

# Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service)

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### Quarterly Report:

*April 1 – June 30, 2024*

### AmeriCorps

Volunteer Iowa has awarded \$8.9 million in grant funding and an additional \$2.4 million in [Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards](#) for Iowa AmeriCorps State programs and members. These grants will support 19 programs engaging more than 750 AmeriCorps members in Iowa who will serve with nonprofit, community, and faith-based organizations across the state. Five additional grantees will conduct planning activities to develop and expand new AmeriCorps programming across the state.

Volunteer Iowa announced the following AmeriCorps State grants for program year 2024-2025:

### Program Grants:

<b><i>Program Name (Program Sponsor)</i></b>	<b><i>Program Description</i></b>
AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach (Iowa State University)	AmeriCorps 4-H members use Positive Youth Development framework to deliver exciting, hands-on learning experiences to youth across the state of Iowa.
AmeriCorps Youth Launch (Graceland University)	AmeriCorps members mentor youth, build valuable developmental assets, instill civic engagement, and help young people find the "sparks" that ignite their passions in life.
Bur Oak Land Trust AmeriCorps Program (Bur Oak Land Trust)	Bur Oak Land Trust AmeriCorps members serve to protect and restore Eastern Iowa's natural resources through prescribed fire and planting native plants and remove invasive species.
City of Davenport AmeriCorps and Youth Corps Program (City of Davenport)	Members focus on reducing the high school dropout rate by serving with organizations that support youth at the elementary level during the school day and out-of-school time activities.
City of Dubuque AmeriCorps Program: Creating Opportunities (City of Dubuque)	Members will develop and implement social-emotional learning interventions to K-12th grade students through in-school and out-of-school-time programs.
College Access and Success AmeriCorps (Iowa College Student Aid Commission)	College Access and Success AmeriCorps members assist high school and current college students as they plan for, prepare for and succeed in college.

Conservation Corps Iowa AmeriCorps (Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa)	Members make a difference protecting the environment and gain valuable skills for their future, engaging youth and young adults in environmental stewardship.
Disaster PrepWise AmeriCorps Program (University of Iowa)	A Public Health AmeriCorps program with members serving to help community-based older adults become prepared for disasters and strengthen their emergency support networks.
Green Iowa AmeriCorps (University of Northern Iowa)	Green Iowa AmeriCorps works to empower Iowa's communities and school districts to make more environmental, conservation-minded decisions and improvements.
Habitat for Humanity of Iowa AmeriCorps Program (Habitat for Humanity of Iowa)	Members learn, serve, and give back to the community by building houses, managing volunteers, and engaging homeowners at local Habitat for Humanities.
Iowa College Corps AmeriCorps (Seed Coalition)	Members will engage college students in mentoring, serve at nonprofit/public sector organization, and/or be involved in meaningful civic engagement experiences in partnership with colleges and universities across the state.
Iowa Community Corps (Iowa Economic Development Authority)	AmeriCorps members will respond to public health needs by addressing food insecurity and providing resource navigation in rural and urban Iowa communities.
Iowa Legal Aid AmeriCorps Project (Iowa Legal Aid)	AmeriCorps members provide direct services to clients and their communities, helping them access legal information, resources and support needed to resolve fundamental civil legal problems.
Iowa Reading Corps AmeriCorps Program (United Ways of Iowa)	AmeriCorps members address ongoing literacy learning loss using evidence-based interventions with students in K-3rd grade.
Polk County Conservation AmeriCorps (Polk County Conservation Board)	Members will lead environment education program, engage Polk County teens within the Youth Corps program, complete natural resource enhancement, build volunteer programming, and increase reach and effectiveness adaptive veteran programming.
RedTails LEAD AmeriCorps (Hawkeye Community College)	Members form a network of support for underserved students by serving to alleviate food insecurity, construct and remodel homes, provide childcare, or help with academic and other life challenges.

RIVA AmeriCorps (Refugee & Immigrant Voices in Action)	The program trains emerging leaders from refugee and immigrant communities to support fellow refugee and immigrant students in job-readiness classes through learning support, referrals, outreach, and wrap around services.
Rural Iowa AmeriCorps (Iowa Economic Development Authority)	The program will partner with community-based organizations across Iowa to increase capacity, quality, and cultural competency of service delivery and project development.
Youth Connect AmeriCorps (Iowa State University)	Using a healing centered engagement approach, members connect foster care youth to resources and supports in the transition from foster care to independent living.

**Planning grants:**

AmeriCorps Planning Grant – Aging and Disability Services Focus (Iowa Department of Health and Human Services)	Proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to provide Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) with Peer Navigator AmeriCorps members. The members will be trained peer-to-peer service navigators for people with disabilities through the expansion of the ADRC system.
AmeriCorps Planning Grant (Camp Fire Heart of Iowa)	Proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to expand access to quality out-of-school-time programming in high-need communities in central Iowa.
AmeriCorps Planning Grant – Refugee Services Focus (Iowa Department of Health and Human Services)	Proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to provide experiential learning for members, recruited from Iowa’s refugee community, to create a workforce pathway within the human services field.
AmeriCorps Planning Grant (University of Iowa)	Proposes to expand existing Public Health AmeriCorps program to address public health workforce shortage by providing members with hands-on experiences to supplement their education.
AmeriCorps Planning Grant (World Relief Quad Cities)	Proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to address employment barriers and strengthen career pathways for refugees and immigrants in eastern Iowa.

Volunteer Iowa received a \$100,000.00 planning grant from the Schultz Family Foundation for the Youth Mental Health Corps, with the intent to launch in the fall of 2025. The planning grant

period is April 1, 2024 through January 15, 2025. More information about the Youth Mental Health Corps is available on the [AmeriCorps website](#).

### **Commission Business**

Volunteer Iowa held its final FY24 full commission meeting on Thursday, May 9. During the meeting, the commission bid farewell to three commissioners who are concluding their service on the commission: Commission Chair Angela Jiskoot, Barb Westercamp, and Dr. Bobbretta Brewton. The Commission selected Dan Cataldi as Commission Chair and Ashley Denton as Vice Chair for FY25.

### **Disaster**

Volunteer Iowa was tasked with supporting volunteer coordination for the Greenfield tornado response. Staff deployed, setting up a Volunteer Reception Center and a process to collect volunteer information needed to be used for in-kind FEMA match. Additionally, the team set up a system and hotline for collecting requests from homeowners for clean-up and repair assistance. An AmeriCorps NCCC team from Vinton was deployed to support the operation, and the Habitat for Humanity AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team also assisted with response efforts. Volunteer Iowa was also tasked with supporting clean-up efforts in Cedar County, and deployed Bur Oak Land Trust AmeriCorps members to assist. Ringgold County also requested assistance, and the Conservation Corps Minnesota Iowa AmeriCorps program will be conducting assessments and leading clean-up efforts. Volunteer Iowa is also supporting the identification of volunteers, in partnership with RSVP programs located in Polk, Union, and Pottawattamie counties, to assist at DSNAP sites through HHS.

### **Iowa MENTOR**

- Trained two program partners on the new resource called *Becoming a Better Mentor: Strategies for Being There for Young People*. This resource is designed to build the confidence and knowledge of volunteers who spend time with young people.
- Elements of Effective Practice Training was held for eight newer mentoring professionals to strengthen their youth-serving programs with evidence-based practice. Trained three program partners on the new Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. The official 5<sup>th</sup> edition launches in January 2025.
- Two programs completed their National Quality Mentoring System Assessment and were granted certification.
- Volunteer Iowa awarded four K-12 schools Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Mentoring grants. Grantees were awarded \$20,000 to support planning and starting new mentoring programs in schools to help students succeed academically and support their mental health and overall wellbeing. The following schools were awarded the VGF ARP Mentoring grant:
  - Carlisle Community School District
  - Dike New Hartford Community Schools
  - Hamburg Community School District
  - Cedar Valley Catholic School System

**Recognition**

- **Give Back Iowa Challenge:** The 2024 Give Back Iowa Challenge had 21 employers register to participate in the challenge. Over 18,000 volunteer hours were logged during the two-month challenge period. The winners and runners up of the challenge are:
  - Small: Community Youth Concepts (CYC), Des Moines  
Honorable Mention: United Way of Central Iowa
  - Mid-sized: Riverside Casino and Golf Resort, Riverside  
Honorable Mention: First Citizens Bank, Mason City
  - Large: ITA Group, West Des Moines  
Honorable Mention: City of Dubuque, Dubuque
- **Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame Ceremony:** The Iowa Volunteer Award Ceremony honored six Hall of Fame inductees and four Excellence in Mentoring Awardees on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at the State Capitol building. Governor Kim Reynolds and Commission Chair Angela Jiskoot presented the awards. [Information about the inductees](#) is available on our website.
- **2024 Governor’s Volunteer Awards Ceremony:** One statewide Governor’s Volunteer Awards (GVA) ceremony was held on June 25 at Ankeny High School in Ankeny. The ceremony featured remarks from the Governor and local leaders. The ceremony honors contributions of over 430 individuals and groups serving more than 80 communities across the state. Photos from the ceremony are posted on our [Flickr Page](#).

**RSVP**

Volunteer Iowa awarded 19 RSVP Grants with state awards based on legislative appropriation award in June. Initial award amounts:

Organization	Project Name	State Award	Federal Amount
Boone County Hospital	RSVP 55+ Volunteer Program of Boone, Greene, and Guthrie Counties	\$ 23,747.44	\$ 125,000.00
Carroll County Board	RSVP Carroll County (Carroll, Crawford, Calhoun)	\$ 14,967.88	\$ 127,500.00
Clinton County	RSVP of Clinton County	\$ 7,483.94	\$ 50,000.00
Decorah Public Library	Northeast Iowa RSVP (Allamakee, Howard, Winneshiek)	\$ 19,649.25	\$ 52,500.00
Graceland University	Southern Iowa RSVP (Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Union)	\$ 15,656.27	\$ 131,529.00

HIRTA Public Transit	HIRTA RSVP of Madison and Marion Counties	\$ 14,967.88	\$ 150,000.00
Iowa Department of Health and Human Services RSVP	HHS RSVP Cass, Dubuque, Harrison, Iowa, Keokuk, Mahaska, Louisa, Monona, Shelby, Montgomery, Poweshiek, Woodbury, and Fremont Counties	\$ 89,807.27	\$ 900,000.00
Iowa Department of Health and Human Services RSVP	HHS RSVP Cass, Dubuque, Harrison, Iowa, Keokuk, Mahaska, Louisa, Monona, Shelby, Montgomery, Poweshiek, Woodbury, and Fremont Counties	\$ 14,481.56	\$ 50,000.00
Iowa Lakes Community College	Northwest Iowa RSVP (Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Palo Alto)	\$ 20,975.44	\$ 92,908.00
Jasper County Agricultural Extension District	Newton/Jasper RSVP	\$ 7,483.94	\$ 52,500.00
North Iowa Area Community College	RSVP of North Central Iowa (Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Worth, Mitchell, Hancock, Winnebago)	\$ 14,967.88	\$ 141,647.00
Story City Senior Citizens, Inc.	Central Iowa RSVP - Story, Marshall, Hamilton, & Webster Co.	\$ 38,989.41	\$ 172,498.00
The Fellowship Cup	RSVP Henry County	\$ 16,084.12	\$ 47,500.00
United Way of Wapello County	RSVP of Monroe, Jefferson and Wapello Counties	\$ 14,967.88	\$ 78,479.00
United Way of Central Iowa	United Way of Central Iowa RSVP (Polk, Dallas, Warren)	\$ 7,483.94	\$ 89,323.00

United Way of East Central Iowa	United Way 55+ Initiative (Linn, Jones, Cedar, Benton)	\$ 22,451.82	\$ 202,000.00
United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (Johnson, Muscatine, Washington, Des Moines and Iowa counties)	\$ 52,080.13	\$ 94,839.00
United Way of the Great River Region (formerly Ft. Madison Area United Way)	RSVP of Lee County/ United Way of Great River Region	\$ 7,483.94	\$ 50,000.00
Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley	Engaging People to Build a Stronger Community and RSVP of Buchanan County (Blackhawk, Fayette, Buchanan)	\$ 7,483.94	\$ 179,585.00
		\$418,698	\$ 2,849,933

**Youth Service & Service-Learning**

- Volunteer Iowa received funding from The Allstate Foundation and America’s Service Commissions (ASC) to expand youth-led service initiatives. Iowa was one of 10 state service commissions selected to receive The Allstate Foundation Empowering Youth Service Grant. Through this opportunity, youth-serving organizations may apply for \$2,500 in funding to support service-learning development. Volunteer Iowa was also one of eight state service commissions to receive Charles Stewart Mott Foundation’s Deepening Youth Service Grant. This grant will support the development of tiered service-learning trainings, resources to support youth service, and recognition for youth volunteers. The full announcement can be found on [ASC’s website](#).
- Volunteer Iowa awarded five K-12 schools Volunteer Generation Fund American Rescue Plan (ARP) Youth Service-Learning Continuation Grants. Grantees were awarded \$15,000 fixed-price grants to continue to support the development and strengthening of service-learning programming in K-12 schools districts. Funding from Year One of the Youth Service-Learning Grant led to 565 youth volunteers volunteering 1097 hours in their community. Projects include the creation of a free community garden, intergenerational bonding with students and a memory care center, building ramps and providing repairs for seniors, redesigning of a city play area to be more accommodating, and much more. The following schools were each awarded a continuation Youth Service-Learning Grant:
  - CAL Elementary School
  - Central Lyon Community School District
  - Hamburg Community School District

- Waterloo Community School District – LifeLab
- Sioux Center Community School District

### **AmeriCorps Seniors**

The Volunteer Iowa Senior Demonstration Program did not receive funding to continue Senior Demonstration Program work through a Foster Grandparent Program. The Senior Demonstration Program will finish in September 2024. Volunteers will continue to serve in summer programs that help children with exceptional needs and support their academic and personal development. Volunteer Iowa will work closely with volunteers and organizations to find alternative forms of volunteering and ways to continue to support youth. The 2023-2024 school year saw 175 youth directly impacted by volunteers and showed improvement in reading, writing, speaking, motor, and social skills.

### **AmeriCorps VISTA Program**

- The VISTA program provides much needed resources to areas of the state that are under resourced and non-profit and public organizations that need support to further their mission to meet critical needs in Iowa.
- The Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program re-enrolled one year-long VISTA to serve with Centrally Rooted in Dubuque. There are seven organizations that are actively recruiting the support of a VISTA to help research, create, and/or expand programming and resources to help reduce barriers of low-income Iowa families and individuals.