – By 2028, develop a comprehensive strategy to increase youth service opportunities in North Carolina.

1. Objective #1: Continue to manage the **Governor’s Page program** and increase participation in the Service Project component.
2. Objective #2: Develop a strategy to expand youth service opportunities in the state in partnership with the North Carolina Youth Advisory Council, Department of Public Instruction, NC Campus Engagement, and other youth service stakeholders.
3. Objective #3: By 2027, develop a landscape assessment of youth service opportunities throughout the state to map opportunities and elevate promising practices.
4. Objective #4: Based on assessment findings, develop toolkits and other non-financial resources to assist nonprofit organizations and schools in more effectively engaging youth.

Goal #4: Disaster Services Management - Continue volunteer engagement and donations management and coordinate preparedness, response and recovery activities.

1. Objective #1 – Inform the public about volunteer resources and partner organization needs across the state. Connect unaffiliated volunteers to response needs and opportunities available on the VolunteerNC website.
2. Objective #2 – Coordinate activities with the **State Emergency Response Team’s Volunteer Agency Liaison (VAL)**, including deployment of national service resources in coordination with the federal AmeriCorps agency. Work alongside the VAL to help with trainings and develop resources for volunteer and donation management.
3. Objective #3 – Collaborate with the Joint Information Center (JIC) on incident-specific **media messaging** for unaffiliated volunteers and monetary donations.
4. Objective #4 – Oversee the **NC Disaster Relief Fund** when it is activated by the Governor.

Goal #5: Awareness – Elevate awareness of and advocacy for service and volunteerism in North Carolina.

1. Objective #1: Maintain current VolunteerNC **website and social media presence** to increase awareness of service and volunteerism opportunities statewide.
2. Objective #2: By 2027, develop a **state legislative advocacy strategy** to incentivize service in North Carolina.
3. Objective #3: By 2027, develop and update on an annual basis an **elected officials engagement plan** to include the Governor, state legislature, and federal delegation as well as local governments.
4. Objective #4: By 2027, develop and implement an **annual partnership strategy** with a focus on public institutions, corporations, and philanthropic organizations in North Carolina to increase awareness of and identify financial resources to expand and strengthen service and volunteerism opportunities in the state.

Goal #6: Human and Operational Resources – Secure and develop VolunteerNC’s human and operational resources necessary to execute on the State Service Plan.

1. Objective #1: **Maintain VolunteerNC staff** at 10 FTE in 2026 and develop sustainability plans to grow staff in the future when additional federal resources are available.
2. Objective #2: **Recruit, structure, develop, and engage the VolunteerNC Commissioners** to ensure accountability as well as leverage commissioner skills in support of the State Service Plan.
3. Objective #3: Maintain a strong relationship with **federal funding partners, including the AmeriCorps agency**, by meeting all compliance requirements; providing timely, thorough annual reporting; and, engaging in regular communication with the designated AmeriCorps portfolio management team and other AmeriCorps personnel as circumstances merit.
4. Objective #4: Maintain annual membership in **America’s Service Commissions** and participate in relevant training, technical assistance, peer sharing, and other network activities.

### **VolunteerNC Commissioners**

Rev. Dr. Joseph Blosser, Chair  
Kathleen Evans, Vice Chair  
Dr. Elena Ashburn  
Heather Black  
Alice Brown  
Dr. Lori Carlin  
Leslie Garvin  
Rev. Paul Langston  
Mary Ann LeRay  
Lindsay McClelland  
Natalia Mejia  
Cheryl Parquet  
Hon. Jill Patton  
Major Samantha Sliney, Esq.  
Rose Thompson  
Ellen Whitlock  
Demarcus Williams

### **VolunteerNC Staff**

Briles Johnson, Executive Director  
Megan Trawick, Deputy Director  
Donna Atkinson, Social Media Coordinator  
Whitney Campassi, AmeriCorps Program and Training Officer  
Joseph D'Souza, AmeriCorps Financial Director  
Erinn Foote, Governor's Page Coordinator  
Colleen Garrett, AmeriCorps Compliance Officer  
Kenneth McLellan, Volunteerism Coordinator  
Jose Trueba, Grants Officer  
Christy Venable, External Affairs Officer