
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

THE IOWA COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEER SERVICE COVID-19 RESPONSE

Volunteer Iowa. The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service ([Volunteer Iowa](#)) has provided [resources](#) to address needs created by COVID-19. Information on Volunteer Iowa programs, including [AmeriCorps](#), Disaster Volunteers, the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF), State Volunteer Recognition Programs, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), can be found [here](#). Over 38.0% of Iowa volunteers are age 55 or older, and the most common volunteer area for older volunteers is food collection and distribution. Therefore, Volunteer Iowa has focused on filling gaps left in these areas and helping those experiencing increased need due to COVID-19.

Volunteer Iowa has posted and promoted 144 COVID-19-specific volunteer needs from organizations across Iowa and Volunteer Iowa has actively recruited to fill those needs. Volunteer Iowa has also provided information and guidance by working with the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to help organizations utilize volunteers safely. All activities have come through missions with the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) or the Governor's Feeding Iowans Task Force.

AmeriCorps. The AmeriCorps Program has reassigned 328 members, who have provided approximately 11,500 service hours in 29 locations. The main area of support is food response (food banks, food pantries, and local school food grab-and-go locations). Other areas of support include:

- Making face masks to donate to health care facilities
- Legal advice hotline support
- Blood donation support
- Volunteer management support
- AmeriCorps food bank deployment
 - 17 AmeriCorps members deployed to River Bend Foodbank and Northeast Iowa Food Bank
 - 1,914 hours served
 - 253,052 pounds of food collected or distributed
 - Main activity is sorting and boxing food for distribution for backpack programs, mobile food pantries, etc.

Volunteer Iowa is working with an additional 68 community organizations across the State to place members for over 90 new full-time positions this summer and beyond, to support ongoing needs as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

RSVP. All RSVP volunteers are age 55 and over. The Program has focused efforts on safe ways to contribute to the COVID-19 response. RSVP activities related to the COVID-19 response include:

- Community gardening and produce gleaning from farmers market producers, which provides free produce to area food pantries.
- Pen pal volunteers writing letters to nursing home residents instead of students.
- Delivering mobile meals across the State through Meals on Wheels with no-contact delivery/drop off at the door.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE): Sewing masks and gowns for organizations and hospitals across the State.
- County emergency management call center or remote hotline work.

Upcoming Issues. Volunteer Iowa is anticipating the following issues and opportunities:

- Decrease in overall volunteers
- Decrease in organizational-level investment in volunteerism
- Decrease in funding
- Increase in demand for volunteers in specific areas and decrease in others
- Technology and virtual volunteering opportunities

LSA Staff Contact: Ron Robinson (515.281.6256) ron.robinson@legis.iowa.gov

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