

15H.5 Iowa summer youth corps — community programs account.

1. For the purposes of [this section](#), “*service-learning*” means a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

2. The Iowa summer youth corps program is established to provide meaningful summer enrichment programming to Iowa youth. The program shall be administered by the commission using a competitive grant process to implement projects in accordance with program requirements. The commission shall adopt administrative rules for the program, including but not limited to incentives, grant criteria, and grantee selection processes. A percentage of the grants shall be designated by the commission to address the needs of economically distressed areas.

3. The program shall provide grants for projects that utilize a service-learning approach during the summer months to enhance student achievement and summer learning retention, teach meaningful job skills to Iowa youth, engage Iowa youth in their communities, provide positive youth development experiences, and address the needs of youth from families with low income. The service-learning approach shall be integrated into the program using science, technology, engineering, mathematics, social studies, civic literacy, or other appropriate curricula identified by the department of education.

4. The program shall involve the youth participating in the program in service-learning activities with one or more of the following focuses:

a. Energy conservation in the youth’s community, including conducting educational outreach on energy conservation and working to improve energy efficiency in low-income housing and public spaces.

b. Emergency and disaster preparedness.

c. Improving access to and obtaining the benefits from providing computers and other emerging technologies in underserved and other appropriate areas of counties and cities, including but not limited to low-income communities, senior centers and communities, schools, libraries, and other public settings.

d. Mentoring of middle school youth while involving all participants in service-learning to address unmet human, educational, environmental, public safety, or emergency disaster preparedness needs in the participants’ community.

e. Establishing or implementing summer of service projects during the summer months. Budgeting for a summer of service project shall include the cost of recruitment, training, and placement of service-learning coordinators. A summer of service project shall comply with all of the following requirements:

(1) Youth participating in a project will be enrolled in grades six through twelve in the school year which begins immediately following the end of a project.

(2) The focus of each project shall be community-based, service-learning activities that address unmet human, educational, environmental, emergency and disaster preparedness, and public service needs. Environmental needs addressed may include energy conservation, water quality, and land stewardship.

(3) The activities for each project shall be intensive, structured, supervised, and designed to produce identifiable improvements to the community. The activities may include the extension of school year service-learning programs into the summer months.

f. Performing community improvement projects, which may include but are not limited to a green corps program activity under [section 15H.6](#) or other youth training program.

5. a. Funding for the Iowa summer youth corps program, the Iowa green corps program established pursuant to [section 15H.6](#), the Iowa reading corps program established pursuant to [section 15H.7](#), the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program established pursuant to [section 15H.8](#), and the Iowa national service corps program established pursuant to [section 15H.9](#) shall be obtained from private sector, and local, state, and federal government sources, or from other available funds credited to the community programs account, which shall be created within the department under the authority of the commission. Moneys available in the account for a fiscal year are appropriated to the commission to be used for the programs. The commission may establish an escrow account within the department and obligate moneys

within that escrow account for tuition or program payments to be made beyond the term of any fiscal year. Notwithstanding [section 12C.7, subsection 2](#), interest earned on moneys in the community programs account shall be credited to the account. Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#), moneys in the community programs account or escrow account shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain available for expenditure in future fiscal years.

b. The commission shall manage the Iowa summer youth corps program in a manner to maximize the leveraging of federal, local, and private funding opportunities that increase or amplify program impact and service-learning opportunities. The commission shall also encourage collaboration with, and utilization of, other national, local, and nonprofit programs engaged in community service or addressing the needs of youth from families with low income.

c. The commission shall give priority consideration to approving those projects that target communities that have disproportionately high rates of juvenile crime or low rates of high school graduation or that have been designated as an economically distressed area.

d. The commission shall include progress information concerning implementation of the Iowa summer youth corps program in the quarterly reports made to the governor and the general assembly in accordance with [section 15H.2](#).

6. a. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of [chapter 8A, subchapter IV](#), or [chapter 96](#), a person participating in the Iowa summer youth corps program shall be exempt from merit system requirements and shall not be eligible to receive unemployment compensation benefits.

b. If a stipend is provided to a youth participating in the Iowa summer youth corps program, the youth shall be age fourteen through eighteen.

c. A youth participating in a summer of service project that either has an education award or no compensation shall comply with the grade level requirements specified for summer of service project participation.

d. A project that uses funding for an AmeriCorps young adult component within the project design shall limit participation in the component to young persons who are age sixteen through twenty-four at the time of enrollment in the project.

7. For purposes of [this section](#), “*economically distressed area*” means a county that meets at least three of the following criteria:

a. The county ranks among the thirty-three Iowa counties with the highest average monthly unemployment rates for the most recent twelve-month period based on the applicable local area unemployment statistics produced by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics.

b. The county ranks among the thirty-three Iowa counties with the highest average annualized unemployment rates for the most recent five-year period based on the applicable local area unemployment statistics produced by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics.

c. The county ranks among the thirty-three Iowa counties with the lowest annual average weekly wages based on the most recent quarterly census of employment and wages published by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics.

d. The county ranks among the thirty-three Iowa counties with the highest family poverty rates based on the most recent American community survey five-year estimate released by the United States census bureau.

e. The county ranks among the thirty-three Iowa counties with the highest percentage population loss. Percentage population loss shall be calculated by comparing the most recent population estimate produced by the United States census bureau to the most recent decennial census released by the United States census bureau, except for a calendar year in which the decennial census data is released, then the percentage population loss shall be calculated by comparing the population in the decennial census released that calendar year to the population in the decennial census released ten years prior.

f. The county ranks among the thirty-three Iowa counties with the highest percentage of

persons sixty-five years of age or older based on the most recent American community survey five-year estimate released by the United States census bureau.

2009 Acts, ch 161, §1, 4; 2011 Acts, ch 118, §85, 89; 2014 Acts, ch 1130, §32, 33; 2015 Acts, ch 34, §1; 2016 Acts, ch 1073, §10, 11; 2016 Acts, ch 1139, §90; 2018 Acts, ch 1086, §1; 2020 Acts, ch 1062, §8; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §23; 2025 Acts, ch 136, §41 – 43, 59

Referred to in §15H.6, 15H.7, 15H.8, 15H.9, 92.17

2025 amendment to subsection 2 effective December 31, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 136, §59

2025 amendment to subsection 5, paragraph c effective December 31, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 136, §59

Subsection 7 effective December 31, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 136, §59

Subsection 2 amended

Subsection 5, paragraph c amended

NEW subsection 7