



TEXAS STATE SERVICE PLAN, 2013 – 2015

OneStar Foundation exists to build a stronger nonprofit sector for a better Texas.

For almost four decades there has been an acknowledgement by the State of Texas of the critical importance of civic engagement to the strength of our communities. From the creation of the Texas Center for Volunteer Action in 1976 to the formation of its eventual successor, OneStar Foundation in 2004, Texas has maintained its support of a strong nonprofit sector. Today, OneStar Foundation is recognized state-wide as the voice of the sector, a neutral convener and a respected business partner to foundations, state agencies, and the business community.

From 2009-2011, with funding from the Meadows Foundation and in-kind sources, OneStar Foundation commissioned the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A & M University to conduct a research study to provide a multi-layered perspective of the nonprofit infrastructure and capacity-building landscape in Texas.

As a result of this research, and in order to enhance the infrastructure, capability, and capacity of Texas nonprofit organizations and networks to more effectively and strategically serve local communities, OneStar has chosen to implement our mission using the following strategies:

*CONNECTING faith-based and community organizations, businesses, government and foundations to resources and information about the nonprofit sector;

*PROMOTING the nonprofit sector, innovative strategies and public-private partnerships to drive community solutions; and

*CONVENING statewide nonprofit networks, developing a coordinated approach to building the strongest, most impactful nonprofit sector in the country.

It is these three principles, to CONNECT, PROMOTE and CONVENE, that guide all work done by OneStar Foundation.

As the state service commission, OneStar has also conducted extensive research on our national service efforts and AmeriCorps*Texas portfolio. As part of these efforts, OneStar commissioned Dr. Peter Frumkin of the University of Texas' RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service from 2009-2012 to develop and implement a rigorous, scientifically-based independent evaluation of the AmeriCorps*Texas portfolio (available for download on our website).

The AmeriCorps*Texas Statewide Evaluation surveyed program managers at twenty-five AmeriCorps*Texas State service programs during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 service years, as well as 1,368 members who had successfully completed the 2010-2011 service year, to assess 1) the *impact* that AmeriCorps*Texas programs have on their respective communities, 2) the *value added* of AmeriCorps to Texas, and 3) the *organizational and management structures* that are commonly

associated with impactful, value-adding AmeriCorps*Texas programs. The impact analysis component of this study also incorporated and added to some of the field-tested elements from the longitudinal study “Still Serving: Measuring the Eight-Year Impact of AmeriCorps on Alumni” designed by Abt Associates.

This research generated the following primary findings:

**1) Overall, both AmeriCorps program managers and AmeriCorps*Texas members report that their programs and service have a positive impact on the clients they serve as well as on the communities where the programs operate. AmeriCorps*Texas members, by and large, perceive their service to be very effective, believe that their service made an important contribution to the community, perceive that their service was very helpful to the community, strongly agree that they made a difference in the life of at least one person, and say that they left behind either the start of something important or part of a real solution as a result of their service.

**2) Excellence across three program characteristics—service clarity, orientation quality, and communication quality—increases the likelihood that members will assess their service as “very effective.”

**3) AmeriCorps*Texas programs are cost effective and provide value to the community. On an annual basis, by looking at the regionally adjusted reported values of service hours, members’ service represents over \$10 million in net value added to organizations and communities.

**4) Three organizational characteristics are associated with higher regionally adjusted net values of service: organizational emphasis on developing members, higher ratings for organizational systems and management, and ability to secure community support.

OneStar also conducted a 15-question Member Disability Inclusion Survey in March 2012 to assess the current climate of disability inclusion within AmeriCorps*Texas programs. The survey was developed by OneStar’s Senior Disability Inclusion Program Manager, a Social Work Graduate and the Inclusion Team of Texas using examples from other state commissions including, Florida, Illinois, and Georgia. While it is estimated that 13% of Texans age 5 and up have a disability (Center for Personal Assistance Services), our 2012 survey of AmeriCorps*Texas members indicated that of those who responded only 6% had disclosed a disability and 38% of respondents were not aware that reasonable accommodations were available to them during their service.

The collective results of our research over the years has allowed us to move forward in making data driven decisions in our outreach, grant making, and management and development of programs. In light of our research and observed needs of national service programs in Texas, OneStar will focus its 2012-2015 efforts on the following strategies:

**1) VISIBILITY: Heightening public awareness and understanding of national and community service resources, programs and opportunities throughout the state.

**2) INCLUSION: Promoting AmeriCorps*Texas as a skill-building strategy towards employment opportunities and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities, including returned veterans, while also training programs and members on becoming more inclusive of people with intellectual, developmental, physical and psychological disabilities.

****3) EVALUATION:** Continuous learning and research into effective program design, creating a stronger member experience, return on investment and demonstrating impact through evidence to determine the “value added” of service and volunteerism as a competitive advantage to achieving sustainable social change.

OneStar will continue to select AmeriCorps grantees for funding using a multi-phase process that will include review by experts from the community, OneStar staff, OneStar Senior Leadership and approval by the OneStar National Service Commission Board. Applications will be reviewed based on eligibility, selection criteria, and OneStar priorities. Upon selection of finalists, OneStar will give special consideration to finalist applications that address one or a combination of the priority areas, listed below. Applicants will be encouraged to integrate the priorities and initiatives into their program design, where they logically align with their organizational mission and objectives.

From 2013-2015, OneStar will continue to focus our national service funding and efforts on the following focus areas in our state:

****State Focus Area –** Priority will be given to programs that address the state focus area of Youth Educational Attainment.

****National Focus Areas –** Priority will be given to programs in the Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families Focus Areas.

Through this State Service Plan and all of our work, OneStar remains steadfast in its vision to make Texas home to the strongest, most effective nonprofit sector in the country.