



**Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service)
Quarterly Report:
*January 1 – March 31, 2021***

AmeriCorps:

- AmeriCorps Week was March 7-13, 2021. AmeriCorps week honors the valuable contributions of AmeriCorps members who pledge to “get things done” for Iowa and the nation as a whole. It also celebrates the contributions and support of the hundreds of local organizations that make AmeriCorps Iowa programs possible. Currently in Iowa, there are more than 1,400 members serving at more than 375 locations across the state. 2020 was a challenging and difficult year. Our world changed. In Iowa, we weren’t just faced with the loss of lives and livelihoods due to a global pandemic; we also faced the devastating destruction and unimagined challenges following the August 10 derecho. Despite so many obstacles, each day countless Americans answered the call to serve. They raised their hands. Stood up. Showed up. And volunteered to put their neighbors and complete strangers first. To help make Iowa and America safer and healthier, more fair, and more just. AmeriCorps engages 270,000 Americans each year in sustained, results-driven service through our AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors programs. These dedicated citizens help communities impacted by COVID-19, ensure students stay on track to graduate, combat hunger and homelessness, respond to natural disasters, fight the opioid epidemic, help seniors live independently, support veterans and military families, and much more. Many stories and celebrations were shared on social media using #MadeinAmeriCorps and #AmeriCorpsWorks.
- Volunteer Iowa issued a special AmeriCorps competition for state and federal priorities, including COVID-response and recovery, derecho/disaster recovery, under-represented communities, and planning grants with anticipated programming beginning in summer or fall 2021.
- Placed 5 new AmeriCorps VISTA Members in nonprofits across the state. Project focus areas include continued Derecho Recovery work and addressing inequities in health and wellness services for minority populations.

Commission Business:

- A Virtual Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol was held on February 9, 2021. Holding the event virtually allowed for broader participation of program participants in addition to board members and staff. Volunteer Iowa programs, partners, and commissioners informed legislators about the impact of Volunteer Iowa programs in their communities.

Disaster Response:

- Volunteer Iowa virtually trained our AmeriCorps Mobile Response Team the first of February 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.

Iowa MENTOR, the Iowa Mentoring Partnership:

- **Youth Mentoring:** 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. The Governor recorded a message and signed a proclamation declaring Mentoring Month in Iowa.
 - Connect Focus Grow training: Iowa MENTOR staff provided virtually, a training on a new curriculum, Connect Focus Grow (CFG).
 - EEP training: Iowa MENTOR staff provided a virtual training on Elements of Effective Practice of Mentoring in March. This was to ground newer mentoring practitioners in best practice.
- **Future Ready Iowa Mentoring Program:** To kickoff 2021, Future Ready Iowa Mentoring engagement significantly increased among both students and mentors. The number of students enrolled in virtual career mentoring increased to 96 representing 15 different colleges, including 14 community colleges and Mercy College of Health Sciences. The majority of the students who requested mentors are in information technology and healthcare, but are also pursuing careers in the trades (e.g., welding, wind turbine technology). The number of mentors increased to 56. To correspond with the need, the majority of mentors are now in information technology followed by healthcare, business/management, education and research, advanced manufacturing, and construction/engineering. A total of 1,113 activities occurred within Future Ready Iowa's virtual career mentoring platform, including 589 messages exchanged, 217 meetings completed via video call, and 235 tasks completed (e.g., resume review, goal development). Significant engagement also occurred outside of the platform. Iowa College Aid welcomed additional AmeriCorps College Success Coaches hosted by community colleges throughout the state. Their continued focus will be on supporting students academically and recruiting them into the career mentoring program via text mentoring campaigns.

Volunteer Recognition:

- **50 Faces of Volunteerism:** Nominees have been added to our blog.
- **Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame and Excellence in Mentoring Awards:** The nomination process and ceremony have been postponed to later in 2021.
- **Give Back Iowa Challenge:** The Give Back Iowa Challenge will kick off on April 1 with an invite to employers to participate. Volunteer Iowa will provide recommendations for at home, virtual and low risk volunteer opportunities to registered businesses.
- **Governor's Volunteer Awards:** GVA nominations will close on April 16, with a virtual ceremony being planned for July.

Service Enterprise:

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

- The Northeast Iowa RSVP and Meals from the Heartland became certified, and the United Way of Wapello County and Cedar Rapids Public Library were recertified.

Training:

Skills-Based Volunteering Series: Six webinars were held in February and March to allow nonprofits and government organizations explore how skills-based volunteers can support their missions. The interactive workshop-style sessions covered project readiness and scoping while providing useful tools, activities, and resources to create a robust skill-based volunteer program.

Volunteer Generation Fund:

Grant activities began on Jan 1, 2021 for the six grants awarded last quarter:

• ThinkCause	\$32,375
• Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley	\$13,774
• United Way of East Central Iowa	\$28,256
• United Way of Wapello County	\$20,000
• City of Dubuque	\$29,799
• North Iowa Area Community College	\$31,354
TOTAL	\$155,558