

## ANALYSIS

### Higher Education Coordinating Commission AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund

---

**Analyst:** Kim To

**Request:** Approve the submission of a federal grant to the AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund, in the amount of \$300,000, for funding to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

**Analysis:** The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) OregonServes program is requesting authorization to apply for a federal grant through the AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund to support existing staff in efforts to recruit and retain emergency preparedness and general community service volunteers statewide.

Housed in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, OregonServes is the federally required AmeriCorps State Service Commission for Oregon, charged with supporting and advancing national service, volunteerism, and civic engagement in local communities and statewide. OregonServes is also a primary responding partner in Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) Emergency Response Plan for Volunteers and Donations. In this role, OregonServes is responsible for resource development and coordination of national service resources and volunteer coordination.

The AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund is designed to provide funding to organizations to expand recruitment and retention of skilled-based volunteers to solve community problems. This is a competitive grant and requires a 20% match of \$60,000 which HECC plans to fulfill with existing agency resources and in-kind services.

If awarded, the HECC OregonServes unit would hire one limited duration Office Specialist 2 position to support existing staff with the implementation of two vendor-managed volunteer management software (ReDI and Get Connected) to help the agency identify, recruit, and manage disaster recovery and general needs volunteers. A portion of the funding will be used to provide microgrants to community organizations to develop accessible and equitable emergency response plans, volunteer resources, and civic engagement and service-learning initiatives.

The grant application was due May 16, 2023. HECC submitted a request to the Legislature on April 28th, however due to legislative scheduling conflicts, a work session could not be scheduled prior to today, making this a retroactive approval.

**Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.

## Higher Education Coordinating Commission Crawford

---

**Request:** Authorization to apply for a grant of \$300,000 from AmeriCorps to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is requesting authorization to apply for a \$300,000 grant from AmeriCorps' Volunteer Generation Fund to pursue three actions:

- 1) Implement two vendor-managed volunteer connector databases, one focused on disaster recovery, and the other on more general volunteer activities. These will be vendor managed and not require agency support;
- 2) Provide grants to community organizations to develop accessible and equitable emergency response plans and volunteer resources; and
- 3) Provide grants to community organizations to develop civic engagement and service-learning initiatives related to emergency preparedness.

The grant is a competitive grant with a match requirement of 20 percent. If awarded for the first year, HECC would be eligible to seek an additional two years of funding with a higher match requirement. HECC would use \$33,000 General Fund and \$27,000 in-kind services to cover the match requirement for the first year of the grant. If successful, the agency will request additional expenditure limitation and seek to hire a limited duration position to help implement and administer the databases.



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

3225 25th Street SE

Salem, Oregon 97302

[www.oregon.gov/HigherEd](http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd)

April 28, 2023

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair  
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

### **Nature of the Request**

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), via OregonServes, is putting forth this 10-day notification letter to request permission for the OregonServes Commission to apply for a federal funding opportunity from AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is the federal agency that brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. OregonServes is the state service commission for national service, civic engagement and volunteerism. OregonServes is also a responding partner in the states' Emergency Support Function 16 for donations and volunteers. HECC is applying for \$300,000 through the [Volunteer Generation Fund](#), to strengthen HECC's ability to recruit and retain volunteers.

The Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grant opportunity makes investments in volunteer management practices to meet critical community needs. The VGF prioritizes applications that propose removing barriers to engage volunteers from historically underrepresented communities and programs that actively engage volunteers in removing structural racial inequities. OregonServes will utilize the HECC Equity Lens in the development and implementation of this grant program. This federal opportunity was released on March 17, 2023, and the due date for the application is May 16, 2023. The \$300,000 in federal funds is for the allowable cost period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. If awarded a grant in this first year of the opportunity, the HECC may be eligible for two additional years, which would require future applications that are based on performance in the first year.

### **Agency Action**

HECC intends to apply for \$300,000 to implement three interventions that address identified community needs to increase community resiliency, volunteerism, and civic engagement. The interventions will focus on investing resources and building organizational capacity by providing targeted assistance to organizations and populations most in need of support including youth, rural and BIPOC communities. The three interventions are:

1. Implementing two volunteer connector databases (one focused on disaster recovery, the other focused on general volunteer activities) to address the lack of recruitment and management tools in the state for both disaster and general volunteer needs. These databases are vendor-managed and will not require agency IT support.

2. Reducing barriers to inclusivity during a disaster by providing grants to community organizations to develop accessible and equitable emergency response plans and volunteer resources.
3. Provide grants to community organizations and schools to develop inclusive and accessible civic engagement and service-learning initiatives related to emergency preparedness.

HECC will use grant funds to hire 1 FTE limited duration Office Specialist 2 to help with the implementation and administration of the volunteer connector databases. HECC will also use funds to provide sub-grants to organizations to increase capacity, provide volunteer management training workshops, and training and outreach materials. There is a 20% match requirement of \$60,000, which HECC plans to cover with Agency resources and in-kind services.

The VGF opportunity aligns with OregonServes' state and federal statutory responsibilities, and strategic goals to:

- Expand the impact of volunteering and civic engagement -- expand resources for volunteer management professionals.
- Provide communities with the resources and best practices needed to effectively engage volunteers, prepare response and recover from disasters.
- Invest in resources and professional development activities that increase the capacity of community organizations to engage volunteers and national service members.
- Center equity, diversity and inclusion principles within the work of the commission.
- Promote civic engagement and service-learning programming in K-12.

HECC currently employs a Volunteer and Disaster Services Coordinator who will implement the grant activities.

HECC will use \$33,000 in agency General Fund and will provide \$27,000 of in-kind services to meet the match requirements.

**Action Requested**

HECC requests authority to apply for the Volunteer Generation Fund grant in the amount of \$300,000 from AmeriCorps.

**Legislation Affected**

If funds are received, HECC will be requesting additional expenditure limitation.

Sincerely,



Ramona Rodamaker, Deputy Executive Director for  
Ben Cannon, Executive Director  
Higher Education Coordinating Commission