

Colorado Governor's Commission on Community Service

Colorado State Service Plan 2006 – 2008

I. Introduction

The Colorado Governor's Commission on Community Service, under the Office of Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien, is pleased to present this 2006 – 2008 State Service Plan Update to the Corporation for National and Community Service. This plan update provides a progress report on the 2008 program activities while laying the groundwork for the 2009-2011 State Service Plan, to be developed in 2009. In addition to the plan update, GCCS is submitting the 2008 Mid-year Report as an accompanying document, highlighting 2008 AmeriCorps service program achievements.

This plan update also reflects the program accomplishments in 2008, most notably the Colorado statewide community outreach and needs assessment process.

This new update provides for a restatement of existing program goals, and continues the alignment of the Governor's Commission on Community Service goals and programs, as stated in the 2006-2008 State Service Plan, with the community service goals and priorities set forth by Colorado Governor, Governor Bill Ritter, and Lt Governor, Barbara O'Brien.

Many of the goals and specific programming areas articulated in the Colorado State Service Plan for 2006-2008 are still current and appropriate for the 2008 Plan Update. Because of multi-year grants, current programming will continue. New programs may shift as additional funding becomes available. Special emphasis continues to be placed on aligning community service and volunteerism in the state with Governor Ritter's goals of fulfilling the "Colorado Promise". The plan update also identifies and places high priority on those service areas that are consistent with the Lt Governor's Strategic Plan. Finally, program and management goals articulated in the GCCS management plan remain a significant addition to the 2006-2008 State Service Plan.

II. Collaborative Partners

A draft of this plan update was presented to all Colorado streams of service, partner organizations, sub grantee programs and stakeholders via email. The following organizations, participants in the 2006 plan development, were invited to offer comments, feedback and suggestions for the 2008 Update:

- National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC),
- The Corporation for National and Community Service State Office (state office),
- Colorado Governor's Commission on Community Service commissioners,
- Colorado Commission sub grantee programs,
- The Colorado Department of Education (CDE),
- Learn and Serve programs,
- Campus Compact,
- AmeriCorps National Directs,
- Colorado Volunteer Center Network,
- Colorado Non-Profit Association,
- Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships.

Other non profit, education, government, and foundation volunteer and community service based organizations such as the American Red Cross-Mile High Chapter, Salvation Army, City and County of Denver Mayor's Office of Strategic Partnerships, Mile High United Way 2-1-1, AmeriCorps Alumni Association, DenverWorks, Disability Mentoring Month Committee,

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Daniels Fund foundation, Junior League, Johnson and Wales University, Regis University, Senior Hub, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Colorado Coalition of Faith and community stakeholders participated.

Some examples of current year collaborations with stakeholders include:

- National Philanthropy Day – the Commission continues its work at promoting and honoring individuals, nonprofit organizations and corporations who exemplify the highest standards of volunteerism to their community. The Commission's resources have been specifically targeted at identifying youth and youth groups to honor as exemplary volunteers.
- Colorado Volunteer Center Network - as a member of this volunteer center network, the Commission is providing leadership and resources that will implement the groups plans to start up a state internet portal for all volunteer centers, promote the creation of new volunteer centers in remote areas of the state, and strengthen the capacities of all volunteer centers by accessing VISTA volunteers and other means of support.
- Colorado Mentoring Collaboration and Youth Mentoring Collaboration – by providing monetary and in kind resources to the Youth Mentoring Collaborative, the Commission is supporting the growth of the mentoring resources in the Denver metro area. Additionally, in partnership with one of its commissioners, the Commission launched the Colorado Mentoring Collaboration, a statewide effort at promoting and building the resources of mentoring organizations outside of the Denver metro area.
- Colorado Cares Day (July) and Martin Luther King jr. Holiday Tribute Day of Service (January) both of which are high profile service days sponsored by the GCCS.

III. The Colorado Promise:

Special emphasis has been placed on aligning the goals of the Governor's Colorado Promise with the programming priorities of the Governor's Commission on Community Service. Those areas of the Colorado Promise most closely aligned with the goals in the existing state service plan are summarized in part below.

Governor Ritter's "Colorado Promise":

Education: Investing in our schools and our students:

1. Fostering high-quality educators and inspiring a new generation of teachers
2. Making sure children arrive at school ready to learn; expand early childhood education
3. Improving student achievement
4. Getting parents more involved; launch a family literacy crusade; promote and support the role parents play; promote parental participation in homework assignments

Health

1. Focusing on prevention, childhood immunization, developing and disseminating educational vaccination materials; educating parents about the Colorado information Immunization System
2. Investments in rural health, including building an adequate rural health provider workforce

The Environment

1. Public land management; ensure that public lands are used wisely including recreation and wilderness preservation
2. Protecting livable places and open spaces; preserve open spaces, provide lands for recreation, protecting our natural resources
3. Conservation

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IV. The Lt. Governor's Strategic Plan – Strengthening children, families and communities.

Mission: The mission of the Lt. Governor's office is to strengthen families and communities, support the health, education, and development of all children, and improve the quality of life for all Coloradans through the promotion of education, childhood development, community service, citizenship, civic engagement, volunteerism and the arts.

The Lt Governor's office promotes education, early childhood and youth development. Programming and policy initiatives include:

- Smart Start Colorado
- The Head-Start – State Collaboration
- Co-Chairmanship of the P-20 Education Council
- Health and Wellness

Governor's Commission on Community Service Management Plan

Finally, in addition to specific program areas noted below, the Governor's Commission on Community Service has adopted the following management goals:

- Develop and maintain organizational and financial resources necessary to provide effective and efficient program services
- Establish and maintain effective and efficient grants program management and systems
- Build strategic partnerships
- Promote community service and volunteerism
- Establish and achieve standards of excellence in all aspects of operations and provide professional growth and development for employees.

V. Specific Programming Areas:

Consistent with multi-year grant programming, no significant changes are anticipated in 2008-2009 in the Specific Programming Areas of the State Service Plan. The following service areas remain priority service areas for the Commission, and where appropriate, the State Service Plan is aligned with the Governor's Colorado Promise, Lt. Governor's Strategic Plan and the Commission's new management plan. The continuing priority programming areas are:

- Education and literacy
- Disability inclusion
- Volunteerism and community service
- Disaster preparedness, education, and community volunteer response
- Strengthening families initiatives
- Youth mentoring
- Non profit collaboration, sustainability, and support
- Outreach to at risk youth
- Engaging seniors in service

GCCS Project and Program Initiatives for 2008-2009

1. Building Strategic Partnerships

Consistent with the goals set forth in the 2006-2008 State Service Plan, one of the major goals of this year's plan update is to build and maintain strategic partnerships. To this end the

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Commission continues to place great emphasis on a campaign to increase public awareness of community service and volunteerism related to strengthening communities, expanding volunteerism, youth development and education, civic engagement, and mentoring. The Commission is continuing a comprehensive community awareness effort, begun in 2008. The goal of the outreach plan is to expand the commission visibility in Colorado and to foster volunteer service statewide with emphases in three distinct areas: public information, marketing and branding, and community awareness and building partnerships. The goals are:

- Educate the general public about the mission and goals of the commission.
- Increase community awareness and media exposure in a variety of ways: personal appearances, print media, routine and periodic press releases, more visible announcements, web site updating, expansion of electronic database of partner agencies and organizations, and other ways.
- Encourage all Colorado residents, especially youth, to engage in volunteer service to make the state a better place to live and raise a family.

2. Program Evaluation

The Commission had hoped to implement an evaluation of its 2007 Formula Grant programs in 2008. The focus of this project was to be on “outcomes based” evaluation strategies. We have been unable to implement the program evaluation as planned in 2008. Since accountability is one of our management guiding principles, we will re-consider a program evaluation component, as previously described, for the 2009-2011 program grant cycle, to begin in 2010.

This program evaluation component will begin by designating a committee consisting of Commission staff and program managers to outline the framework for an evaluation tool and process. The Corporation's T/TA providers will provide assistance in this aspect of the project. Through an RFP process, a subcontractor will be chosen to implement the evaluation plan.

VI. Laying the Foundation for the Future

Now in the third year of a three-year grant and program cycle, the GCCS State Service Plan Update is necessarily limited in scope. However, the Commission is developing a comprehensive and extensive plan process for the next three year planning cycle. A comprehensive statewide community outreach and needs assessment process, conducted in 2008, will result in a Needs Assessment Report, to be completed and distributed in January 2009. This needs assessment report will be used as the foundation for the 2009-2011 State Service Plan, and preliminary findings (November, 2008) will be used in determining program priorities and priority geographic service needs for the 2009-2011 AmeriCorps grant application funding cycle. The guiding principles for that plan process are:

1. Extensive outreach and stakeholder engagement in the planning process.
2. Effective communications with a wide range of constituencies.
3. Inclusiveness, diversity, transparency and accountability in the plan development process.
4. Processes that result in statewide participation, including community forums, small group discussions, individual interviews, disability needs assessment, etc.
5. Transparency and accountability in the grant application and selection processes, which will begin soon after submission of this state service plan update.

VII. Specific Accomplishments - 2008

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Communication Plan – In an effort to increase communication, promote volunteerism, and create a brand for the Commission, the GCCS has implemented a new communication plan. Along with the annual publications of the *MLK Jr. Day Report* and the *Colorado Cares Day Report*, the staff now publishes scheduled quarterly Newsletters, the *AmeriCorps State Program Mid-Year Report*, and the *Governor's Commission on Community Service Annual Report*, on a regular basis. Aside from our new regular publications, the Commission also produced special reports in 2008 such as the US Commissions State Funding Survey Report.

Preparation and outreach for 2009 Grant Cycle - In mid-2008, the Commission staff launched a new three-year AmeriCorps grant cycle. A Notice of Funding Opportunity was distributed which requested applications that addressed the strategic initiatives of the Corporation for National and Community Service as well as specific Colorado initiatives. In an effort to provide this offer to all geographic areas of the state and to all potential grant recipients, particularly those in rural, underserved and areas of extreme poverty, several outreach activities were undertaken. The NOFO was distributed to:

- All Colorado counties through the 211 volunteer network system,
 - GCCS stakeholders, program partners and participants,
 - National service partners including the CNCS State Office, NCCC, and Campus Compact
 - A press release distributed by the Governor's Media Office,
- Seven pre-application sessions were held in Denver (2), Glenwood Springs, Pueblo, Durango, Fort Morgan and Estes Park.

AmeriCorps Week - Colorado was chosen to host the 1st ever AmeriCorps Week Launch. The Kick Off Event included an AmeriCorps led Service Project at Red Rocks Park, and the first annual Governor's Service Award Ceremony at Red Rocks Amphitheater. Members and guests went along trails and paths cleaning up litter, pulling harmful weeds, and clearing overgrown brush.

- Number of Participants: 500
- Hrs of Service to Project: 2000

AmeriCorps Week in Colorado ended with AmeriCorps Night at the Rockies. The night featured AmeriCorps Governor's Service Award recipients who were introduced at pre-game ceremonies before the Colorado Rockies baseball game.

AmeriCorps week partners included: City and County of Denver Parks & Recreation, City and County of Denver Theaters & Arenas, Colorado Campus Compact, Colorado Rockies, Dreyer's Ice Cream, Frontier Airlines, KMGH Channel 7, Red Bull Energy Drink, Regis University, Stadium Medical, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado.

State Needs Assessment - The current needs assessment will be one of the foundations for the development of the *2009-2011 State Service Plan*, and will help the Commission develop and enhance relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with individuals, organizations, foundations, and others to build and maintain vital thriving communities throughout Colorado.

The general focus of the assessment is to determine what is important to communities, how citizens are involved in their communities, what is working to engage citizens in the civic life of the community, and what kinds of supports are needed to expand service, volunteerism, and civic engagement. While specific issues may vary by community, emphasis is place on issues such as: education, early childhood development / learning, youth development, health care, people with a disability, conservation / environment.

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From April – August 2008, community forums, small group discussions, and interviews involving approximately 400 people were conducted in the six primary sites plus Cortez, Pagosa Springs, Southern Ute Indian Reservation, and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation.

To ensure reliability and validity, a draft report will be distributed to those participating in the initial data gathering phase. Final reports for the six primary sites (Alamosa, Durango, Greeley, Grand Junction, Lamar, Pueblo) plus a statewide report will be produced and distributed.

Reference Documents:

GCCS Grant Portfolio

GCCS Management Plan

GCCS 2008 Mid Year Report