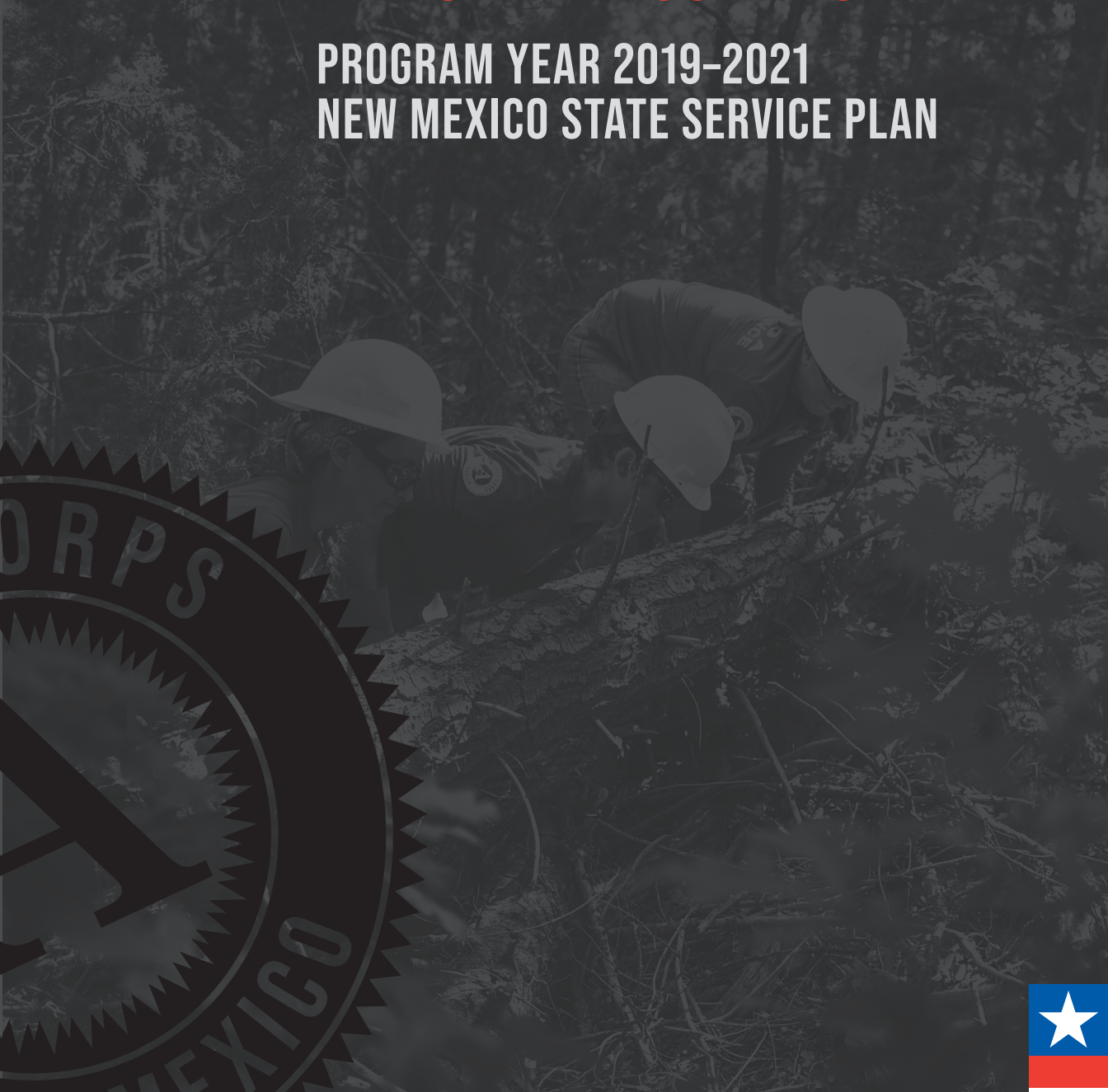


NEW MEXICO COMMISSION  
FOR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

# AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM YEAR 2019-2021  
NEW MEXICO STATE SERVICE PLAN





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2019–2021 New Mexico State Service Plan

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SEPTEMBER 2019

**EVERY DAY,** our Commission, under the auspices of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, stewards state and federal resources to mobilize AmeriCorps members to expand opportunity—for both the communities they serve, and for those who serve.



Over the next three years, New Mexico has an unprecedented chance to ramp up AmeriCorps programs dramatically; the State Service Plan is the “how” and “why” of this expansion. This plan represents the input, guidance and suggestions of community members, elected officials, Commissioners, consultants, and AmeriCorps subgrantees and members from throughout the state. It’s their passion and commitment that we hope to capture through action.

**KIND, LOVING,  
CARING AND SHARING**

**The State Service Plan  
is dedicated to the memory  
of Jennifer Riordan, former  
Commission Chair and  
a champion of national  
service.**

Special thanks are due to Commissioner Charles “Hank” Humiston, who led initial conversations on the approach and direction of the 2019–2021 State Service Plan, and to Commissioner Matthew Montoya, who helped facilitate community conversations in Ruidoso and Española.

This plan will require significant changes to our Commission’s identity and structure, but to borrow the often-repeated quote from Stephen Covey, “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” Since 1994, our Commission’s main thing has been AmeriCorps, and this plan is a blueprint for how our Commission intends—to borrow the AmeriCorps motto—to get things done, more effectively, with more impact, for a greater number of communities throughout New Mexico.

In Service,

Elaine Graff  
Commission Chair

Samuel Sokolove  
Executive Director

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This plan outlines measurable objectives that the Commission will prioritize over the next three years to achieve these strategic goals.*

**New Mexico** represents an intensely varied landscape, with sparsely populated rural expanses, economically and culturally diverse urban areas, and 23 autonomous Native American tribes. Each region and community offers its own unique set of challenges and opportunities. In a state where one size does not fit all, New Mexico AmeriCorps continues to make an impact through national and community service—but we have the potential to do much more.

In Program Year 2018 (September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019), the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism awarded qualified applicants just 46% of the formula funds pool available for AmeriCorps State and National programs. That 54% of funds left on the table means unrealized solutions to these communities' endemic problems and unseized opportunities for community members' professional and personal growth. The Program Year 2019–2021 (September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2022) State Service Plan serves as a roadmap for AmeriCorps State and National programs to bridge this gap, connecting communities in New Mexico to the full funding and AmeriCorps member service that can sustain their long-term success.<sup>1</sup>

This State Service Plan ambitiously aims to draw down 100% of formula funds by Program Year 2021 while increasing the number of AmeriCorps programs operating in New Mexico to 17. Building off of the Program Year 2016–2018 State Service Plan, the Program Year 2019–2021 State Service Plan also uses the six AmeriCorps focus areas as a toolbox for effectively responding to the unmet needs of New Mexicans. In addition, this plan lays the groundwork for building a robust statewide alumni network, as well as increasing awareness and visibility of AmeriCorps in New Mexico.

This plan outlines measurable objectives that the Commission will prioritize over the next three years to achieve these strategic goals. Guiding the Commission's work is a set of funding priorities and strategies informed by our 2018 community engagement process and needs assessment. Focusing our priorities on Economic Opportunity and Education while expanding our presence in rural New Mexico strongly aligns with the legislative priorities of New Mexico Governor Lujan Grisham's Administration, as well as with the CNCS Transformation and Sustainability Plan.

The 2019–2021 New Mexico State Service Plan will be revisited annually by our Commission to provide timely updates and evaluate progress on the strategic goals, and it will be modified to address any emergent crises. This plan is effective September 1, 2019, and will guide the work of the Commission through August 31, 2022.





# KEY FACTS ON THE NEW MEXICO COMMISSION



## DUTIES OF A STATE SERVICE COMMISSION

As outlined in the federal National and Community Service Act of 1990, state commissions exist as a mechanism for states to apply for and accept national service grants. State commissions execute several key duties:

- ★ Prepare a national service plan for the state.
- ★ Apply for the state's national service members.
- ★ Provide recommendations on priorities for national service programs.

## 2019 COMMISSIONERS

### Commission Chair

**Elaine Graff** Albuquerque

**Jorja Armijo-Brasher** Albuquerque

**Erin Atkins** Alamogordo

**Rebekka Burt** Santa Fe

**Bernadine Dallago** Las Cruces

**Alice Garza** Albuquerque

**Jessica Harvey** Las Cruces

**Nancy Hughes** Albuquerque

**Charles Humiston** Albuquerque

**Renee Lowden** Albuquerque

**Matthew Montoya** Albuquerque

**Alice Perez** Gallup

**Richard Safford** Angel Fire

**Phoebe Suina** San Felipe & Cochiti Pueblo

### Ex-Officio/Non-Voting Members

**Michael Garcia** Santa Fe

**Samuel Sokolove** Albuquerque

- ★ Make technical assistance available to program applicants and grantees.
- ★ Assist in providing health care and child care benefits to program participants.
- ★ Develop and promote a state system for recruiting and placing participants in programs.
- ★ Administer a state-wide grant program that includes the selection, oversight and evaluation of grant recipients.
- ★ Develop projects, training methods, curricula and other materials and activities related to national service programs.

## OUR MANDATE

In accordance with federal legislation,<sup>2</sup> the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism was established through Executive Order No. 94-03 by Governor Bruce King in 1994. The Commission is administratively housed in the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and is guided by a bipartisan citizen body appointed by the Governor, which includes representatives of business, labor, education, government, human service agencies and community-based organizations. The Commission exists to guide national service policy for the state and to directly administer funding awarded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) for New Mexico State AmeriCorps programs.

## NATIONAL SERVICE: THEN AND NOW

### History of National Service

# Our Mission



**1932** President Roosevelt founds the Civilian Conservation Corps (now known as NCCC).



**1961** President Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps.

**1965** President Kennedy founds VISTA to fight poverty.

**1990** National and Community Service Act is signed by President George H. W. Bush.



**1993** Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is established.



**1994** AmeriCorps is founded, engaging Americans in direct service to their community.

**1994** The New Mexico State Commission on National and Community Service is established (changed to current name in 1997).

**2018**

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, CNCS announces the Transformation and Sustainability Plan.



The New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism engages New Mexicans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service to address our state's most pressing challenges—including education, the environment, public safety, health and housing. The ultimate aim of the Commission is to achieve direct and meaningful improvements in New Mexico's communities through volunteerism and national service. Our overarching commitment is to work hand-in-hand with community partners, focusing resources, volunteerism and national service where the need is greatest.

The first seeds of U.S. national service were planted during the Great Depression, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (predecessor to the National Civilian Community Corps, or NCCC). Since its formal inception in the 1930s, national service has evolved to reflect America's changing values under successions of presidential leadership: President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in the 1960s; President Lyndon B. Johnson worked with Congress to pass the Volunteers in Service to America Act (VISTA) in 1964; and President George H.W. Bush signed into law the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which established a Commission on National and Community Service—a precursor to the formation of the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism in 1994.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton amended President George H.W. Bush's legislation to create the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency established to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and nation. This legislation brought together many different streams of service such as NCCC and VISTA, and also created AmeriCorps State and National programs. The CNCS is now the nation's largest grantmaker for service and volunteering.

Today, preparations are underway for yet another significant evolution in the organization of national service. Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2018, the Corporation for National and Community Service announced the Transformation and Sustainability Plan. The series of changes outlined in this plan aims to improve coordination, efficiency and consistency in the support that the CNCS offers to AmeriCorps. The CNCS will streamline its 54 state- and territorial-housed offices into eight regional offices.

The New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism will continue to foster connections to all streams of service as New Mexico's CNCS office in Santa Fe transitions to regional operations in Aurora, Colorado. We look forward to serving as a responsive and informed on-the-ground partner to the CNCS while the Transformation and Sustainability plan is implemented.

# THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

## SIX FOCUS AREAS

### NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

**AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL** supports a wide range of local service programs that engage thousands of Americans in intensive community service each year.<sup>3</sup>

#### AMERICORPS NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS (NCCC)

strengthens communities and develops leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.

**AMERICORPS VISTA** has been on the forefront of ending poverty in America for 50 years.

**SENIOR CORPS** connects today's age 55+ citizens with the people and organizations that need them most.

#### SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND (SIF)

mobilizes private resources to find and grow community solutions with evidence of results.

#### VOLUNTEER GENERATION FUND

supports voluntary organizations and state service commissions in boosting the impact of volunteers in addressing critical community needs.

|  | PY2018<br>New Mexico<br>Members | PY2021<br>Projected<br>New Mexico<br>Members |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>DISASTER SERVICES</b>   | <b>30</b>                       | <b>60</b>                                    |
| Help communities across the country prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters.  |                                 |  |
| <b>ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b>  | <b>49</b>                       | <b>98</b>                                    |
| Address housing, financial literacy and employment needs of low-income families and individuals.   |                                 |  |
| <b>EDUCATION</b>   | <b>128</b>                      | <b>256</b>                                   |
| Help communities design and implement results-driven, cost-effective solutions that support students from cradle to career.  |                                 |  |
| <b>ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP</b>   | <b>256</b>                      | <b>512</b>                                   |
| Train our youth, unemployed and under-employed citizens in conservation and green jobs, reconnect Americans to the outdoors, and support successful science-based conservation strategies.   |                                 |  |
| <b>HEALTHY FUTURES</b>   | <b>5</b>                        | <b>10</b>                                    |
| Connect communities to resources and opportunities that make healthy and independent living a reality. Use a three-pronged approach of health-focused assistance, prevention and intervention to educate and maintain healthy communities. |                                 |  |
| <b>VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES</b>  | <b>20</b>                       | <b>40</b>                                    |
| 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.   |                                 |  |
| <b>TOTAL NEW MEXICO MEMBERS</b>  | <b>488</b>                      | <b>976</b>                                   |



AMERICORPS IN NEW MEXICO

# WHERE WE STAND



Through the service of hundreds of AmeriCorps members throughout New Mexico, seismic changes occur: Communities are strengthened; people get healthier; at-risk children are empowered to learn and lead. Paths, literally and figuratively, are forged.

Since 1994, more than 10,000 New Mexico residents have served in AmeriCorps, providing more than 10 million hours of service and earning more than \$28.6 million in scholarships for their service. Volunteers, national service members and the Commission

identify and target the critical needs of New Mexico using the six CNCS Focus Areas: education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, economic opportunity, disaster services, and veterans and military families.



10,000 New Mexico residents have served

10 million hours of service

\$28.6 million in scholarships





# AMERICORPS NEW MEXICO PROGRAM YEAR 2018 IN REVIEW

**\$1,766,408**

**Federal Formula and Competitive Funds from CNCS**

**\$423,938**

**Match-Funds Leveraged (24%)**

**349**

**Members**

**235,981**

**Hours of Service Performed**

## PARTNERSHIPS BY FOCUS AREA

### **Mandy's Special Farm** Albuquerque

**FOCUS AREA:** Economic Opportunity

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$140,635

**PURPOSE:** Provide pre-vocational and vocational support to individuals with developmental disabilities.

### **EcoServants (dba Sierra Blanca Service Corps)**

Ruidoso

**FOCUS AREA:** Economic Opportunity/Environment

**FUNDING TYPE:** Competitive **AMOUNT:** \$288,055

**PURPOSE:** Build and restore sustainable trails, remove noxious weeds, conduct forest monitoring, improve parks and provide emergency relief.

### **Rocky Mountain Youth Corps** Taos, Albuquerque

**FOCUS AREA:** Economic Opportunity/Environment

**FUNDING TYPE:** Competitive **AMOUNT:** \$600,019

**PURPOSE:** Preserve and restore the environment, revitalize communities and prepare young people for healthy, productive lives.

### **Families and Youth Inc.** Las Cruces

**FOCUS AREA:** Education

**FUNDING TYPE:** Competitive **AMOUNT:** \$278,036

**PURPOSE:** Provide in- and after-school support and safe summer recreation programs for high priority schools.

### **NACA Inspired Schools Network** Statewide

**FOCUS AREA:** Education

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$207,404

**PURPOSE:** Provide educational experiences that build on community-defined needs and strengths for Indigenous students.

### **Teach for America** Statewide

**FOCUS AREA:** Education

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$47,963

**PURPOSE:** Strengthen the sovereignty of tribal nations through culturally responsive teaching techniques that increase students' college and career readiness.

### **Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico** Statewide

**FOCUS AREA:** Healthy Futures

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$68,975

**PURPOSE:** Perform activities such as nutrition education, tasting demonstrations, site training, problem solving and referrals for those needing social services and health resources in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Belen, Anthony and Deming. AmeriCorps members are also responsible for increasing client knowledge of nutrition, ultimately leading to behavior changes.

### **RMYC/Not Forgotten Outreach** Taos

**FOCUS AREA:** Veterans and Military Families

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$78,990

**PURPOSE:** Receive training in agricultural and vocational skills to serve in agriculture, starting with Taos County. The AmeriCorps members, veterans and military family members successfully transition from military to civilian life through increased economic and psychological well being.

## PLANNING GRANTS

### **Regents of the University of New Mexico**

Albuquerque

**FOCUS AREA:** Education

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$26,331

**PURPOSE:** Address STEM education, mentoring and leadership, and provide service activities to disadvantaged youth (grades 6-8) resulting in in-school mentoring or academic support to sustain children's interest in STEM subjects.

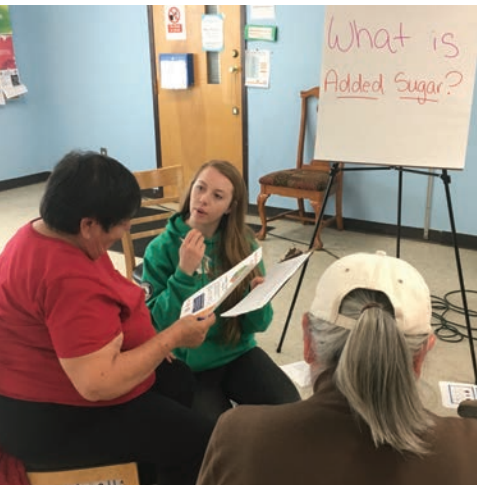
### **County of Rio Arriba** Rio Arriba County

**FOCUS AREA:** Healthy Futures

**FUNDING TYPE:** Formula **AMOUNT:** \$30,000

**PURPOSE:** Create a "Recovery Corps" to serve the workforce needs of detention and health/recovery agencies impacted by the opioid epidemic. Members will be equipped with a Certified Peer Support Worker (CPSW), Community Health Worker (CHW), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or Medicaid coding/billing certification to provide recovery support and Medicaid billing at clinics, hospitals, community mental health centers, treatment providers and the County Detention Center.

# METHODOLOGY



To inform this plan, the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism contracted with Carl Colonius to conduct a statewide needs assessment throughout 2018. (Consultant Carl Colonius is a co-founder and former Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, an AmeriCorps-funded organization.) The needs assessment used a variety of methodologies, including key informant interviews, listening sessions, meetings with local government officials and a survey of Commissioners on the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism board. The key findings that resulted from these activities are addressed throughout this plan, particularly in the “New Mexico Funding Priorities: Program Year 2019–2021” and “Overcoming Barriers to Service” sections that follow.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Carl Colonius conducted an initial eight key informant interviews with local stakeholders to better understand unmet needs in their communities and to identify key contacts to outreach for listening sessions.<sup>4</sup>

## LISTENING SESSIONS

Carl Colonius and staff of the Commission hosted listening sessions in eight counties, with outreach efforts also targeting a neighboring county. Counties were primarily selected based on location of existing and prior AmeriCorps programs, but also included counties with no history of AmeriCorps.

### Listening sessions were designed to:

1. increase awareness of AmeriCorps opportunities in New Mexico;
2. understand local services and gaps; and
3. identify promising opportunities to create new AmeriCorps partnerships.

In some counties, multiple organization-specific stakeholder meetings were conducted in addition to or in lieu of listening sessions. In total, 106 unaffiliated participants and 76 organizations were represented in the sessions. Key community needs identified in each county are as follows:

★ **Bernalillo County:** Education, economic opportunity, “silo-ization” of nonprofit sector (i.e., need for collaboration)

★ **Doña Ana County:** Quality education, literacy, economic opportunities for youth

★ **Grant County:** Economy opportunity, environmental management

★ **Lea County:** Economic opportunities for youth, education, out-of-school-time programs

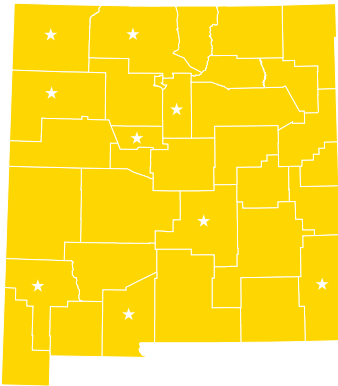
★ **Lincoln County:** “Silo-ization” of nonprofit sector, opioid addiction, age 55+ population, child welfare, economic opportunity

★ **McKinley County:** Economy opportunity, education

★ **Rio Arriba County:** Opioid addiction, economic opportunity

★ **San Juan County:** Economy opportunity, education, lack of tribal resources

★ **Santa Fe County:** Economic opportunity, education



## MEETINGS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Carl Colonius and Sam Sokolove, the Executive Director of the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism, met with local government officials in three counties as a follow up to the listening sessions. These meetings identified ways in which AmeriCorps can address local needs that government agencies are working to mitigate. In the more rural areas, they empowered local government to serve as an intermediary for multiple applicants that, individually, do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to launch an AmeriCorps program.

## COMMISSIONER SURVEY

The New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism distributed an electronic survey to its Commissioners. The survey was primarily intended to understand the Commissioners' top priorities for AmeriCorps growth, as well as their perception of top barriers facing prospective AmeriCorps applicants. Survey questions asked Commissioners to identify the geographic areas most in need of funding, as well as rate the priority of community needs there, such as:

- ★ Economic needs of low income families and individuals.
- ★ Environmental stewardship and conservation.
- ★ Healthy futures, including health-focused assistance, prevention and intervention.
- ★ Serving and engaging veterans and military families.
- ★ Supporting programs that reduce and/or prevent prescription drug and opioid abuse.
- ★ Helping communities design and implement educational programs that support students.
- ★ Increasing the number of AmeriCorps members age 55+.
- ★ Addressing safe environments for at-risk children.

The Commission also answered questions that relate to the internal structure and governance of the organization, such as:

- ★ Do you feel that the current name of our Commission reflects our current activities and priorities?
- ★ Do you feel that it is important that we change the name of our Commission?
- ★ Have you communicated in the past with an elected official (local, state or federal) about the Commission or AmeriCorps?
- ★ What do you think prevents the Commission from funding more AmeriCorps programs?





# NEW MEXICO FUNDING PRIORITIES: PROGRAM YEAR 2019–2021



*"In this moment, on this new day, we stand together on the precipice of immeasurable opportunity. I'm ready to begin the climb — and I know you are too."*

—GOVERNOR MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM,  
2019 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS





**Every dollar that passes through AmeriCorps results in a return to society of \$3.95—in terms of higher earnings, increased output and other community-wide benefits.<sup>5</sup> AmeriCorps is an investment in New Mexico, and so the solution-oriented prerogatives of our state’s administration are inextricably tied to our own.**

Through the 2018 statewide community engagement process and needs assessment, New Mexicans identified the local issues impacting their communities and opportunities for AmeriCorps to meet their needs. These local issues reflect significant challenges facing New Mexico. While many approaches and all six of AmeriCorps focus areas will be critical to tackling these issues, the Commission will prioritize the investment of AmeriCorps resources in the following areas.

## **1. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

- a. Strategic partnerships with burgeoning industries in New Mexico (i.e. film, renewable energy)**
- b. Improving housing options for low-income families**
- c. Workforce development resources and services, such as job training and job placement programs**
- d. Eco-tourism that capitalizes on New Mexico’s enchanting landscape**
- e. VetCorps training**
- f. Inclusion-based service programming**

The 2018 Kids Count data placed New Mexico 49th out of 50 for economic well-being. When adults can’t find work in New Mexico, our children pay the price: Over one third (36%) of children in New Mexico live in families where no parent is employed full-time (vs 28% national average).<sup>6</sup> And the unemployment rate for people with a disability is more than double that of individuals without a disability.<sup>7</sup> There are encouraging statistics, too: Participation in service increases employability by 27%, regardless of a person’s gender, age, race, geographical area or job market conditions.<sup>8</sup> And AmeriCorps members—including underserved populations with Mandy’s Special Farm and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps’ ASL inclusion crews—earn critical employment skills to better prepare themselves for diverse opportunities in the workplace.



## 2. EDUCATION

- a. Engaging youth through service learning opportunities
- b. Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers
- c. Education-focused/out-of-school-time programs
- d. Increasing graduation rates

New Mexico ranked last in the nation for education in the 2018 Kids Count data. Three out of four (75%) fourth-graders in New Mexico were not proficient in reading, and four out of five (80%) eighth-graders were not proficient in math. Which means that over a quarter of high school students (29%) do not graduate on time.<sup>9</sup> It's time to stop failing our children. That's why we are creating the next generation of community-led and culturally responsive educators with Teach for America. We are providing in- and after-school support and safe summer recreation programs through Families & Youth Inc. We have funded a STEM program planning grant for middle schoolers through UNM. And children enrolled in our state's network of NACA Inspired Schools are receiving after-school mentoring in the same languages that are spoken in their homes, including Navajo. These are effective, common-sense approaches to education that every child deserves. The Commission will work with Public Education Department on integrating national service solutions into our underserved school communities.

## 3. ADDRESSING OPIOID ADDICTION

- a. Recovery Corps model

New Mexico had the 17th-highest drug overdose death rate in the country in 2017—about 13% higher than the national average. Of those deaths, two out of three involved prescription opioids or heroin.<sup>10</sup> And even when priceless lives aren't lost, opioid abuse, dependence and misuse cost New Mexico an estimated \$890 million.<sup>11</sup> But the opioid crisis is not endemic to New Mexico—it is epidemic to our nation. And so we are looking to strategies deployed in other states that have proven a track record for success. Foremost among them, the Recovery Corps model is a blueprint for expanding access to urgently needed care and support to people facing down addiction. As part of New Mexico's flagship Recovery Corps program, currently designed in a planning grant with Rio Arriba County, AmeriCorps members are on track to provide peer recovery and referral assistance to 200 participants from Rio Arriba County by Program Year 2021.

## 4. CHILD WELLNESS

- a. Addressing hunger
- b. Out-of-school-time programming

At 50th in the nation for child wellbeing, almost one-third (30%) of New Mexican children live in poverty, compared to one-in-five nationally (19%).<sup>12</sup> According to Roadrunner Food Bank, the largest hunger relief organization in New Mexico and



an AmeriCorps host site, 17% of New Mexicans experience hunger. Families in New Mexico should not have to decide between much-needed healthcare, heat or food. To help children in New Mexico reach their full potential, AmeriCorps members address hunger head-on at Roadrunner Food Bank.

## 5. RURAL EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

### a. Program models using an intermediary approach

Almost a quarter (22.6%) of New Mexicans live in rural communities. They experience higher rates of poverty (23.3% vs. 17.9%), unemployment (6.7% vs. 5.9%) and lower rates of high school graduation (91.2% vs. 96.3%) than their urban counterparts.<sup>13</sup> Many rural communities in New Mexico lack access to basic services, such as high-speed internet, transportation, healthcare and economic opportunity. Competition among municipal and non-profit agencies for state and federal funding further compounds the poverty conditions in these communities. The Commission can address these limitations by prioritizing rural intermediaries for AmeriCorps program development. In this proven model, a consortium of community-based or grass-roots agencies can act collectively in determining priorities, program design and implementation for one shared “hub” of AmeriCorps programming. The intermediary model has been emphasized by commissions including West Virginia, Hawaii, Iowa, Texas and Mississippi. The rural communities in New Mexico have not yet used this program design to further AmeriCorps service in areas that are historically underserved by national service programs.

## 6. ENGAGING AND SERVING NEW MEXICANS AGE 55 AND OLDER

### a. Engaging members age 55+

### b. Promoting AmeriCorps’ transferable education benefits

### c. Prioritizing senior-focused projects

### d. Disaster preparedness with special attention to senior needs

Thirteen percent of New Mexicans are seniors, with 27% of those seniors living alone. Unfortunately, poverty is a significant obstacle faced by seniors in New Mexico. According to the US Census, almost one in 10 senior households have an annual income of less than \$10,000, and over one in four senior households have an annual income of less than \$20,000. While these statistics are daunting, seniors are actively engaged in making positive changes in their community. According to the 2018 CNCS report on Volunteerism, nearly 28% of New Mexico’s Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) regularly volunteer, ranking them 28th in the nation. The Commission will leverage and safeguard senior talent by recruiting seniors in its outreach efforts and supporting projects that address the vulnerabilities of New Mexico’s growing senior population.



# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO SERVICE

With so many federal dollars still unclaimed in New Mexico, our communities should have every opportunity to reap the tremendous resources offered by AmeriCorps. The Commissioner survey and statewide listening sessions identified multiple perceived and actual barriers that prevent organizations from applying for AmeriCorps grants. In order to fully award much-needed funding and services in New Mexico, the Commission will work to remove these obstacles from the paths of our potential subgrantees.<sup>14</sup>



## ★ CUMBERSOME APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

A lengthy application process—further encumbered by a web of reference documents laden with technical wording—has daunted prospective subgrantees. In Program Year 2018, the Commission shortened the formula application from 101 pages to 40 pages by deleting repetition and removing procurement and purchasing language. The Commission will continue to identify, revise and further streamline its most in-demand materials, so that prospective applicants aren't overwhelmed by large volumes of complex or redundant language.

## ★ MATCH REQUIREMENT CASH

The 24% match requirement is considered a barrier by some organizations, despite there being a great deal of flexibility in how sites can meet it. Communication regarding the match should illustrate the broad spectrum of in-kind support that counts toward the threshold, so that prospective sites and communities don't view their cash flow as a deterrent.

## ★ EXTENSIVE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

Reporting and administrative requirements are a real challenge for smaller organizations that lack a robust infrastructure—both internally and externally, especially for New Mexico's many impoverished rural communities.<sup>15</sup> A proven best practice in overcoming this barrier is the intermediary (aka, "hub" or "consortia") approach to programming. In this model, an organization with sufficient administrative capacity shares its AmeriCorps programming with several smaller organizations, pooling their limited resources under one diverse consortium. These multi-focused hubs carry the added benefit of addressing rural communities' human and infrastructure needs more holistically—an approach that's also mirrored in the governor's rural development priority.

Mentorship is another strategy that the Commission has begun pursuing. By enlisting experienced AmeriCorps program managers to mentor newer grant recipients, valuable institutional knowledge will be shared, rather than siloed.

## ★ LACK OF BRAND AWARENESS

Words like "volunteerism," "members" and even "AmeriCorps" are frequently not understood by community members who aren't already engaged in the programming. To address the lack of awareness surrounding AmeriCorps' language and branding, the New Mexico Commission will pursue a three-pronged strategy:

1. continuing statewide engagement and awareness sessions overseen by the Commission Executive Director;
2. leveraging AmeriCorps alumni as champions of the program; and
3. undergoing a rebranding effort that better represents the AmeriCorps opportunity.

Engagement sessions have provided valuable insight that the AmeriCorps brand is not well-understood in many communities across New Mexico; the Executive Director can use these touchpoint sessions to make further inroads for program awareness while identifying unmet needs in various communities. Having a strong statewide alumni network—composed of community members who understand the impact of AmeriCorps firsthand—will provide a skilled, trackable pool of spokespeople who can effectively advocate for national service in New Mexico. And finally, AmeriCorps' name,<sup>16</sup> website and other outward-facing materials have traditionally emphasized the experience of membership over the experience of acting as a host site, or of community impact overall. Representing a more symmetrical relationship between members and sites in branding and communications will go a long way in helping communities understand what the program has to offer them.



# STRATEGIC GOALS

In order for New Mexico to achieve the meaningful outcomes it deserves, AmeriCorps' statewide goals must be actionable and precise. The goals outlined here are fleshed out with measurable objectives and proven strategies to ensure the Commission's success in making these aims a reality. The Commission will monitor the progress of this plan over the next three years so that these objectives will be achieved by Program Year 2021.



# GOAL 1

## Award 100% of Federal Funds to New Mexico's AmeriCorps Programs

New Mexico returns a majority of its federal formula dollars (54% or \$699,702) to the Corporation for National and Community Service. These unspent dollars represent lost opportunities to craft innovative solutions to New Mexico's most pressing challenges.

### OBJECTIVE 1

Reduce the AmeriCorps federal formula funds returned by 50% in year one, 75% in year two and 100% in year three.

|  | PY2018: Current | PY2019: Goal | PY2020: Goal | PY2021: Goal |
|--|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Federal Formula Funds Available in NM* | \$1,300,000     | \$1,300,000  | \$1,300,000  | \$1,300,000  |
| Federal Formula Funds Received in NM   | \$600,298       | \$921,983    | \$1,110,992  | \$1,300,000  |
| Federal Formula Funds Returned from NM | \$699,702       | \$378,017    | \$189,008    | \$0          |

\*Assuming stable formula funding available through 2021.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Increase to 17 AmeriCorps programs in New Mexico by PY2021.

|                         | PY2018: Current | PY2019: Goal | PY2020: Goal | PY2021: Goal |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Formula Funded Programs | 5               | 7            | 9            | 11           |
| Competitive Programs    | 3               | 4            | 5            | 6            |
| Total Programs          | 8               | 11           | 14           | 17           |

### OBJECTIVE 3

Fund at least three intermediary model programs in rural communities by PY2021.

### STRATEGIES

- A. Prioritize applicants who use the intermediary model to encourage partnerships among tribes, non-profit agencies and governmental agencies in rural communities outside of the Rio Grande Corridor.
  - a. Pre-identify and provide program-design support to at least three prospective intermediary-model programs in PY2019–2021.
- B. Require at least three formula-funded programs to apply directly to CNCS for competitive funding by PY2021.
- C. Establish a mentorship program that matches every new PY2019–2021 subgrantee with experienced staff in order to increase compliance and encourage high-performing sites through peer support.
- D. Increase AmeriCorps' statewide outreach to identify potential nonprofit and governmental partners in underserved and rural communities of New Mexico.

- a. Annually engage the WIOA regional boards to connect Commission staff to contacts in at least three underserved communities from various regions that would benefit from AmeriCorps.
- E. Continue to streamline and simplify the application process, while making grant-making cycles and processes more easily understood to potential applicants and the general public.
- F. Continue to offer individualized technical assistance to prospective applicants prior to the Commission's release of a request for applicants (RFA) in order to increase successful grant application submissions.
- G. Increase communication concerning the flexibility of in-kind match requirements to potential applicants.
- H. Partner with the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) to identify short-term service sites that can be nurtured into AmeriCorps state sites.

## GOAL 2

### Solve New Mexico's Most Urgent Challenges with National Service

Strategically use the funding priorities identified in this plan to guide grant funding decisions that ensure national service resources address priority community needs.

#### OBJECTIVE 1

Offer additional points in the RFA review process to responsive applications addressing one or more of the Funding Priority areas identified in this State Service Plan by Program Year 2019.

#### OBJECTIVE 2

Pilot a Service Learning Curriculum in partnership with Teach for America to be introduced to the New Mexico Public Education Department by Program Year 2020.<sup>17</sup>

#### OBJECTIVE 3

Fund a Recovery Corps site to address opioid/prescription drug addiction by Program Year 2021.

#### STRATEGIES

- A. Prioritize the intermediary model as a means to overcome identified barriers to service.
- B. Conduct strategic outreach to organizations with the potential to successfully host AmeriCorps programs that address the priority areas.
  - a. Prioritize outreach in rural communities
- C. Align grant-making with the goals and priorities of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Administration.
- D. Encourage coordination among federal, state and local agencies to manage National Service opportunities.
- E. Work with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions field offices (i.e.



Workforce Connection centers] and Apprenticeship and Youth departments to provide work-based training through volunteer opportunities.

- F.** Offer an annual technical workshop geared toward agencies focused on literacy to support responsive applications for funding.
- G.** Develop an informational campaign in partnership with the Department of Senior Affairs to inform New Mexicans age 55 and older of AmeriCorps service opportunities.

## GOAL 3:

### Create a Robust AmeriCorps Alumni Network

Mobilize AmeriCorps alumni—changemakers with strong ties to their communities—to champion the community, personal and professional impacts of service in New Mexico.

#### OBJECTIVE 1

**Create an AmeriCorps Alumni Task Force by PY2021 to conduct legislative outreach in partnership with Commissioners.**

#### OBJECTIVE 2

**Engage at least 50% of Program Year 2019–2021 AmeriCorps Members in the Alumni Network within their first post-service year.<sup>18</sup>**

#### OBJECTIVE 3

**Recruit at least one private sector entity per program year to become Employers of National Service alumni.<sup>19</sup>**

#### STRATEGIES

- A.** Amend the Commission by-laws to create an AmeriCorps Alumni Commission Board Executive Committee position to support the alumni network efforts and provide ongoing engagement opportunities for AmeriCorps advocacy and promotion.
- B.** Enter Program Year 2019–2021 AmeriCorps alumni into the WIOA Workforce Connection Online System database to provide career employment services and track post-service employment for at least three years.
- C.** Use AmeriCorps alumni to recruit prospective members and sites.
- D.** Host quarterly alumni events, such as networking socials, job fairs and employment skill trainings.
- E.** Engage alumni in legislative initiatives, such as making New Mexico an Employer of National Service and one-for-one matching scholarships for AmeriCorps alumni.
- F.** Educate recent alumni about the non-competitive eligibility benefits they have earned.<sup>20</sup>
- G.** Create a task force of alumni age 55 and older to promote peer awareness of transferrable education benefits.
- H.** Work with the Governor’s Office to sponsor a statewide Member Recognition event.

## PROMISING PRACTICES FOR ALUMNI



Learning from our national partners, the Commission will engage AmeriCorps alumni in at least two key legislative initiatives over the next three years:

1. **listing New Mexico as an Employer of National Service and**
2. **funding one-for-one matching scholarships for those engaged in national service.**

Employers of National Service is a CNCS initiative that creates recruitment, hiring and advancement opportunities for AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni. The Commonwealth of Virginia became the first state to officially join Employers of National Service in 2015.<sup>21</sup> Since that time, more than 500 companies, nonprofits and public agencies have signed on—a testament to the enduring skills and service integrity of national service alumni.

Furthermore, the Commission would like to see one-for-one matching on scholarships for students who participate in national service programs. At the start of 2019, the Arizona Legislature introduced the John McCain Public Service Scholarship Fund bill (HB 2321) in memory of the late long-serving Senator. This bill would create a scholarship fund that matches student awards earned through national service programs—regardless of the program or location in which they're earned. The proposed scholarship fund would encourage service among college students by awarding recipients an additional stipend that could be earned while completing their programs. Money for the scholarship fund would come from the state fund.<sup>22</sup>

## GOAL 4

**Make AmeriCorps  
a Known Entity  
in New Mexico**

Increase the awareness and reputation of AmeriCorps in New Mexico across all sectors, emphasizing the community impact of National Service for host sites and members.

### OBJECTIVE 1

Rename the Commission to accurately reflect the AmeriCorps experience by end of Program Year 2019.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Create localized marketing materials that are geared toward prospective sites, in addition to prospective members, by end of Program Year 2020.

### OBJECTIVE 3

Boost social media presence of @AmeriCorps\_NM to 850 followers on Instagram and 500 followers on Twitter by PY2021, while increasing posts on the Facebook page administered by New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to 20 per calendar year, in order to spread awareness of the AmeriCorps brand, communicate events/happenings, and celebrate members in service.

### STRATEGY

- A. Conduct market research to establish the core messaging and brand identity at the heart of New Mexico's AmeriCorps experience.

- B.** Identify stakeholders (e.g., host sites, prospective members over 55) that the public awareness campaign will seek to engage.
- C.** Simplify external language and messaging to appeal to diverse audiences.
- D.** Articulate through brand collateral why the Commission is housed in the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions.
- E.** Utilize social media to promote AmeriCorps opportunities.
- F.** Issue a quarterly online newsletter highlighting our programs and leadership, with supportive impact data.
- G.** Engage members and alumni to participate in New Mexico's Days of Service, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, AmeriCorps Week and other relevant events.
- H.** Prepare an annual report describing the impact of AmeriCorps to be presented to the Governor's Office each program year.
- I.** Work with NMPED to coordinate visits from current and former AmeriCorps members to high schools throughout the state to present post-graduation service options.
- J.** Conduct a public awareness campaign, highlighting diverse impacts on the community, alumni experiences and program sites.

## SUCCESSFUL AMERICORPS PROJECTS AND HOST SITES AT A GLANCE

**The Commission encourages potential applicants to be mindful of these characteristics of a compelling proposal:**

Eligible organizations—including tribes, institutions of higher education, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and state entities—must operate within New Mexico.

### THE PROPOSED PROJECT

- ★ Will produce significant contributions to address an identified community need.
- ★ Offers meaningful service experiences that will increase the skills of AmeriCorps members.

### THE APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

- ★ Has experience, staffing and management structure to implement the proposed program.
- ★ Maintains financial policies and knowledge of accounting principals.
- ★ Can provide adequate supervision to AmeriCorps members.
- ★ Has a history of demonstrating measurable impact.
- ★ Has a history of working collaboratively with other agencies toward a common goal.
- ★ Offers an inclusive service culture.





## END NOTES

- 1 The 2016–2018 State Service Plan was effective through Dec. 31, 2018. With the incoming administration of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, we have used this time between plans to study and align with the priorities of the new state administration.
- 2 According to the Code of Federal Regulations §2550.2 (I), a State Service Commission is a bipartisan or nonpartisan state entity, approved by the Corporation, consisting of 15–25 members (appointed by the chief executive officer of the state), that is responsible for developing a comprehensive national service plan, assembling applications for funding and approved national service positions, as well as administering national and community service programs in the state.
- 3 In New Mexico, resources and programming for AmeriCorps State and National programs are administered by the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism under the oversight of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions.
- 4 Interviews were conducted with local experts Norty and Summer Kalishman, Antoinette Tellez Humble from the Kellogg Foundation, Emily Kaltenbach of the Drug Policy Alliance, Linda Milborne and Valerie Rangel from New Mexico Community Foundation, and James Jimenez and Bill Jordon from New Mexico Voices for Children. In addition, James Jimenez from New Mexico Voices for Children and Emily Kaltenbach from Drug Policy Alliance provided insight and committed to remain a resource for current and future grant awardees after the Albuquerque listening session.
- 5 Belfield, Clive. (2013). *The Economic Value of National Service*. Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education Teachers College, Columbia University.
- 6 Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2018 *Kids Count Profile: New Mexico*. Retrieved February 22, 2019, from [https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2018KC\\_profiles\\_NM.pdf](https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2018KC_profiles_NM.pdf)
- 7 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). *Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary*. Retrieved February 26, 2016, from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>
- 8 Corporation for National and Community Service: Research. Retrieved March 3, 2019, from <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via/research>
- 9 Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2018 *Kids Count Profile: New Mexico*. Retrieved February 22, 2019, from [https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2018KC\\_profiles\\_NM.pdf](https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2018KC_profiles_NM.pdf)
- 10 New Mexico Department of Health. (2017). Drug Overdose in New Mexico. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://nmhealth.org/publication/view/marketing/2117/>
- 11 New Mexico's Indicator-Based Information System (NM-IBIS). Retrieved February 28, 2019, from [https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/complete\\_profile/DrugOverdoseDth.html](https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/complete_profile/DrugOverdoseDth.html)
- 12 Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2018 *Kids Count Profile: New Mexico*. Retrieved February 22, 2019, from [https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2018KC\\_profiles\\_NM.pdf](https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2018KC_profiles_NM.pdf)
- 13 U.S. Census Bureau. *QuickFacts; USDA Economic Research Service: State Fact Sheets*. Retrieved February 28, 2019, from <https://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?StateFIPS=35&StateName=New%20Mexico&ID=17854>
- 14 The Commission is currently staffed to handle a significantly expanded portfolio in support of these efforts; two full-time program officers have the capacity to administer up to eight programs each. If general fund appropriations are maintained at their current level, the Commission will be adequately staffed until FY2021, at which time the staffing composition will be reassessed.
- 15 According to census data, poverty rates in New Mexico's rural areas are the highest in the country, at 21.9%, while more New Mexicans live in rural areas than the national average. United States Census Bureau. (2016). *New Census Data Shows Differences Between Urban and Rural Populations*. Retrieved February 18, 2019, from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-210.html>
- 16 There are many excellent organizations in New Mexico devoted to increasing volunteerism—including the Center for Nonprofit Excellence, VolunteerMatch, Share NM, Community Link ABQ and One ABQ—and the New Mexico Commission for Volunteerism is frequently misidentified as one of them.
- 17 Service learning is combining learning goals and community service in ways that enhance both student growth and the common good. Most of New Mexico's public high school do not have a curriculum that involves service learning. To encourage an ongoing continuum of service in New Mexico, the NMCCV proposes the introduction of a structured service-learning program in grades 9–12 with academic credit. A program in Arizona can serve as a model in New Mexico. New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism. (2006). *New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement*.
- 18 Based on overall New Mexico national service alumni portfolio size.
- 19 Currently, there are no New Mexico-based registered private sector Employers of National Service.
- 20 AmeriCorps alumni receive preferred status when applying for federal jobs on [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov); USAJOBS is a United States Office of Personnel Management website that tracks and maintains its own data independently of the Commission.
- 21 *Virginia Becomes First State to Join Employers of National Service*. Retrieved March 6, 2019, from <https://blog.americorpsalums.org/2015/01/27/virginia-becomes-first-state-to-join-employers-of-national-service/>
- 22 State of Arizona House of Representatives Fifty-Fourth Legislature First Regular Session. (2019). *House Bill 2321*. Retrieved March 6, 2019, from <https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/54leg/1R/bills/HB2321H.pdf>



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