

Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service)

www.volunteeriowa.org

Quarterly Report:

January 1 – March 31, 2026

AmeriCorps State and National:

- AmeriCorps Week was celebrated March 9-13, 2026. AmeriCorps Week honors the valuable contributions of all AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers who pledge to “get things done” for Iowa and the nation. With more than 7,500 individuals serving at 785 local service sites in Iowa, it’s important to acknowledge the impact these members and volunteers have on our state and country.
- Volunteer Iowa is in the process of reviewing grant applications for our formula grant award process and submitting applications to the national competitive review. Formula grant reviewers consist of Volunteer Iowa Commissioners and peer reviewers. Existing AmeriCorps programs apply annually to continue to receive AmeriCorps funding from the Commission.

AmeriCorps Seniors: RSVP

- Volunteer Iowa is awaiting notification on continuation applications for AmeriCorps Seniors Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) grants. These programs, supported by both federal and state funds, manage thousands of volunteers providing transportation to medical appointments, meals and other appointments, delivering meals to seniors, working in food pantries, teaching exercise classes and partnering in schools. These grants include direct support through Volunteer Iowa HHS programming in 14 counties.
- Volunteer Iowa is supporting RSVP programs in Iowa working on submitting new and re-compete federal grant applications with technical assistance and grant writing consultation to strengthen Iowa applications and increase their competitiveness nationally.

AmeriCorps VISTA:

- Eight VISTA members currently serve with nonprofits across the state. Project focus areas include developing plans to engage more Iowans in service, increasing participation and matches for youth mentor programs, supporting programming and increasing resources for vulnerable Iowans, supporting immigrant and refugee populations and addressing critical mental health issues. Additionally, placements are pending with over 40 additional VISTA host sites for spring and summer start dates.

Commission Business:

- Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol was held on February 24, 2026. Program participants, board members and staff participated both in person and virtually. Volunteer Iowa programs, partners, and commissioners informed legislators about the impact of Volunteer Iowa programs in their communities.

Disaster Response:

- Volunteer Iowa is partnered with Shelby County Emergency Management and ISU Extension to facilitate a Disaster Workshop on March 25, 2026. The workshop educated community members on the impact of volunteers in supporting disaster response efforts. A future Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) training will be scheduled as a follow-up to this workshop.

- Volunteer Iowa is collaborating with Black Hawk County's RSVP program to conduct a VRC simulation exercise at the University of Northern Iowa, to engage between 50-75 students in hands-on VRC training.
- Funding for the HSGP 2025 grant year has not yet been released to Homeland Security and Emergency Management. We have been informed that the grant should be awarded once funds are released. The application for the HSGP 2026 grant is expected to be submitted later this month.

Iowa MENTOR, the Iowa Mentoring Partnership:

- Iowa MENTOR conducted trainings with area MENTOR affiliates Nebraska and Kansas on the Elements of Effective Practice on Mentoring (EPPM). This collaboration allowed Iowa MENTOR program partners to interact with other mentoring programs across the region, strengthen their knowledge and share fundamentals with their colleagues and peers.
- Iowa MENTOR recertified three mentoring program partners this quarter: Mentor Iowa, Children of Promise, and Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Mississippi Valley.
- A newly certified mentoring program, Athletics for Education and Success (AFES), located in Fort Dodge, serves 50 youth through mentoring, after school programming, drum line, and other educational services.
- Technical assistance was provided to eight program partners. The technical assistance in program operations, program management and best practices helps programs develop and strengthen mentoring programs.

Training:

- **Volunteer Engagement Training Program:** The six-part series of volunteer engagement webinars was held January through March. Through a partnership with the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, the program makes consistent, high quality volunteer engagement training available statewide.
- **Service Enterprise:** This research based, change management process trains organizations to effectively leverage the skills of volunteers to meet their mission. A new statewide virtual cohort has launched with five organizations. Additional organizations are currently working on their accreditation or reaccreditation through this program.
- **Volunteer Engagement Training:** Staff will be working with Keep Iowa Beautiful and the Community Foundation of Western Iowa to provide their community partners training on effective volunteer engagement in late March and early April.

Volunteer Recognition:

- **Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame and Excellence in Mentoring Awards:** The 2026 Volunteer Iowa Awards Ceremony will take place on April 24th at the Capitol, honoring the 2026 Hall of Fame Inductees and the 2026 Excellence in Mentoring awardees. Profiles of this year's inductees, ceremony information, and photos will be available [on our website](#).
- **Give Back Iowa Challenge:** The Give Back Iowa Challenge will kick off on April 1 with an invite to employers to participate. Volunteer Iowa provides recommendations for volunteer opportunities to registered businesses.
- **Governor's Volunteer Awards:** The Governor's Volunteer Awards (GVA) nominations will close on April 30th with a statewide ceremony being planned for the summer.

Youth Service & Service-Learning:

- **Day of Service:** Volunteer Iowa launched the Youth Service Board and Family Volunteer Initiative Day of Service programs with 21 participating organizations.

- Both programs provide professional development opportunities and training for organizations on best practices for engaging youth as volunteers, establishing family volunteer programs, and planning a Day of Service.
- **Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) ARP:** The VGF ARP grant ended 2/28/26. To date, schools have reported sixteen service-learning projects completed, 74 staff members trained on service-learning principles and best practices, 926 students engaged in service-learning totaling 2499 hours served, and 34 community partners engaged.
- **Youth Volunteering:** Volunteer Iowa received \$20,000 from America's Service Commission (ASC) to support the expansion of meaningful youth service opportunities across Iowa. Additionally, Volunteer Iowa hosted a State of Youth Service forum in partnership with Youth Service America in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and America's 250. This forum engaged over 30 organizations in discussion around barriers to youth volunteerism.