

Analysis

Item 2: Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Oregon Volunteers Program

Analyst: Doug Wilson

Request: Allocate \$300,552 to provide the total amount of state match for federal funds for the operations of the Volunteer program and the Ameri Corps program for the current biennium.

Analysis: The federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides an annual \$265,000 grant for each year of the 2019-21 biennium to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) for offsetting the operational costs of the Oregon Volunteers program which also provides the state management of the Ameri Corps program. These federal grant resources require an equal state match. These combined state and federal resources provide funding for two program analysts and the associated Services and Supplies to administer and coordinate the program. The program was administered by the Governor's Office until halfway through the 2017-19 biennium when it was transferred to HECC. At that time there was sufficient funding for the state match for the remainder of the 2017-19 biennium.

During the early development of the 2019-21 budget, only a portion of the \$265,000 General Fund required for the state match was included in the budget, leaving a portion of the first year's match underfunded with no amount provided for the second year's state match. As a result, HECC's budget is underfunded by \$300,552 General Fund to meet the match requirement to fully utilize the available federal funding. HECC staff has stated that in previous conversations with CNCS, the federal authorities have made it clear that they would consider pulling all this federal funding in the future if these two positions and associated costs are not funded.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board allocate \$300,552 from the Emergency Fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to meet the state matching requirement for the Oregon Volunteers program and the Ameri-Corps program.

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Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Brickman

Request: Allocate \$300,552 from the State Emergency Fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for the state match required by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) of the Commission for Voluntary Action and Service (Oregon Volunteers).

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Volunteers Program was transferred from the Office of the Governor to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (Commission) in Senate Bill 5201, during the 2018 Legislative Session. In the 2017-19 biennium, the Commission received the program (and funding) for one year of the biennium. After adjournment of the 2019 Legislative Session, it was discovered that during the development of the Agency's 2019-21 budget, an error was made. The error was only including one-year's funding for the program's match requirement.

The federal funding agency for Oregon Volunteers, CNCS, issues an annual operating grant in the amount of \$265,000 to the Commission for the operations and administration of the AmeriCorps program in Oregon. The 2019-21 biennial General Fund total for state match requirement should have been \$530,000. To receive the federal operating funds, Oregon Volunteers must guarantee a dollar to dollar match. Due to the error of building in only one year's worth of funding, the Commission received \$229,448 General Fund, in House Bill 5024 (2019). The Commission verified with CNCS, that it can claim the remainder of last year's grant award and this year's grant by receiving an additional \$300,552 General Fund for this biennium. Without the match, the loss to the Commission would require a reduction in grants to local non-profits and coalitions receiving Oregon Volunteers support and a reduction in staff and board support.

Legal Reference: Allocation of \$300,552 from the State Emergency Fund to supplement the appropriation made by chapter 666, section 1(1), Oregon Laws 2019, for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's federal match requirement for the Oregon Volunteers Commission.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Office of the Executive Director
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Salem, OR 97310
www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Tina Kotek, Co-Chair
State Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of Request

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) requests an increase of \$300,552 General Fund disbursement from the Emergency Fund to utilize state general funds to meet federal funds match requirements for Oregon Volunteers (OV), otherwise known as the Commission for Voluntary Action & Service, to manage the program.

Agency Action

Oregon Volunteers promotes and supports AmeriCorps, volunteerism, and civic engagement to strengthen Oregon communities. The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 established the program in 1994. The Oregon Legislature transferred the program from the Governor's Office to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in July 2018. Previously, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services Shared Client Services unit managed the grant on behalf of the Governor's Office.

The federal funding agency for Oregon Volunteers, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), issues an annual operating grant, in the amount of \$265,000, to the state commission to facilitate operations and administration of AmeriCorps program grants in Oregon, for a total of \$530,000 per biennium. To receive these operating funds Oregon Volunteers must guarantee a dollar to dollar match. When the program was transferred to HECC in July 2018, the general fund expenditure limitation was provided for one year and reduced from the original

limitation of \$250,000. The HECC general fund limitation is currently \$229,448 GF limitation in HB 5024, Section 1, Chapter 666, 2019, for the 2019-2021 biennium.

To continue managing the OV grant, HECC requests an additional \$300,552 in General Fund expenditure limitation to administer the OV grant during the 2019-2021 biennium. This amount is based on existing Oregon Volunteers federal fund agreement amounts. HECC will include these match funds in its budget estimates as it prepares its 2021-23 Agency Request Budget.

Action Requested

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission requests General Fund disbursement from the Emergency Fund of \$300,552 to administer the grant for Oregon Volunteers and meet the federal match requirement.

Legislation Affected

Chapter Law 666 (2019 Laws), Effective April 3, 2019; Section 1

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ben Cannon".

Ben Cannon
Executive Director