



**Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service)
Quarterly Report:
October 1 – December 31, 2023**

AmeriCorps Seniors:

Volunteer Iowa’s Senior Demonstration Program partners with 14 youth-serving organizations, including K-12 schools, early learning center, and mentoring organizations, in six urban and rural counties. There are currently nine volunteers age 55+ actively serving 45 youth directly and 275 youth indirectly. Volunteers serve an average of 10 hours a week with children. Volunteers provide one-on-one support to children with exceptional needs through mentoring and tutoring. This quarter focused on finalizing volunteer placements as the school year started up again and onboarding six new volunteers who will begin their service at the start of 2024.

The HHS Retired and Senior Volunteer Program serves 25 nonprofit, healthcare, state and local government workstations in 14 mostly rural counties. There are currently 268 volunteers age 55+ serving an average of 1385 hours per month over the last year. In Q1, volunteers drove seniors and other individuals in need over 16,800 miles to medical and other critical appointments. This quarter focused on replacing departed staff and developing new volunteer opportunities in the areas of warming shelters, veteran transportation, infant care support and refugee services.

AmeriCorps State:

In November, the Commission voted to forward the following slate of AmeriCorps programs to the federal level funding competition for the 2024-2025 program year:

Agency Name	Program Name	Grant Award Type
Bur Oak Land Trust	Bur Oak Land Trust AmeriCorps	Continuation
City of Davenport	City of Davenport AmeriCorps & Youth Corps Program	Continuation
City of Dubuque	City of Dubuque AmeriCorps Program	Continuation
Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa	Conservation Corps Iowa AmeriCorps	Continuation
Graceland University	AmeriCorps Youth Launch	Recompete
Habitat for Humanity of Iowa, Inc.	Habitat for Humanity of Iowa AmeriCorps	Continuation
Hawkeye Community College	RedTails LEAD AmeriCorps	New

Iowa College Student Aid Commission	Course to College AmeriCorps- College Access	Continuation
Iowa Economic Development Authority	IEDA Rural AmeriCorps	Continuation
Iowa Economic Development Authority	Iowa Community Corps AmeriCorps	Continuation (Public Health AmeriCorps)
Iowa Legal Aid	Iowa Legal Aid AmeriCorps Project	Continuation
Iowa State University of Science and Technology	Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach Program	Continuation
Refugee & Immigrant Voices in Action (RIVA)	RIVA AmeriCorps	Continuation
The University of Iowa	Disaster Prepwise AmeriCorps	Continuation (Public Health AmeriCorps)
United Ways of Iowa	Iowa Reading Corps AmeriCorps Program	Recompete
University of Northern Iowa	Green Iowa AmeriCorps	Recompete

AmeriCorps VISTA:

The AmeriCorps VISTA program, through service and volunteering, seeks to create a climate where economically disadvantaged individuals and youth are provided the tools needed for financial well-being and academic success, and communities have the resources needed to address critical needs related to poverty.

This quarter the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA program has 30 VISTA members supporting 20 organizations across the state. More information can be found on our [website](#).

Organization	City	Organization	City
ArtHaus	Decorah	Iowa Youth Writing Project	Iowa City
Centrally Rooted	Dubuque	Kirkwood Community College, TRIO program	Cedar Rapids
Children of Promise Mentoring Program	Cedar Rapids	ManUp Iowa	West Des Moines
University of Iowa, Disaster Prepwise	Iowa City	NAMI Dubuque	Dubuque
EMBARC	Des Moines	NAMI South Central Iowa	Centerville
Fort Madison Area Arts Foundation	Fort Madison	NAMI Southwest Iowa	Neola
Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council	Johnston	VAXSDM	Des Moines
Iowa Community Action Association	Des Moines	Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District	Vinton
Iowa MENTOR	Des Moines	Volunteer Iowa	Des Moines

Disaster Response:

Hawaii Mission Assignment: Volunteer Iowa's Disaster Program Officer Michael Rojas was tasked as the Incident Commander for the Maui Wildfires and arrived in Hawaii on August 26th. Michael was integrated into the state volunteer and donations management taskforce to begin the mission. He worked in partnership with Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). They triaged the issues stemming from the fire, primarily working through donations management and logistics. Once the AmeriCorps-Disaster Response Teams (A-DRTs) arrived, the priorities shifted to the distribution of life-sustaining supplies to survivors of the fires. With close to 30 A-DRTs, over the course of 30 days they were able to distribute, sort and package over 200,000 pounds of donations, medical supplies, food, and water and supervised over 2000 spontaneous volunteer hours. Their work was highly touted by elected officials, HI-EMA, FEMA, and other partners working on the ground. Michael spent time training the second wave before he returned to the mainland at the end of September.

Award Honoree: Michael Rojas, Disaster Program Officer, was honored in November with an "Excellence in AmeriCorps Award" during the annual AmeriCorps Symposium in Washington, DC, specifically receiving the Excellence in Disaster Services Leadership award. One of two new categories, Michael was the inaugural recipient of the award.

The Excellence in Disaster Services Leadership award recognizes an AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (A-DRT) Command staff member that demonstrates outstanding leadership in providing and/or supporting training, technical assistance, and/or deployment leadership; consistently and reliably supports the development of their own A-DRT program as well as the development of other A-DRT personnel via deployments and/or blue sky committee services; and is recognized within their own program and other A-DRT program staff for their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

While in DC, Michael met with Senator Charles Grassley and staff of Senator Joni Ernst, who honored him for receiving this award.

Iowa MENTOR (Iowa Mentoring Partnership or IMP):

Youth Mentoring: The following programs completed the National Quality Mentoring System assessment and were granted certification with the IMP 2022-2025:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands

Volunteer Recognition: Nothing new to report during this time period.

Events: Nothing new to report during this time period.

RSVP: Nothing new to report during this time period.

Service Enterprise:

RSVP 55+ Volunteer Program Boone, Greene & Guthrie Counties and YMCA Supportive Housing Campus in Des Moines earned their Service Enterprise accreditation during this quarter. Additionally, two organizations completed Service Enterprise trainings, Table to Table in Iowa City and Children & Family Urban Movement (CFUM) in Des Moines. A virtual cohort is scheduled for early 2024 in conjunction with our 9/11 Day of Service grant.

Training:

- Volunteer Iowa continued to support programs through virtual training and technical assistance.

- **AmeriCorps Program Staff Launch:** This is an annual training offered for all Iowa AmeriCorps program staff. It occurred October 19 and 20. The training sessions offered networking, learning about state and federal grant requirements and updates, and overall support for program core competency growth.
- **Iowa MENTOR:** The following trainings were conducted for mentoring professionals this quarter: Elements of Effective for Mentoring – October 31 and November 1. Becoming a Better Mentor Training: Adopting a Mentoring Mindset --October 24. Mentor’s Guide to Youth Purpose –November 9.

Volunteer Generation Fund ARP:

Service-Learning: Each of the five VGF ARP service-learning grantees began integrating service-learning within three classrooms across their school districts. This includes Waterloo Community Schools, CAL Elementary Schools, Sioux Center Community Schools, Hamburg Community Schools, and Central Lyon Community Schools. Currently, four service-learning projects have been completed, engaging 55 students in 68 hours of service. Service-learning projects include hygiene kits in school bathrooms for those in need, a mural for an elementary school to boost positivity, a school garden program to donate vegetable to a local food bank, and sidewalk repair for an elderly woman.

Mentoring: Each of the four VGF ARP mentoring subgrantees school districts have begun implementing the Elements of Effective Practices of Mentoring into their mentoring program policies and procedure manuals they are creating for their mentoring programs. Carlisle Community School District, Hamburg Community Schools, Cedar Valley Community Schools, and Dike/New Hartford Community Schools each do monthly check-ins with the grant administrator to share updates of recruitment strategies and ways they are reaching out to community leaders for partnerships. The plan for all the school districts is to develop a workplan on the beginnings of their mentoring program in Fall 2024. Marketing strategies for mentoring recruitment have been completed this quarter. For National Mentoring Month in January, Iowa MENTOR will share PSAs, social media strategies and posts to mentoring professionals to enhance mentor/volunteer recruitment.

Youth Service:

Volunteer Iowa’s Service-Learning AmeriCorps VISTA led four trainings for the 2023 Iowa Association of Student Councils Conference in October. Over 120 of youth learned about service projects and were encouraged to volunteer within their community. Volunteer Iowa’s Service-Learning VISTA continued to research and meet with Silver Cord Advisors at Iowa High Schools in order to develop best practices and resources for youth recognition and volunteer programs.