MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE (MCVS)

5-Year Strategic Plan
for Fiscal Years 2028-2032

1. COMPREHENSIVE MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE AGENCY:

The mission of the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS) is to engage and support Mississippians of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities. MCVS is the official grantmaking and service agency to volunteer and community service organizations in Mississippi. It administers federal funds under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which supports national and community service activities focusing on disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families, and under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009, which reauthorized and strengthened national service laws.

In January 1994, the Mississippi Commission for National and Community Service was created by Executive Order No. 742 to promote community service and volunteerism to meet local needs more effectively. Through the enactment of Senate Bill 2447 in 1996, the Commission officially became the state office of volunteerism, to be known as the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service. Since that time, MCVS has utilized national service programming and volunteer efforts to address a multitude of Mississippi's greatest challenges. MCVS prioritizes volunteer initiatives that are faith-based, serve deep-need communities, utilize evidence-based practices, and benefit Mississippians to the greatest extent possible.

To achieve its mission, MCVS promotes coalitions and collaborative efforts among public and private entities, including nonprofits, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher learning, and state and local agencies. Through the advancement of community service programs and resource sharing initiatives throughout the state, MCVS addresses myriad state and local needs. Since Hurricane Katrina, MCVS has provided volunteer coordination support to local agencies and the state in times of disaster, as outlined in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Direct and demonstrable results are achieved through fostering civic responsibility, strengthening the ties that bind us together as Mississippians, and educational opportunities for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

2. STATEMENT OF AGENCY PHILOSOPHY:

MCVS is committed to making service a way of life. We work to encourage a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility to the state. MCVS fosters community engagement and builds volunteer capacity through effective and efficient programming, training, outreach, and technical assistance.

3. RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS:

GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS

Statewide Goal: To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government, and *participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism*.

Benchmark: Engaged Citizenry - percentage of state residents who volunteer

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Statewide Goal: To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians.

Benchmark: Employment & Income – percent of civilian non-institutional population 16+ years employed or participating in National Service.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND ORDER

Statewide Goal: To protect the public's safety, including providing timely and appropriate responses to emergencies and disasters.

Benchmark: Average emergency response time to natural and man-made disasters.

4. OVERVIEW OF MCVS 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (FY 2028-2032):

MCVS commits to engage more Mississippians in service to their communities by increasing funding opportunities, engaging more volunteers, and ensuring more communities are better prepared to respond to disasters in their communities. This commitment was developed in consultation with the MCVS Board (which is comprised of a varied cross-section of individuals, organizations, sectors, and national service programming) as well as the state's network of agencies, nonprofit organizations, the MS Secretary of State Charities Division, and public organizations.

Government and Citizens: Volunteerism

The Commission will promote service as a strategy for government and citizens to improve communities. To engage more citizens in volunteer service, the Commission will provide training, technical assistance, and support to community and charitable organizations to allow them to increase volunteer opportunities, effectively and efficiently engage volunteers, and provide public recognition of volunteers. This will result in an increase in the number of volunteer opportunities available statewide, the number of volunteers, the number of volunteer hours, the number of nonprofits that receive volunteer management training and technical assistance, and the number of volunteers registered in our online database (powered by GivePulse).

Economic Development: AmeriCorps

The Commission will promote AmeriCorps programs as a professional development opportunity for Mississippians to access higher education and gain work experience and skills while serving their communities. To increase opportunities for Mississippians to serve in AmeriCorps, the Commission will expand the number of AmeriCorps programs, increase outreach to rural and underserved regions, assist in removing current federal barriers to accessing AmeriCorps resources, and prioritize efforts to build statewide networks supporting a diverse body of broadly minded community service organizations. This will result in an increase in the number of Mississippians engaged in National Service. AmeriCorps members also earn an education award upon completion of a service year, which most choose to invest at Mississippi higher education and technical training institutions. The Commission will work with institutions of higher education for the opportunity to match the education award members receive. MCVS believes that institutions that match the education award will see an increase in enrollment of AmeriCorps Alumni, while infusing more funding into Mississippi's institutions of higher learning.

Public Safety and Order: Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

The Commission will prepare and assist communities to engage volunteers in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. To better prepare communities, the Commission will connect volunteers and opportunities throughout the state to provide capacity building to nonprofit organizations, coordination with municipalities and county governments regarding national service laws, and to build partnerships between local emergency management agencies to reduce response time and increase long-term community resiliency. Through this work, the Commission can fulfill its role as outlined in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

5. EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT:

MCVS consistently operates strong programming because of its ability to effectively implement rigorous monitoring and oversight. Its staff is focused on the implementation of AmeriCorps, Volunteerism, and Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Through a process of regular board meetings and program site visits, the Commission determines how well the needs of Mississippians have been met. Management policies are in place to address any deficiencies in the process. Budgetary constraints are considered when new and expanded projects are requested.

Other factors which influence our ability to achieve target performance goals include:

- Federal Funding uncertainty,
- Federal barriers to accessing AmeriCorps resources,
- Progression towards external partner collaboration,
- Local and State support and funding,
- Temporary suspension and discretionary termination of grants by the federal agency,
- Strategic Communications Plan and the use of social media and other streams,
- Sub-grantees face challenges to meet match requirements,
- Complexity of managing federal grants and building capacity of non-profits,
- Finding qualified legal applicants who are prepared to manage federal funds

Even though we face these obstacles in our everyday work, MCVS still manages to produce nationally acclaimed service engagements and collaboratives that strengthen communities. Its ability to satisfy federal and state financial and programmatic audits signifies our commitment to providing quality programs and services to the citizens of Mississippi. These audits include those from the Office of Inspector General, an annual A-133 audit, desk reviews, routing Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) analyses, risk-based desk and on-site reviews of sub-grantees; and a yearly audit conducted in coordination with the Institutions of Higher Learning.

5.1 INTERNAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS USED TO EVALUATE AGENCY'S PERFORMANCE:

MCVS has established strong guidelines and managerial policies for its internal management system and performance evaluation. The agency uses an internal management system to evaluate performance achievements in relationship to performance levels targets. Management policies include a monthly review to track targeted performance. The agency consists of an Executive Director, Chief of Staff, Fiscal Officer, and five other staff. Site visits are conducted to all funded programs to ensure progress toward goals, objectives, and fiscal accountability, and to provide technical assistance in program development and problem solving. Desk audits and records reviews of fiscal and program documentation are conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations pursuant to applicable federal and state legislation. Monitoring of financial reimbursement requests is conducted monthly. MCVS continues to monitor its programs in FY2028-2032 through a variety of mechanisms, including the following:

<u>Informal Monitoring</u>

- Weekly (sometimes daily) telephone and e-mail exchanges
- Participation in quarterly training and service events
- Informal visits for special events, orientations, graduation ceremonies, etc.
- Timely follow-up on issues brought to the Commission
- Media coverage of programs

Formal Monitoring

- Risk-based Periodic Expense Requests for reimbursement
- Semiannual Federal Financial Expenditure Reports
- Quarterly programmatic progress reports for programs receiving any funding
- Quarterly financial progress reports for programs receiving any funding
- Scheduled and unscheduled monitoring site visits by MCVS program officers
- Site visits by Commission Members
- Annual financial audit of the MCVS agency
- Regular budget-to-actuals meetings

Participant evaluations are conducted at each training and technical assistance event sponsored by MCVS. Outside independent reviewers, Commissioners, and internal staff are utilized to ensure proper consideration of all funding applicants. As part of continuous improvement efforts, Board members' review of staff projects and accomplishments is part of each MCVS Board meeting agenda. MCVS regularly participates in After-Action Reviews of the Emergency Service Function – 6 following each disaster. Further, MCVS performs a comprehensive Impact Analysis of services rendered before, during, and after a disaster occurs. This includes number of volunteers, hours, service sites, work orders (both public and private), and more as the incident requires.

6. AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, & MEASURES BY PROGRAM

The MCVS objectives outlined herein provide a summary of the agency goals and activities for FY 2028-2032. The agency's areas of concentration are separated into the three distinct programs that form the core basis of operations: Government and Citizens: Volunteerism; Economic Development: AmeriCorps; Public Safety and Order: Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

PROGRAM ONE: GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS – VOLUNTEERISM

GOAL A: Increase percentage of Mississippians volunteering. (Miss. Code Ann. §43-55-13)

OBJECTIVE A.1.: Provide volunteer management, recruitment, and retention training and technical assistance to community organizations.

OUTCOME: Increase the number of volunteer opportunities created.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Provide training to community organizations

Output: Provide specified number of training and assistance events to organizations.
Efficiency: Increase the ratio of non-state dollars utilized for training events.
Explanatory: Number of charitable organizations registered with the MS Secretary of State.

OBJECTIVE B.1.: Provide public recognition of volunteers

OUTCOME: Increase number of impressions across all marketing channels.

STRATEGY B.1.1: Coordinate statewide multimedia campaign including recognition events, certificates, and social media features

Output: Coordinate a specified number of volunteer recognition events.
Output: Recognize a specified number of individuals for volunteerism.
Efficiency: Ratio of non-state dollars for volunteer recognition events.
Explanatory: Number of residents who volunteer.

OBJECTIVE C.1.: Promote the benefits of volunteerism

OUTCOME: Increase in public awareness of the benefits of volunteerism.

STRATEGY C.1.1: Coordinate a multimedia campaign

Output: Produce annual report on the state of volunteerism in Mississippi.
Efficiency: Increase private investment in volunteerism including state income tax checkoff and "Volunteer Y'all" license plates.
Explanatory: Number of residents who volunteer.

PROGRAM TWO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - AMERICORPS

GOAL A: **Increase the percentage of civilian non-institutional populations 16 years and over employed.** (Miss. Code Ann. §43-55-13)

OBJECTIVE A.1: Increase number of opportunities for Mississippians to serve in AmeriCorps

OUTCOME: Increase the number of AmeriCorps member slots available.
OUTCOME: Increase in the number of education awards earned.
OUTCOME: Maintain percentage of sub-grantees in compliance with federal regulations.
OUTCOME: Increase number of applications received for AmeriCorps State grants.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Expand and maintain AmeriCorps State sub-grantees

Output: Conduct specified number of training and technical assistance occurrences.
Output: Conduct program monitoring visits and records review to determine the quality of sub-grantee operations and systems.
Efficiency: Assist sub-grantees in recruiting/retaining members to fill awarded slots.
Efficiency: Frequency of visit reports monitored within a certain number of working days after conducting review of records.
Efficiency: Evaluate sub-grantee reimbursement requests to ensure compliance with federal approved expenditures and provide reimbursements to sub-grantees in specified number of days after receipt, provided proper documentation is submitted.
Efficiency: Ensure specified percentage of sub-grantees participate in training and technical assistance events.
Explanatory: Increase in federal funding (dollars).

STRATEGY A.1.2.: Increase outreach to rural and underserved areas. Output: Coordinate a specified number of outreach events.

Output: Engage specified number of participants in outreach technical assistance.
Efficiency: Average number of training and technical assistance attendees who complete the AmeriCorps state grant application process.
Explanatory: Increase in federal funding (dollars).

PROGRAM THREE: PUBLIC SAFETY AND ORDER –
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, & RECOVERY

GOAL A: **Decrease response time** (State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan)

OBJECTIVE A.1.: Prepare communities to utilize volunteers in disaster

OUTCOME: Increase percent of counties who have a designated volunteer coordination plan.

STRATEGY A.1.1.: Provide Volunteer Reception Center management and coordination training to communities throughout MS.

Output: Conduct specified number of community disaster preparedness trainings.
Efficiency: Average reduction of personnel cost per county with a designated volunteer coordination plan.
Explanatory: Number of natural and manmade disasters.

OBJECTIVE B.1.: Support communities in active disaster response

OUTCOME: Decrease in transition time between initial response and long-term recovery.

STRATEGY B.1.1.: Consult with emergency manager to launch scaled response

Output: Response to percentage of Emergency Operation Center requests for assistance.
Efficiency: Average reduction in emergency response time to natural and manmade disasters from time of request in Web Emergency Operation Center.
Explanatory: Number of natural and manmade disasters.