Volunteer Tennessee 2016-18 State Plan

Background:
Federal law provides that State Commissions, such as Volunteer Tennessee, must prepare a national service plan for the State that: is developed, through an open and public process; covers a 3-year period; includes measurable goals and outcomes for the State national service programs in the State; ensures outreach to diverse community-based agencies that serve underrepresented populations; provides for effective coordination of funding applications submitted by the State and other organizations within the State under the national service laws; is updated annually; ensures outreach to, and coordination with, municipalities (including large cities) and county governments regarding the national service laws; and contains such information as the State Commission considers to be appropriate or as the Corporation may require. In addition, federal law provides that the State shall work with appropriate State agencies and private entities to develop a comprehensive State service plan for service by adults age 55 or older.

Based on board strategic planning and input gathered from stakeholders, Volunteer Tennessee developed the following Tennessee State Plan.

I. Focus Areas and Measures
Focus Area 1: Cultivate a Culture of Service.
 Target: 1.1. Institutionalize Service-Learning:
  Outcome 1.1.1. Advocate with the DOE and Tennessee School Board to implement Service-Learning credit for high school utilizing meaningful Service-Learning by 2018.
  Outcome 1.1.2. Collaborate with the Tennessee Board of Regents to utilize Service-Learning as tool to meet Tennessee Promise service requirements by 2018.
  Outcome 1.1.3. Recognize 12 schools (K-12) engaged in exemplary Service-Learning and volunteerism through Service-Learning Seal of Approval by 2018.

 Target: 1.2. Build Capacity for Volunteer Programs:
  Outcome 1.2.1. Increase participation and quality of Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning (TCVSL) workshops by 2018.
  Outcome 1.2.2. TCVSL attendees will implement or enhance 10 systems or business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) as a result of workshop participation each year.*
  Outcome 1.2.3. 90% of the TCVSL workshop participants will rate the workshop content as good or excellent each year.*
  Outcome 1.2.4. Increase youth participation at TCVSL by 10% by 2018.
  Outcome 1.2.5. 100% of participating Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards counties have a youth and adult honoree by 2018.

Focus Area 2: Board Involvement.
 Target: 2.1. Leverage Board Involvement:
  Outcome 2.1.1. Increase success and visibility of programs.
  Outcome 2.1.2. Increase awareness of Volunteer Tennessee.
  Outcome 2.1.3. Increase board member participation with programs (including days of service, swearing-in and graduation events, site visits, etc.).

Focus Area 3: Strengthen Awareness and Collaborations.
 Target: 3.1. Strengthen Awareness and Collaborations:

Outcome 3.1.1. Organizations participate in annual regional meetings.
Outcome 3.1.2. Volunteer Tennessee board and staff visit all General Assembly members through Day on the Hill.
Outcome 3.1.3. Increase media hits, tweets, etc. and 1 post each week.
Outcome 3.1.4. Governor attends in and supports GVSA by 2016.
Outcome 3.1.5. Produce white paper of fundraising strategies/models and fundraising plan with Friends of Volunteer Tennessee with $ goals.
Outcome 3.1.6. Increase funds raised by 10% by 2018.

Focus Area 4: Create Comprehensive Marketing Strategy.
Target: 4.1. Promote Volunteer Tennessee Brand with high visibility campaign:
Outcome 4.1.1. Programs that receive funding from Volunteer Tennessee to prominently display Volunteer Tennessee logo by 2018.
Outcome 4.1.2. Volunteer Tennessee tags in social media posts increase by 2018.
Outcome 4.1.3. At least one event with local Miss Tennessee title holders implemented by 2018.

Target: 4.2. Promote Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards:
Outcome 4.2.1. Increase county involvement to 65% by 2016, 70% by 2017, 75% by 2018

Target: 4.3. Increase visibility with policy makers/elected officials:
Outcome 4.3.1. General Assembly members reached through Volunteer Tennessee activities.

Target: 4.4. Establish new & promote existing certification/recognition programs:
Outcome 4.4.1. First corporate certifications provided at 2017 Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning.

Focus Area 5: Increase Sustainability of Volunteer Tennessee.
Target: 5.1. Increase Funding:
Outcome 5.1.1. By 2018, the Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards will be self-sufficient.
Outcome 5.1.2. By 2018, increase state appropriations by $160,000.

*Measure included in 2016 Commission Support Grant application.

II. State Service Plan for Adults Age 55 or Older

The nation is experiencing an increase in the number of individuals eligible for the services of the various programs established under the Older Americans Act of 1965. The U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates show the population of adults age 55 and older in Tennessee at 27% of the total population. As Tennessee's Boomer population continues to reach retirement age, the State will face greater challenges for all of the systems that work to support older persons. While government and informal systems that historically work together to address the needs of older persons are stressed by the sheer numbers of older persons in the United States, it is important to acknowledge the opportunities that the growing number of older adults seek to contribute to, or pay back, their communities.

Healthier, more active and more assertive information seekers than generations of the past, young Boomers, if offered interesting and rewarding opportunities to help their communities, will help to shore up faltering government and community resources. From a labor perspective, this population may be divided into three basic groups: 1) those who will retire and stop working earlier than their full Social Security retirement income eligibility, 2) those who will work to the age of full Social Security retirement income eligibility and then retire and, 3) those who will continue to work beyond their full Social Security retirement income eligibility age. In a

strong economy, more people will be inclined to retire early, but in a weak economy, as is the case at present, more will decide to stay in the workforce longer just to make ends meet. The 2013 Local Employment Dynamics data from the Census Bureau indicates that adults age 55 and older made up 21% of the Tennessee workforce. This same data shows that the largest segment of these older workers are spread throughout rural areas of the State; however, several metropolitan areas showed high numbers of older workers.

The enormous increase in the number of older workers brought about by the "aging-in" of the Boomers is creating a glut of job-seekers for relatively few paying positions. According to information provided by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, older workers will make up a higher proportion of the 2016 workforce, and approximately 75% of State employees are within 5 years of retirement. Paying positions are available, but competition to get those is stiff. Boomers looking for jobs are likely to be open to a variety of non-traditional "employment" configurations, provided that each offers some type of useful compensation. An example would be the pairing of older, experienced workers with younger workers for mentoring – the mentoring could be reciprocal, with the older person sharing skills acquired over decades of work in the same or a similar field with the younger worker and the younger worker helping the older one understand and navigate newer technology and methods of communication. Older workers who become less able to do strenuous physical work could benefit from learning new skills by working with younger people. Acceptable forms of compensation might include money, the exchange of goods or services, or opportunities for networking, new experiences or new learning.

According to Dr. Jim Powers, Chief of Geriatrics at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Nashville, some of the benefits for older workers in the work force include income, community engagement, mentorship of younger workers, an active and healthier lifestyle, and increased longevity. Some of the pressures that keep them in the work force include Social Security income that is inadequate to retire, low savings rate of US workers, financial requirements of caregiving for children/grandchildren, need to retain health insurance that would otherwise be unaffordable, and previous loss of pension/other work place retirement benefits.

(A) Recommendations for policies to increase service for adults age 55 or older, including how to best use such adults as sources of social capital, and how to utilize their skills and experience to address community needs:

Volunteer Tennessee recommends investigating the following policies to increase service for adults age 55 or older:
1) Policies that will engage adults to serve more in the roles of transportation assistance for other seniors and hunger;
2) Policies encouraging senior technology programs that tap into the vast resources of wisdom, experience and knowledge present in our aging baby boomers. The benefits to society are enormous to have volunteer consultants, trainers and coaches available online in a variety of fields, and the engagement can only be good for the physical, emotional and social health of the older volunteers.
3) Policies that will assist older adults in finding volunteer opportunities that best fit their interests.

(B) Recommendations to the State agency on aging:

Rather than making recommendations to the Tennessee Commission on Aging on these issues, Volunteer Tennessee believes that a more appropriate approach is to align with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disabilities' existing Tennessee State Plan on Aging 2014-2018. Volunteer Tennessee can support the Commission on Aging's existing goals in the following ways:

(i) Encourage additional volunteers in evidence-based programming that promotes healthy aging and disease

Prevention;

(ii) Encourage additional volunteers in transportation services best practice models including, but not limited to, the Independent Transportation Network (ITN); and

(iii) Support the Commission on Aging's goal to Identify and maintain professional volunteer program coordinators at the State Unit on Aging and each of the nine (9 Area Agencies on Aging and Disability to implement a volunteer program targeting baby boomers to meet the growing needs of the aging population.

(C) Recommendations for civic engagement and multigenerational activities:

To encourage civic engagement and multigenerational activities, Volunteer Tennessee recommends:

1) Using adults 55 and older coupled with college students and high school students (e.g. Tennessee Scholars) to address community problems through service-learning projects. Such a combination could provide for outstanding civic engagement opportunities and pass on new and reflective responses on behalf of all parties as they work together to meet service project work. Mentoring would take place and allow for the exchange of experience and career/workforce dialogue from both parties.
2) Developing a wide range of volunteer opportunities for adults that are highly skilled in their fields and who want to create change and make an impact in their communities.

(D) Recommendations for encouraging the development of Encore service programs in the State.

To encourage development of Encore service programs in the State, Volunteer Tennessee recommends:
1) Further support and investigation of ongoing discussions with other State Commissions on the possibility of a National Direct AmeriCorps Encore program. Such a program would allow placement of Encore members in rural communities and meet the needs of those communities by conducting activities such as financial literacy, housing placement assistance, and volunteer recognition as a means of increasing volunteerism to meet community needs in general.
2) Support for potential senior technology programs (as mentioned in (A)2) above) that would combine volunteers 55 and older with school students (K-16) working in service-learning contexts to serve communities and underserved individuals in high need of digital training and access.