



LD1433 Sec 4: Maine Commission for Community Service to Study Feasibility of Developing Higher Education Service Corps Program

**Report to the Legislature Joint Standing Committee on
Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing
Committee on State and Local Government**

Respectfully Submitted By

Volunteer Maine, Maine Commission for Community Service

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A full list of contributors to this study may be found in Appendix A. Volunteer Maine is deeply grateful to the many people who contributed their time and expertise throughout this study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the feasibility of creating a statewide Higher Education Service Corps in Maine, as directed by LD 1433. A Higher Education Service Corps, as explored in this feasibility study, could be a coordinated, statewide service-learning model that provides financial and professional support to institutions and students to engage in meaningful, community-defined and academically connected service that strengthens Maine's communities and retains talent in the state. Developed in partnership with Maine's public and private higher education institutions, the study concludes that the feasibility of a Higher Education Service Corps is high — provided key barriers are addressed, including institutional capacity, funding stability, program sustainability, and effective management. Additionally, success will require setting reasonable expectations for both institutions and students, aligned with available time and resources.

The findings reveal that Maine's higher education institutions already possess a strong and deeply embedded culture of service. Students are actively engaged in a wide range of community-based activities, both through formal academic programs and independent volunteer efforts. However, these activities are largely decentralized, inconsistently funded, and often reliant on limited institutional infrastructure or individual faculty leadership.

The study finds strong alignment between student skills and community needs across sectors such as healthcare, education, environmental stewardship, data analysis, and skilled trades. Student interest in participating in a structured service corps is high, particularly if participation includes financial support, academic credit, and opportunities for professional growth. However, significant barriers exist for both students and institutions, including time constraints, financial pressures, transportation challenges, limited housing options, and institutional capacity limitations related to funding, staffing, and academic requirements.

Overall, the report concludes that a Higher Education Service Corps is both feasible and promising if designed with flexibility, sustainability, and equity at its core. Key recommendations include establishing a statewide coordination structure alongside campus-based program management; providing stipends or financial aid to reduce participation barriers; integrating service with existing academic programs where possible; and offering multiple participation pathways, including part-time, summer, and post-graduate options. The model should also emphasize cross-institution collaboration and align service opportunities with Maine's workforce and economic development goals.

While additional research — particularly expanded student survey data and deeper engagement with community partners — is needed prior to launching a pilot, this feasibility

study demonstrates clear potential. With intentional design and sustained investment, a Higher Education Service Corps could strengthen communities, enhance student outcomes, and serve as a strategic tool to retain talent and build a more resilient and vibrant Maine economy.

BACKGROUND

LD1433 Section 4: Maine Commission for Community Service to study feasibility of developing higher education service corps program.

Maine Commission for Community Service to study feasibility of developing higher education service corps program. Resolved: That the Maine Commission for Community Service, established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 7501, the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy shall collaborate to conduct a feasibility study to examine the expansion of existing service programs and the creation of a higher education service corps program that focuses on:

1. Coastal issues;
2. Transportation;
3. Energy;
4. Housing;
5. Land and freshwater preservation;
6. Community resilience;
7. Education; and
8. Public health.

The feasibility study must also examine economic development and consider whether the higher education service corps program will operate out of each campus at the University of Maine, described in Title 20-A, section 10901-A, each campus of the Maine Community College System, described in Title 20-A, section 10901-A, and the Maine Maritime Academy. The Maine Commission for Community Service shall submit a report on the feasibility study to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government by December 3, 2025. Each joint standing committee may report out legislation related to the content of the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

Note: an extension was approved to mid-April, 2026 for the report

Service Learning

Service learning is defined as a method of teaching that integrates classroom learning with service focused on community needs targeted by students for action.¹ Service learning has historically been integrated into many of Volunteer Maine and State of Maine’s initiatives, however, there has not been an attempt to create a Higher Education Service Corps. Integration of service learning has varied based on institutional capacity and funding. As a form of service learning, a Higher Education Service Corps is different from volunteerism and internships. Internships emphasize attaining specific career-oriented skills where service providers are the main beneficiaries, while volunteerism focuses on the recipients of the services. In comparison, service learning incorporates academic learning with community service to enhance the knowledge of course material through real-world applications.²

Recent studies³ indicate the benefits of service learning include:

- increased student learning and practical experience, civic engagement, and reciprocal relationships between campus and community,
- enhanced institutional satisfaction and civic literacy, student personal and social responsibility, interpersonal skills, and civic leadership,
- a deeper understanding of course contents and academic self-efficacy, and
- improved community life through increased awareness and problem-solving skills.

Relationships between the institution and the community through service learning also allow for participating community partners to gain new information, strategies, and highly skilled (often free) support which can then evolve into employment.⁴ For students, engagement with the community is associated with increased retention and graduation rates.⁵ Additionally, multiple studies have connected participating in service learning with better career exploration skills and acquiring career-related knowledge. Studies that prioritized understanding the impacts of participation in service learning on historically underserved students found a positive impact as well.

Service learning also offers a pathway for addressing workforce challenges. In Maine, workforce challenges are driven primarily by demographic change and the need to expand the state’s talent pool. Some young people leave the state to find skill and opportunity elsewhere which has economic and socio-cultural impacts on communities. Growing local talent and attracting new workers, including through stronger connections between

¹ Maine Commission for Community Service & Learn and Serve America, (2011)

² Salam et al., 2019

³ Chittum, Enke, & Finley, 2022; Salam et al., 2019; Schultes et al., 2025

⁴ Salam et al., 2019

⁵ Chittum, Enke, & Finley, 2022

education and employment, is essential to supporting long-term economic growth, community vitality, and the state’s competitiveness.

Current Models

To understand how best to move forward with a Higher Education Service Corps in the state of Maine, it is important to investigate other potential models for this type of program.

There are several models for engaging students in service opportunities on a federal, state, and philanthropic/individual level. Through AmeriCorps, programs such as the UC Berkeley College Corps, the University of Central Arkansas BearsServe Leaders, and AmeriCorps Campus Compact VISTA create outcomes similar to the projected goals of Maine’s Higher Education Corps. These programs integrate service as supplement to students’ educational requirements to offset the cost of their education. Usually, students are serving between 300 (minimum required for AmeriCorps) and 450 hours over the course of the year and they receive a stipend in addition to the Segal Education Award.⁶ In some cases, students receive academic credit if they enroll in an associated course on leadership/civic engagement but for the most part they are non-credited programs.

Institutions prioritize offering these opportunities to students that demonstrate financial need, those belonging to underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and first-generation students to support college access and provide funding, training, and a sense of belonging. The AmeriCorps program Next Steps in Philadelphia combines Federal Work Study dollars with AmeriCorps funding. It offers up to 60 students the opportunity to choose their own service placements, and they commit to 300 hours of service and mentoring for incoming first year students. In exchange, they receive mentoring, training, and leadership development and a living stipend that is paid through the institution’s federal work study allocation, but all the hours still count towards their Segal Education Award. Next Steps will also recruit recent graduates as full time corps members to serve as team leaders who complete 1700 hours of service.

Next Steps and BearsServe are both modeled after The Bonner Scholar Program which is a privately funded model for a Higher Education Service Corps. The Bonner Scholar Program provides scholarships to students in exchange for an 8-10 hour weekly commitment to intensive and meaningful service with a local community organization over their four years as an undergraduate student — which is about 112-140 hours per semester — and 280 hours in the summer. Students engage in trainings on leadership and social justice as the Bonner Foundation believes in educating the whole person and wants to encourage students to become aware of how community issues influence service and public policy.

⁶ The Segall Award is offered to AmeriCorps volunteers that have completed a term of service for up to two terms of service. The award can be used to attend qualified institutions of higher education, training, or to repay qualified student loans.

Challenges facing these programs often depend on funding sources and the institutional requirements. Smaller institutions may struggle to recruit and manage participants due to limited capacity and smaller applicant pools. Programs that rely on AmeriCorps funding face additional complexities as they must comply with restrictions and guidelines that often must be held simultaneously with those of the educational institution. For example, the BearsServe model at the University of Central Arkansas requires students to fill out applications for both AmeriCorps and for the University to receive their stipends, creating administrative barriers. Although these programs are meant to increase access to service and reduce the cost of higher education for those that have the least access, AmeriCorps citizenship requirements can limit participation of those populations they are aiming to support. Similarly, AmeriCorps's strict service term hour requirements may be difficult for some students to meet given existing academic and work commitments, thereby reducing participation. Programs like The Bonner Scholar Program attempt to address these concerns by requiring fewer hours and being available to more types of students.

More broadly, service-learning programs require significant time and effort from both the students and the faculty, which can discourage participation. Higher education institutions and education in general are under-resourced and service learning is not often institutionally rewarded or compensated in the same way that research is for faculty members. At the same time, many students are already managing full courseloads and part-time employment to offset the costs of education, making additional service commitments difficult without meaningful incentives.

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Prior to conducting the qualitative and quantitative data collection, Volunteer Maine researched models for a Higher Education Service Corps including their successes and challenges, current literature on best practices and data for service learning, and applicable methodologies for the qualitative and quantitative components of data collection.

Qualitative Interviews

After communicating with identified representatives from Maine Maritime Academy, the Maine Community College System, and the University of Maine System, the study was expanded to include Maine's private colleges and institutions. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from Maine Maritime Academy, the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System, Thomas College,

Bowdoin College, Bates College, Husson University, University of Southern Maine, St. Joseph's, Maine's Department of Education, University of New England, Maine Campus Compact, and the Maine State Legislature to better understand the current educational and sociocultural landscape. The same set of questions was asked of each participant (Appendix B). Each interview took between thirty minutes to an hour and a half and snowball sampling was conducted to identify next interviewees.

Quantitative Survey

To supplement the answers provided by the educational institutions, a quantitative online survey was developed to be distributed to students (Appendix C). Questions were developed based on responses to qualitative interviews and using the Volunteer Functions Inventory⁷ to understand motivations behind student volunteering.

Limitations

Surveys were distributed through institutional partners, which constrained the ability to implement a comprehensive sampling protocol. Additionally, there was a short window of opportunity for collection. In survey literature, it is recommended that sampling and distribution be conducted by the researcher to allow for consistent follow up and communication and that a sampling timeframe consist of at least three months. In addition to survey fatigue, these conditions resulted in a low response rate of students for the quantitative survey. Moving forward, Volunteer Maine would like to continue collaborating with these higher education institutions to collect a more robust sample.

FINDINGS

Students across Maine's higher education institutions are actively engaging in meaningful service opportunities, both through formal institutional programs and independently within their communities. Their dedication to service combined with diverse academic and professional skillsets reveals significant untapped potential to meet community needs and maximize student and community growth by reducing existing barriers for institutions and students. However, this potential is not fully realized due to financial, structural, and institutional barriers. A Higher Education Service Corps offers an effective and scalable approach to reducing barriers by aligning program design, funding, and infrastructure in ways that make sustained service more accessible and attractive for students and institutions alike.

⁷ Clary et al., 1998

Summary of Student Service Activities Across Maine Higher Education Institutions

This study illuminated the ingrained dedication to service that exists in Maine’s higher education institutions and their student populations. Their passion for benefiting others is integral to supporting Maine’s communities as it creates opportunities for students and communities to grow and learn from one another.

Students participate in a wide range of service activities, ranging from direct community service to structured civic leadership programs both through and outside of their roles as students. Direct service is commonly done through food pantries, blood drives, animal shelters, habitat restoration, building houses (Fuller House at Saint Joseph's, Habitat for Humanity at Husson), coaching youth sports, assisting elderly residents, and community cleanups. Several institutions operate distinctive service initiatives. For example, Saint Joseph's conducts annual service trips to Guatemala focusing on healthcare and water infrastructure; Maine Maritime Academy partners with HOME (a women's housing organization in Orland); and Bowdoin offers compensation-based models including full-time summer fellowships and winter break service opportunities.

Results from the quantitative survey reinforce responses from the qualitative interviews. Respondents engage in service opportunities related to environment and conservation (60%) primarily community clean ups; animals (40%); food insecurity (55%) such as with food pantries; housing (30%); resources support (65%) through clothing drives and donation quality control; healthcare (56%) through blood drives; athletics (61%) through volunteer coaching; education (56%) through after school programs and internships; energy (12%); government (28%); safety (23%) through event security; elder support (12%); and arts/culture (23%).

Many private higher education institutions in Maine have embedded service into their degree requirements or coursework. For example, Husson requires 10 hours of service for graduation, and Thomas College offers a first-year leadership academy focused on service. University of New England's core curriculum previously included a senior seminar in citizenship that required 15 hours of civic engagement — though newer curricula reduced this to 10 hours of freshman volunteering. University of Southern Maine integrates service through capstone projects, service-learning courses, such as *Leadership 270*, which includes community resilience work and chamber of commerce events. Bates College offers 50-60 community-engaged learning courses annually and runs a community work study program supporting approximately 30 students in off-campus positions. Bates also operates a community mini-grant program through which students learn critical community-engaged philanthropy, distributing \$16,000-\$18,000 annually (up to \$2,000 per organization).

Public institutions, including those in the University of Maine System and Maine’s Community Colleges, also integrate service through applied learning requirements such as internships, practicums, and capstones to attain degrees such as nursing, education, dental health, engineering, and healthcare. At the University of Maine in Augusta, the dental assisting program must provide students with opportunities to engage in service and/or community-based learning experiences to meet industry accreditation standards. At Eastern Maine Community College, the building and construction students work with Habitat for Humanity and spend the whole year learning to build a house.

Other avenues on campus for engaging in service include Greek life chapters — such as Alpha Phi Omega — dedicated to service, and student government, clubs, and athletic teams serve as community liaisons. For those programs that do not have service requirements or are labor intensive such as at Maine Maritime Academy, where students are out at sea for a large portion of the year, students capitalize on their personal skills and relationships by offering high school coaching, helping with community projects, and serving as volunteer firefighters in their spare time.

While these efforts demonstrate a strong foundation for service across the state, existing systems lack the capacity to fully coordinate, scale, and sustain this work. With intentional investment and strategic alignment, these pre-existing programs lay groundwork upon which a Higher Education Service Corps could be built, enabling Maine to more effectively leverage student talent in support of community and economic development.

Community Needs and Applicative Skills of a Higher Education Service Corps

The qualitative interviews indicated a strong alignment between student skills and community needs. Interviewees highlighted the rural nature of Maine’s communities and how this impacts accessibility to resources such as food, housing, transportation, healthcare, and childcare. While Maine is “one big, small town,” communities are disparate and it is challenging for a single community to have all the necessary community resources alone. The benefit of a Higher Education Service Corps is that it leverages a community of individuals who are learning new skills that otherwise might not be present or in abundance. Additionally, many of those individuals come from outside of Maine, bringing new skills and experiences with them.

Identified student skills most applicable in benefiting communities were wide-ranging and included technical and vocational trades such as construction, logging, marine operations, and general technical skills; healthcare and human services such as direct patient care, mental health support, early childhood education, and other focused support roles like nursing; environment and energy skills like ecosystem monitoring and ocean studies; business management and communications skills related to organizational leadership,

project management, marketing, and effective communication; general academic skills such as data analysis, critical thinking, problem-solving, research, and digital literacy; and educational skills such as teaching and educational program development. These skills align well with the identified community needs which include tutoring, mentors, and role models for youth; data collection, analysis, and economic studies to bolster organizational capacity in non-profits and start-ups; healthcare; childcare; and environmental issues such as storm preparedness and outdoor learning.

Student Interest and Motivations for Volunteering and Service

As is demonstrated by the breadth of activities students are already engaged in, there is strong motivation and sustained interest in service opportunities, both as an expression of student values and to gain career experience. Students that responded to the quantitative survey indicated interest in a Higher Education Service Corps. Among both student and institution perspectives, there is strong consensus that stipends or other forms of financial support, academic credit, and opportunities for professional development are key factors in making such programs attractive.

Out of the 21 respondents, 10 students were actively volunteering (48%) and 11 had volunteered in the past (52%). For those that are currently volunteering, 50% volunteer monthly, 30% volunteer 4-6 times a year, 30% volunteer 2-4 times a year, and 10% volunteer on an annual basis. Avenues through which they have accessed volunteer opportunities (select all that apply) include their academic program (35%), personal time (60%), religious institutions (25%), sports teams (30%), and student clubs/organizations/government (60%). When responding to the Volunteer Functions Inventory, which examines motivations behind volunteering, respondents overwhelmingly responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to statements that made up the “Values” factor. This indicates that for many students, engaging in volunteerism aligns with their personal value systems.

Of those surveyed, 82% responded that they would be interested in a Higher Education Service Corps or similar extended service opportunity. For the program to be attractive (select all that apply), 70% of respondents listed financial aid, 60% listed academic credit, 55% listed stipend, 50% would be interested in an education award, 45% in a meal plan or college affiliated housing, 40% were interested in professional experience, 20% in a professional credential, 10% in preferential hiring benefits, and 5% listed external recognition. The qualitative interviews had a slightly different distribution. All respondents listed stipends as a motivating factor with 64% listing professional experience, 59% listing academic credit, 47% indicating civic purpose, 11% indicating recognition, and 17% mentioning housing. Financial aid, the top choice for students’ responses, and education award were both only mentioned once in the qualitative interviews.

Challenges and Barriers to Service in Higher Education for Institutions and Students

The accomplishments of Maine’s higher education institutions are laudable, yet there still exist barriers to participation for students and institutions alike. Common logistical and institutional challenges that were highlighted by interviewees included supervision requirements, funding needs, liability concerns, lack of housing, and incongruencies with the academic calendar. Other noteworthy challenges included lack of transportation, politics, institutional capacity, and time constraints based on students’ academic and personal commitments. Maine Community College noted that adult learners have limited time for service due to work and family obligations, suggesting age, socioeconomic status, and other institutional demographics shape participation patterns. For students, the primary barriers to participation in service and volunteerism are available time and their schedules (85%, 17/20). Students were asked to “Select all that apply” and the other four offered categories: Money (30%, 6/20), Transportation/Location (30%, 6/20), Knowledge of Available Opportunities (30%, 6/20), and People to go With (25%, 5/20) were all at similar percentages.

Fragmented Infrastructure and Funding Limitations

Across the board, higher education institutions also indicated that funding and resources for service learning programming are both unreliable and insufficient, creating unsustainable programs that rely on faculty champions’ labor of love in order to continue. Multiple institutions previously had funding from the state and departmental programming dedicated to service learning, which have seen shifts in support over the years, resulting in staff reductions or complete removal. Fourteen representatives from higher education institutions throughout Maine were interviewed as part of this feasibility study and all of them expressed interest in a Higher Education Service Corps, provided that it was developed and managed in a way that emphasized long-term sustainability. Important considerations for sustainability include the existing challenges public institutions already face in securing state funding, as well as the need to create incentives that encourage institutions to prioritize programs such as service learning when they receive state or private funding.

Faculty Capacity and Institutional Constraints

The way that many surviving service learning opportunities and programs are currently structured relies on faculty champions and significant time and energy from staff. Faculty at these institutions are already at capacity when it comes to their time and available resources both personally and in some cases through union contracts. Additionally, emphasis was placed on community expectations for students and institutional capacity regarding service. Interviewees expressed that the program must distinguish the difference

between simple volunteering and more complex, mutually beneficial service learning projects that are integrated with academics.

Rigid Curricula and Licensure Requirements

Within Maine’s academic institutions, especially in the public institutions, there are academic and licensure requirements for certain majors. This can make providing academic credit for service a challenge. Not only are students already engaging in significant amounts of classwork — often while also leading full lives outside of academia — but many academic programs require a professor’s oversight for credit. Working within systems already in place is thus paramount to establishing a program that is both sustainable and creates reasonable expectations of faculty and students.

Academic Calendars

Higher education institutions often will shut down during the summer months which limits their capacity to provide opportunities or resources to students. Similarly, students will often return home or take jobs elsewhere during the time between school years and semesters. This can pose a challenge for programs that incorporate longer term service opportunities.

Housing

When higher education institutions shut down during the summer months, this often will include the on-campus housing and in some cases, there is no or limited on-campus housing offered even during the school year. Housing poses a challenge even outside of academic institution availability and can influence students’ ability to stay in the area over break or post-graduation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After communicating with higher education institutions throughout the state, there is interest in engaging with a Higher Education Service Corps model. Based on the qualitative interviews, it is important for the Higher Education Service Corps to be a flexible model that can work within current higher education systems. Many institutions already have structures in place that a Corps model could leverage to have participation from students.

If a statewide system were established that was available to all higher education institutions there would be opportunity for those institutions to share resources and collaborate to maximize their individual resources in service to their students and communities. During interviews, participants were receptive to a sliding scale model for match based on institutional capacity and the possibility of sharing housing opportunities

for those institutions that close over the summer. It is this spirit of collaboration that is indicative of the potential for a Higher Education Service Corps.

During the validation session, emphasis was placed on the financial limitations of institutions and need to consider the likelihood that an institution could make match. Additionally, there would need to be clarification on how to determine an institution's capacity and who would be making that determination. Sustainable funding, a clear program model, and dedicated program management are integral to these concerns which, with the support from the legislature and Volunteer Maine, could be addressed.

If Maine were to benefit from a Higher Education Service Corps, the following program components are needed to operationalize the concept:

1. Funding for program managers at each institution,
AND
Fund a Dedicated Statewide Coordination Infrastructure that creates a statewide coordinator to:
 - a. Match students with vetted placements
 - b. Support community partners in developing scopes of work and managing Corps members
 - c. Manage logistics and compliance
2. Develop a program that honors service and incorporates lessons from other successful models where:
 - a. Required hours are a minimum of 4-6 hour weekly commitment with the option to be stacked or associated with other program requirements — which is about 56-84 hours per semester — and more during the summer depending on school resources
 - i. Hours can be stacked with other program requirements such as student teaching or clinical hours if they are unpaid as this lowers the barrier to entry for students, maximizes the value of a student's time, and encourages participation from those already engaged in service rather than adding another requirement.
 - ii. Because the program would be through the state, AmeriCorps hour requirements would not be a challenge.
 - b. Financial aid or a stipend is provided to students to offset costs
 - c. Professional development opportunities are offered as a component that is built into the program
 - d. Transportation is provided to access service opportunities recognizing that institutional transportation resources are limited and many students are unable to drive
3. Design flexible participation models (part-time, summer intensive, post-graduate year) to meet institutions and students where they are.

4. Emphasize equity and accessibility, particularly for students facing financial barriers, and address transportation barriers to improve accessibility for all.
5. Build on existing models/partnerships and work within current programs' service requirements so that they can also qualify for Higher Education Service Corps dependent on hours served.
6. Position the Corps as a talent pipeline for Maine, collaborating with the Department of Labor and state agencies to identify career-connected service placements.
7. Create a comprehensive, collaborative state program where members form a cohort and can serve cross-institutionally to pool resources and address community needs more effectively.

CONCLUSION

Higher education institutions and their students throughout the state of Maine embody Maine's motto "Dirigo — I lead" in how they engage with their communities. Their efforts are rewarded to the extent that institutions have the capacity to support their activities, but there are multiple barriers to participation that exist for both students and institutions. The activities that they are already engaged in illustrate an existing desire to serve, and with increased structure and resources that desire can be realized to its maximum potential. Potential contributions of a Higher Education Service Corps include:

1. Sustainable/longitudinal support for non-profits and communities that typical AmeriCorps programs do not have because of their limited terms
2. Increased retention of young people
3. Retention of skilled professionals in Maine's workforce
4. Community diversity and vitality
5. Higher education model integrated with service that attracts students
6. Motivation for civic engagement and learning

Before a pilot program can be funded, more research needs to be done with community members and stakeholders. A pilot would require more data collection from communities to arrive at community-defined priorities to genuine co-creation of service placements. Additionally, additional rounds of the quantitative student survey would need to be fielded.

This feasibility study has established that some higher education institutions have preliminary infrastructure in place and there exists an interest in a Higher Education Corps, but it is tempered with justifiable capacity and resource concerns.

Service learning initiatives like Higher Education Service Corps have been shown to be well worth the investment. With proper structure and sustainable support, Maine can be a

pioneer in creating a corps model that integrates the longevity and quality of AmeriCorps with the flexibility to meet communities, institutions, and students where they are.

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APPENDIX A – List of Interviewees

Interview Participants

In addition to those listed in the Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX B – Qualitative Interview Questions

Current context:

1. What kind of service activities do students engage in at your institution/through your program?

Needs:

2. From your perspective, what unmet needs exist in Maine’s communities or workforce that a higher education service corps could help address?
3. The Legislature identified eight focus areas: coastal issues, transportation, energy, housing, land and freshwater preservation, community resilience, education, and public health.
 - a. Which of these seem most relevant or feasible for your campus or region?
 - b. Are there other local priorities that might align with these themes?
4. What types of student skills or academic disciplines could be most effectively applied to these areas?

Feasibility:

1. What would make participation in a service corps attractive to your students (e.g., stipends, academic credit, professional experience, civic purpose)?
2. What existing campus or system resources could support such a program (e.g., service-learning offices, faculty champions, internship systems)?
3. What kinds of state or federal funding mechanisms could make this sustainable?
4. Are there existing programs or partnerships that might serve as a foundation for a service corps model?
5. What logistical or institutional challenges might need to be addressed (e.g., supervision, funding, liability, housing, academic calendar)?

Additional:

6. Is there anything else you’d like to share about the potential value—or concerns—you see with a Higher Education Service Corps in Maine?
7. Who else should we talk with as part of this study—on your campus or externally?

APPENDIX C – Quantitative Survey

Dear Student,

You are invited to participate in a feasibility study being conducted by Volunteer Maine in accordance with LD1433 passed into law by the 132nd Legislature on June 25, 2025. The study seeks to understand the current landscape of service and volunteer engagement among students enrolled in higher education to assess the feasibility of implementing a Higher Education Service Corps in Maine.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to fill out the following online questionnaire, which will take approximately 10 minutes. There are no risks to completing this questionnaire other than your time and any inconvenience. This study will identify ways in which the State can support communities through service while simultaneously provide growth opportunities to students.

Your survey responses are anonymous. Please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. The data will be stored on a secure electronic database. Only aggregate data will be published or shared with stakeholders. Participation is voluntary. You may stop the survey at any time or skip questions.

Thank you in advance for providing your insight into this important topic as we learn how best to support our students' ambitions and values.

If you have any questions please contact Lucy Martin at lucy.martin@maine.gov

*** 1. Are you currently enrolled in a higher education institution in the state of Maine?**

Yes

No

*** 2. Do you currently volunteer?**

Yes

No

3. Have you volunteered in the past?

Yes

No

4. How often do you volunteer?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- 9-11 Times a Year
- 6-8 Times a Year
- 4-6 Times a Year
- 2-4 Times a Year
- Yearly
- Other (please specify)

5. Through what avenues do/have you volunteer(ed)? (Please select **ALL** that apply)

- Greek life
- Academic program
- Personal time
- Religious institution
- Sports team
- Federal/State program
- Student club/organization/government
- Other (please specify)

6. What **barriers** exist to accessing volunteering/service opportunities? (Please select **ALL** that apply)

- Money
- Time/Schedule
- Transportation
- Knowledge of available opportunities
- People to go with
- Support services (i.e. childcare)
- Other (please specify)

This next section looks at the different kinds of volunteer opportunities you engage/d in. If you do **NOT** engage in a particular type of volunteer opportunity please **choose N/A**

7. Environment and Conservation (Please select **ALL** that apply)

- Land trusts
- Ecological monitoring
- Wildlife monitoring
- Community clean ups
- Agricultural farms
- Storm surge monitoring
- Mapping coastal estuaries
- Environmental engineering
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

8. Animals (Please select **ALL** that apply)

- Wildlife rehab
- Animal shelters
- Farms - Livestock
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

9. Food insecurity (Please select **ALL** that apply)

- Food pantries
- Food drives
- Community garden
- Nutrition counseling
- Food backpack program
- Grocery assistance
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

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7. Environment and Conservation *(Please select **ALL** that apply)*

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- Agricultural farms
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- Environmental engineering
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- N/A

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- Food pantries
- Food drives
- Community garden
- Nutrition counseling
- Food backpack program
- Grocery assistance
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

10. Housing (*Please select ALL that apply*)

- Habitat for Humanity
- Transitional Housing Assistance
- Homeless shelters/Warming shelters
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

11. Resource Support (*Please select ALL that apply*)

- Clothing drives
- Sorting/cleaning donated items
- Household supply drives
- Kit creation (cleaning, art, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

12. Healthcare (*Please select ALL that apply*)

- Blood drives
- Health clinics/fairs
- Physical therapy/Occupational therapy
- Volunteer ambulance corps
- Dental care
- Alcohol and drug counseling
- Mobility support
- Vector borne disease research
- Counseling/Psychology
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

13. Athletics (Please select ALL that apply)

- Volunteer coaching
- Sport staffing
- Special olympics
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

14. Education (Please select ALL that apply)

- Big Brother/Big Sister
- After school programs/clubs
- Tutoring
- Classroom assistance
- Daycare
- Teaching
- Mentoring
- High School Pipeline/Extended Learning Opportunities
- Internship
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

15. Energy (Please select ALL that apply)

- Wood banks
- Energy coaching
- Heat pump installation
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

16. Government *(Please select **ALL** that apply)*

- Internships
- Lobbying
- Canvassing
- Legal aid services
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

17. Safety *(Please select **ALL** that apply)*

- Volunteer firefighters
- Event security
- Support for survivors of domestic violence
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

18. Elder support *(Please select **ALL** that apply)*

- Hospice volunteers
- Companion support
- Elder money management
- Meals on Wheels
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

19. International (Please select ALL that apply)

- Service trips
- Peace Corps
- Teaching
- Conservation
- Health/Medical
- Construction
- Refugee Support
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

20. Arts and Culture (Please select ALL that apply)

- Museum volunteering
- Historical societies
- Historic sites
- Arts instruction (dance, art, music, photography, etc.)
- Event support
- Other (please specify)

- N/A

21. Other (Please describe)

This next section asks questions related specifically to a Higher Education Service Corps where participation would consist of a more intense volunteer/service experience (i.e. 100+ hours) associated with your institution

22. Would you be interested in a program at your institution that offered an extended service opportunity?

- Yes
- No

23. If an extended service opportunity program were to exist, what would make participation attractive? (Please select ALL that apply)

- Stipend
- Professional Experience
- Academic Credit
- External Recognition i.e. Governor, News station, Ceremony
- Education Award i.e. AmeriCorps Education Award which can be used all at once OR in smaller increments to repay qualified student loans, pay for current educational expenses at eligible institutions, and GI Bill Approved Programs.
- Financial Aid
- Meal plan/College affiliated housing
- Professional Credential
- Preferential Hiring
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

This section seeks to understand motivations for engaging in service and volunteerism

24. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding volunteering

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel compassion toward people in need | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel it is important to help others | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can do something for a cause that is important to me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can make new contacts that might help my business or career | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering allows me to explore different career options | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering experience will look good on my resume | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can learn more about the cause for which I am working | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

25. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding volunteering

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I can learn more about the cause for which I am working | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands-on experience | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can learn how to deal with a variety of people | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering is a way to make new friends | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My volunteer work is something I rarely ever think about | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would feel a loss if I were forced to give up volunteering | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I really don't have any clear feelings about volunteer work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| For me, being a volunteer means more than just doing volunteer work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering is an important part of who I am | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

This final section looks to understand the basic demographic information for students in higher education institutions throughout the state of Maine

26. What college/university do you attend?

- Bates College
- Beal University
- Bowdoin College
- Central Maine Community College
- Colby College
- College of the Atlantic
- Eastern Maine Community College
- Husson University
- Kennebec Valley Community College
- Maine College of Art and Design
- Maine College of Health Professions
- Maine Maritime Academy
- Maine Media College
- Northern Maine Community College
- Saint Joseph's College of Maine
- Southern Maine Community College
- The Landing School
- Thomas College
- Unity Environmental University
- University of Maine
- University of Maine - Augusta
- University of Maine - Farmington
- University of Maine - Fort Kent
- University of Maine - Machias
- University of Maine - Presque Isle
- University of New England
- University of Southern Maine
- Washington County Community College
- York County Community College
- Other (please specify)

27. Are you an undergraduate or graduate student?

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Other (please specify)

28. What year are you?

- First Year
- Second Year
- Third Year
- Fourth Year
- Fifth Year
- Sixth Year
- Seventh Year
- Other (please specify)

29. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to respond

30. What is your current gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary, genderqueer, or genderfluid
- Transgender female/trans woman or on the trans female spectrum
- Transgender male/trans man or on the trans man spectrum
- Gender identity not listed

- Prefer not to respond

31. What races/ethnicities do you consider yourself? (Please select ALL that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino/a/e/x American
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (please specify)

- Prefer not to respond

Thank you so much for completing this survey. We really appreciate your time and consideration as we engage in this feasibility study. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the study, feel free to email Lucy Martin at lucy.martin@maine.gov