



**Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service)**

**Quarterly Report:**

***January 1 – March 31, 2020***

- **AmeriCorps:**

- AmeriCorps Week was March 8-14, 2020. During this annual event, individuals, programs, and organizations celebrate the contributions that nearly 75,000 Americans make to their communities and the service of more than 1 million AmeriCorps alumni. More than 1,500 AmeriCorps members met pressing local needs across Iowa, making a lasting impact in communities while gaining valuable skills and experience to advance their careers. AmeriCorps members earned nearly \$4.5 million in Segal AmeriCorps educational grants. Volunteer Iowa profiled nearly 20 AmeriCorps Iowa members and alumni on our blog during AmeriCorps Week. In addition, we secured a proclamation from Governor Reynolds declaring March 8-14 as AmeriCorps Week. Due to COVID-19, the proclamation signing ceremony in the Governor's office was cancelled.
- Hosted a program staff training in February to cover program requirements, share tools and resources, and to ensure successful program and grant management.
- Governor Reynolds issued a directive to redeploy all available AmeriCorps members to COVID-19 response efforts on March 20th. Over 100 Iowa AmeriCorps members have participated in COVID 19 redeployments to help vulnerable Iowans.
- Volunteer Iowa issued a special competition for COVID-Response AmeriCorps with anticipated programming beginning in May.

- **Commission Business:**

- Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol was held on February 11, 2020. 55 attendees from 20 Volunteer Iowa partner programs informed 52 legislators about the impact of Volunteer Iowa programs in their communities. Policy priorities are: Build the culture and climate for service in Iowa • Support the infrastructure needed for quality service opportunities and programs • Develop new service opportunities to meet critical community needs • Improve and streamline existing service opportunities and programs.

- Commission is hosting regular check-in calls with Commissioners and our programs to share announcements, updates, and other relevant resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the state.
- **Disaster Response:**
  - Volunteer Iowa trained our AmeriCorps Mobile Response Team the first of March in basic disaster preparedness, deployment expectations, and volunteer management, along with direct services/hands on training such as how to muck and gut a structure, proper use of PPE and review of mold remediation techniques.
  - Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster. A FEMA level G489 course held in Sydney, Iowa in March to help communities prepare for managing a large influx of community volunteers in times of disaster, and to prepare organizations in southwest Iowa for potential spring/summer flooding events. Planning to provide this course in all Homeland Security Regions continues and will be implemented post COVID-19.
  - Volunteer Iowa was activated to the State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) in March in response to COVID-19 outbreak in Iowa. The Commission continues to monitor and support mission and tasks needed in this response. The support has included reassigning AmeriCorps members to support response needs around food security issues, set up and promotion of a COVID-19 volunteer opportunity spotlight on the statewide volunteer portal, and providing technical assistance to state partners, programs, etc.
- **Iowa Mentoring Partnership (IMP):**
  - National Mentoring Month: Along with MENTOR, the National Mentoring Partnership, over 70 local mentoring programs celebrated by recruiting new mentors and honoring current matches. 3000 mentor recognition certificates from the governor were presented to honor mentors. Programs attended a proclamation signing with Governor Reynolds declaring Mentoring Month in Iowa.
  - SAFE training and EEP training: IMP staff provided training for Burlington schools and partners on February 14<sup>th</sup> on SAFE screening practices for volunteers. We were joined by MENTOR's training specialist, Desiree Robertson, to inform best practice for this national training. Elements of Effective Practice of Mentoring training was held on March 5<sup>th</sup> to ground newer mentoring practitioners in best practice.
  - Future Ready Iowa: The Future Ready Iowa Mentoring Program launched in February. 27 students from 14 different colleges throughout the state enrolled in the program. Enrolled students are pursuing degrees and careers in several different fields. The program also welcomed 14 mentors from 5 different regions of the state and a variety of career fields, including HVAC, dental hygiene, information technology, management/business, mental health, nursing, and education.

- **Recognition:**
  - **50 Faces of Volunteerism:** Nothing new to report.
  - **Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame and Excellence in Mentoring Awards:** Nominations were received in January and the selection committee recommended four individuals and one group to be inducted into the Hall of Fame and two individuals receiving excellence in mentoring awards. Due to COVID-19, the ceremony has been postponed indefinitely.
  - **Give Back Iowa Challenge:** The Give Back Iowa Challenge kicked off on April 1, with 32 employers registered to participate. Volunteer Iowa has provided recommendations for at home, virtual and low risk volunteer opportunities to registered businesses. Promotion for Give Back Iowa was tapered off as it became apparent that COVID-19 would impact volunteer engagement. Volunteer Iowa will determine if the challenge should be extended past the May 31 end date.
  - **Governor's Volunteer Awards:** Due to COVID-19, the Governor's Volunteer Awards have been postponed for 2020.
  - **National Service Member Spotlight:** Nothing new to report.
- **RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) COVID-19 Activities:**
  - Volunteers have started preparing for community gardening which provides free produce to area food pantries. They were getting the soil ready (weather permitting) and had planted cool weather produce (radishes, lettuce, peas) along with starting seeds to place in the garden when the weather allows for them.
  - Volunteers are staffing food pantries, delivering meals, blood drives and are at the Humane Society. VITA tax volunteers are doing drop off taxes.
  - Pen pal volunteers writing letters to nursing home residents since cannot write to their students.
  - Volunteers deliver Mobile Meals, leaving food at door. SHIP counselors are providing Medicare Part D assistance over the phone from their homes. Volunteers are assisting local food pantries as needed, including the SOS (Share Our Sandwiches).
  - Volunteers are sewing hospital style gowns.
  - Volunteers assist with phone calls at the Emergency Management Center to share COVID-19 information.
  - Volunteers are doing life-saving transportation such as dialysis.

- **Service Enterprise:**

This research based, change management process trains organizations to effectively leverage the skills of volunteers to meet their mission.

- Four organizations were selected to participate in the Des Moines cohort of the Service Enterprise Initiative change management process: Des Moines Parks and Rec, EveryStep, Blank Park Zoo, and Meals from the Heartland. Young Women's Resource Center staff will also be re-attending the training. As a result of COVID-19, organizations have been given the option to continue the trainings virtually, or pause and continue once it can be held in person again.

- **Volunteer Generation Fund:**

- Grant activities began on Jan 1, 2020 for the six grants awarded last quarter:

▪ ThinkCause	\$30,000
▪ Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley	\$13,774
▪ United Way of East Central Iowa	\$10,526
▪ United Way of Wapello County	\$20,000
▪ United Way of the Great River Region	\$5,000
▪ Iowa Campus Compact	\$20,000
▪ TOTAL	\$99,300

- **Volunteer Management Training:**

- **Volunteer Management Training Series (VMTS).** Six webinars were held between Jan. 9 and March 12, 2020. VMTS is geared toward individuals that are fairly new to managing or coordinating volunteers for nonprofits, schools, government agencies, faith-based organizations, and service organizations. Session topics included:
  - Understanding Volunteering: Exploring the Heart of the Volunteer Sector
  - Planning: Building A Solid Foundation
  - Recruiting and Placement: Matching Volunteer Skills with Service Needs
  - Training and Orientation: Achieving Service Excellence
  - Supervision: Maximizing the Volunteer Experience
  - Evaluation: Improving Results Using Data and Feedback
- **Additional trainings:** Training on effective volunteer engagement was provided to the Iowa Safe Routes to School Conference.