

Montana State Service Plan Supplement for Service by Adults age 55 or older.

Context: Age is one component of diverse background and experiences among citizens in need, citizens willing to serve a term with AmeriCorps and those willing to serve as community volunteers. According to the [US Census Bureau](#), Montana is home to just over 1 million people, with 17.2% of those age 65 or older. In 2008, [The Center for Aging and Work State Profile for Montana](#) indicated more than 25% of Montana's population is age 55 or older, and indicates that 61.1% of those individuals are still employed. While the data clearly indicates that Montana values the contributions of older workers, it also may show that there is an economic motivation for working longer in life, such as unforeseen circumstances and being underemployed.

The Commission on Community Service and ServeMontana, the Office of Community Service's current and future National Service Programs are highly encouraged to engage adults age 55 and older as service participants and as beneficiaries. All AmeriCorps State programs are encouraged to engage operating Senior Corps programs during National Days of Service and for other episodic opportunities. ServeMontana staff present at the Senior Corps State Directors Annual Meeting and encourage the Senior Corps program staff to reach out and engage with AmeriCorps State programs.

Service Participants age 55 and older

In 2016, Montana Legal Services Association's Justice for Montanans Project (JFMP) AmeriCorps members engaged 2 members into service with AmeriCorps who are age 55 and older. The National Center for Appropriate Technology's Montana Energy Corps enrolled one service member who is 55+. Montana State Parks AmeriCorps has successfully enrolled three 55+ members, one each year in three of the five program years.

Montana State Parks AmeriCorps engages adults age 55 and older as they attend educational and interpretive talks/tours, volunteer during Service Days and other land stewardship events. Adults age 55 and older have served as community volunteers in State Parks, engage with members during community outreach efforts such as tabling at public events and participate through member led outreach to civic organizations (Kiwanis, Lion's Club, etc).

Service Beneficiaries age 55 and older

Montana Legal Services Association's Justice for Montanans Project (JFMP) AmeriCorps members engaged 2 members into service with AmeriCorps who are age 55 and older. JFMP served adults age 55 as follows:

- At the offices of Montana Legal Services Association, low and moderate income adults age 55+ accessed legal information, and referrals from Justice for Montanans members for help with civil legal issues including housing, family law, wills, powers of attorney, and consumer matters.
- At the Office of Consumer Protection, adults age 55+ are being educated about harmful practices by retail businesses and scam operations. JFM members investigate consumer complaints and assist with the input of information for the End-of-Life Registry.
- At the Montana State Bar, JFM members engage adults age 55+ by providing them with referrals to the modest means program for help with finding an affordable attorney, as well as

assisting with legal clinics across the state that address legal issues common to the senior population including wills and advanced directives.

- At the Court Help Program, JFM members assist people with civil legal problems by giving them the information they need to help them resolve their legal problems on their own.

Since 2005, Montana Conservation Corps 'Warm Hearts Warm Homes' initiative partners with Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Service (DPHHS) to provide income eligible seniors installed winterization measures such as window kits, door sweeps and others, depending on the needs of the home.

General Engagement, age 55 and older

In 2016 the National Center for Appropriate Technology's Montana Energy Corps program partnered with Butte RSVP in a Mayor's Day Service Project. For that project, the RSVP participants volunteered with MT Tech students and national service members in the Butte area while collecting food donations at grocery stores to be given to the Butte Emergency Food Bank.

Additionally in 2016, the National Center for Appropriate Technology's Montana Energy Corps partnered with RSVP in Billings, MT for the MLK Jr. Day of Service, serving the 55+ population for the majority of the light weatherization installations in the Billings area.

Limitations, age 55 and older

- It is understood that by design, some of our programs are mindfully serving schools and beneficiaries under age 55+. ServeMontana will continue to encourage recruitment that targets individuals of all ages, into AmeriCorps service and importantly to serve as community volunteers.
- Understanding that age is a protected category and optional for a respondent to report, ServeMontana encourages all programs to track ages of beneficiaries and Service Day participants so that they can report on this demographic. Several of them have begun the work of modifying surveys and data collection tools.