

Governor's AmeriCorps After-School Program

It is no secret the best way for Iowa to meet many of the new challenges facing Iowa parents, educators, and schoolchildren is to expand and improve the quality of our after-school and summer programs for at-risk youth. With quality after-school programs, parents and educators will be given the tools they need to succeed. Our students learn their lessons in the schoolhouse, not on the street, and youth crime will drop significantly. High quality after-school and summer programs enhance opportunities for our children and strengthen our communities.

Program Description

The Governor's AmeriCorps After-School Program is a three-year statewide initiative to place a total of 140 AmeriCorps members in 70 sites across Iowa to establish after-school programs aimed at middle-school at-risk children. Host sites will be located in schools with high rates of juvenile crime, violence, drug abuse and currently lack the resources to fund after-school programming. Full-time members will coordinate all activities of the team and be responsible for community outreach and coordination with the teachers and administration of the school program. There will be an equal division of full-time and part-time AmeriCorps members used to execute the Governor's program. The part-time members will assist and complement the efforts of the full-time members.

One of the most important tasks of the AmeriCorps members will be to build consensus and a partnership between schools and the local community. The AmeriCorps members will work with teachers and school administrators to "team" with volunteers from the community to make these programs work. The Governor envisions teachers spending a few hours a week after school helping kids who need a little extra help with their math, reading and science. The Governor also envisions parents and grandparents mentoring a child, or coming in a few hours a week to read to young children who may not be read to at home. He envisions police officers from the local Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) chapter talking about the dangers of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and local park rangers talking about the importance of being a responsible partner with our environment. He envisions churches and local businesses sponsoring different days of the week and volunteering to make treats and a hot meal for the program participants. The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service is committed to help Governor Vilsack establish a successful program where communities and schools will take "ownership" and become self-sustaining within a short time.

After-school and summer activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Drug prevention/education with local police or D.A.R.E. chapter.
- Expanded learning/tutoring opportunities with teachers, administrators, parents and community volunteers.
- Expanded technology and library hours
- Establishing mentoring relationships collaborating with Health Care Professionals, R.S.V.P, Foster Grandparents, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, and other programs that build positive role models.
- Recreational and cultural activities
- Nutrition and health programs (Hot meals sponsored by different community organizations).
- Recruitment of volunteers to sustain and expand the programs.

The objectives of after-school and summer activities includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide safe, drug-free supervised environments for at-risk middle-school students after school from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m and in the summer.
- Provide a fun and learning experience.
- Provide at-risk students with an ongoing relationship with a caring adult mentor or tutor.
- Provide aggressive and innovative programming to prevent a child's first use of drugs, specifically methamphetamines.
- Create a community partnership that will sustain and expand the after-school and summer programs using volunteers and other community resources.

Partner Organizations:

1. Governor's Office on Volunteerism
2. Iowa State Department of Education
3. Corporation for National Service (federal parent agency of ICVS)
4. Iowa State University Extension
5. Iowa Medical Society
6. The American Red Cross

How do schools apply and qualify for funding?

First Year (1999/2000 Program year)

A request for concept paper was distributed to the top fifty counties, which reported high juvenile crime rates, in early July with applications due by August 14, 2000. The Grants Review Committee of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS) reviewed applications on December 9, 1999 and recommended 10 applications. The primary concern was to target middle schools in counties with high juvenile crime and to evaluate applications based on quality. Source document was provided by Department of Public Safety, 1998 preliminary ranking of juvenile arrest rates by county.

Fred Moore, President of Buena Vista College, chairs the Grants Review Committee. Members of the committee included Joann Callison, Workforce Development, Jody Benz, IDED, Linda Miller, Dept. of Education, Cathann Kress, ISU Extension. Also attending the review session were Dorothy Carpenter, Chair of Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and Nancy Van Milligen, Vice Chair of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and Vice President of Development at Clarke College.

Submitted applications

Centerville Community School District
Davenport Community School District
Dubuque Community School District
Eldora-New Providence School District
Iowa City Community School District
Johnston Community School District
Keokuk Community School District
Maquoketa Community School District
Oelwein Community School District
Perry Community School District
Sioux City Community School District
Waterloo Community School District
West Monona Community School District

Approved applications

Davenport Community School District
Dubuque Community School District
Eldora-New Providence School District
Iowa City Community School District
Johnston Community School District

Maquoketa Community School District

Perry Community School District
Sioux City Community School District
Waterloo Community School District
West Monona Community School District

Second year (2000/2001 program year)

A request for concept papers was distributed to all school districts in early November 1999 with applications due by December 6, 1999. A panel reviewed the applications on August 22, 2000. The review panel included Joe Kurth, Director of Youth Programs and Lisa Berkland, ISU Extension, Ron Parker, Department of Education and Linda Miller, Department of Education. Mr. Parker is also a member of the ICVS. Priority was given to school districts that sponsored a program the first year.

Submitted applications

Ballard Community Junior/Senior High School
Battle Creek-Ida Grove Community School District
Calamus/Wheatland Community School District
Centerville Community School District
Clinton Community School District
Council Bluffs Community School District
Davenport Community School District

Approved applications

Battle Creek-Ida Grove Community School District
Calamus/Wheatland Community School District
Centerville Community School District

Council Bluffs Community School District
Davenport Community School District

Des Moines Public School District
Dubuque Community School District
Eldora-New Providence School District
Hampton-Dumont Community School District
Iowa City Community School District
Maquoketa Community School District
Nevada Community School District
New Hampton Community School District
Nodaway Valley Community School District
Panorama Community School District
Perry Community School District
Sioux City Community School District
Stratford Community School District
United Community School District
Waterloo Community School District

Des Moines Public School District
Dubuque Community School District
Eldora-New Providence School District

Iowa City Community School District
Maquoketa Community School District
Nevada Community School District
New Hampton Community School District
Nodaway Valley Community School District

Sioux City Community School District

Waterloo Community School District

Third year (2001/2002 program year) PROPOSED

A request for concept paper will be distributed to all school districts with priority given to the top fifty counties which reported high juvenile crime rates, late spring or early summer with applications due by late summer 2001. A panel will review the applications late summer or early fall 2000. Review panel members will include representatives from Iowa State University Extension, Department of Education and Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. Priority will be given to school districts that sponsored a program the first and second year. Additional school districts that demonstrate a commitment to establish an after-school and summer program for at-risk youth will be added as funds permit. Depending on approval from the Corporation for National Service, we intend to seek funds to approve a total of thirty sites with one full-time and one part-time member at each site. Total federal funds will be requested in the amount of \$400,000 to \$500,000 and local (state funds) in the amount of \$216,000. Almost \$500,000 in federal funds has been leveraged for this program already.

Program Outcomes/Objectives

Getting Things Done: Objective 1

Forty AmeriCorps members at 15 after-school locations throughout Iowa will provide year-round programming to 300 at-risk middle school youth with poor academic performance and homework completion. Provided programs will emphasize academic guidance such as homework assistance and homework completion in the areas of reading, math, technology, and/or science. The result will be 25% of youth participants will demonstrate an increase of .25 points in their GPA by the end of the academic year and increase homework completion by 15% per semester as measured, respectively, by school GPA records and teachers' records of students' homework completion.

During the past program year, **435 middle school youth** received tutoring assistance from the initiative's AmeriCorps members. The three primary areas of academic tutoring were in the areas of math, science, and reading. Students also received tutoring assistance in the areas of language arts, social studies, technology, and health/nutrition. As a result of students' participation in the after-school tutoring program, **students' homework completion rates increased, on average, by 25 – 50% per quarter**. Preliminary GPA outcome measures are currently being collected. School staff and AmeriCorps members report that fewer youth are receiving failing grades, with projected **GPA improvements as much as one letter grade in some academic content areas**.

School staff, parents, and youth also stated that if it were not for the after-school tutoring programs, students would not complete their classroom assignments on time. Furthermore, school staff observed that students who enrolled in the initiative's tutoring programs participated more actively in classroom discussions and activities, and had a more favorable outlook toward school.

In conjunction with school-based tutoring, AmeriCorps members also provided **2,282 students** with many opportunities to become engaged in enrichment programs. Enrichment programs emphasized aggression and conflict management, asset building, character education, citizenship, cooking, creative artistic expression, dance, drama, drug prevention, First Aid for Little People, life and social skill development, physical fitness, strengthened adult-youth communication, and team building.

AmeriCorps members **recruited 99 volunteers** to assist with tutoring programming and the organization of enrichment activities.

Getting Things Done: Objective 2

Forty AmeriCorps members at 15 after-school locations throughout Iowa will organize multiple-sized groupings of 300 at-risk middle school students to participate in student-identified community service projects twice a year. Service projects may include such events as park clean-ups and school ground beautification. The result will be that 25% of at-risk students will increase their community service hours by four hours per year as measured by the AmeriCorps Service Learning Log.

During the past year, **462 middle school students participated in 3,018 hours of community service/service learning events**. The two most common types of community service events were developing relationships with elderly residents residing in nursing homes and cleaning community and state parks. With elderly community residents, students made crafts, participated in sing-a-longs, wrote letters, and took residents to school events. When working with park rangers and DNR representatives, students picked up litter, cleared hiking trails, painted picnic tables, and mulched playground areas. Middle school youth also participated in school beautification efforts such as planting flowers, collecting food for needy families, making and delivering craft items for children in hospitals, delivering food to individuals who could not leave their homes, and tutoring elementary-aged children.

From actively organizing, participating in, and cognitively processing their community service efforts, students indicated they learned the following:

- a) community service can be hard work;
- b) community service fosters a sense of pride in one's work and community;
- c) intergenerational relationships are enjoyable;
- d) individuals from diverse populations can interact together;
- e) helping people is important, fun, and appreciated by others;
- f) young people play an important role in participating in community service activities; and
- g) more young people need to be involved in community service events.

Community Strengthening: Objective 1

Forty AmeriCorps members at 15 after-school locations throughout Iowa will develop partnerships with community entities to enhance their site's after-school program. AmeriCorps members will initiate the development of partnerships by directly contacting community representatives by way of one-to-one meetings and phone contacts. The result will be that 40% of the after-school program sites will develop two new community partnerships by the end of the grant year as measured by the Community Strengthening Log.

AmeriCorps members have developed and/or strengthened community partnerships with 62 community entities. Members reported partnerships with 26 different types of businesses, organizations, institutions, and agencies. Members also reported 20 different types of benefits to the after-school programs, youth, AmeriCorps members, and community partners that resulted from the developed community partnerships.

The most common community entities that developed partnerships with the after-school programs were nursing homes, neighborhood groups or centers, businesses, and county Iowa State University Extension offices. Partnerships were also developed with social service agencies, police departments, local newspapers and radio stations, parks, colleges, and non-profit community agencies.

The most widely reported benefit of the community partnerships was the provision of staff for after-school workshops, curricula training, and presentations. Community partnerships were also important in the organization of service learning opportunities; preparation of snacks and food donations to the after-school program; monetary donations to purchase materials; provision of physical space for tutoring; donation of personnel time for tutoring; and the provision of media coverage to highlight after-school programs' successes.

Success Stories

These are just a few of the many success stories from the three-year statewide initiative to place AmeriCorps members across Iowa to establish after-school programs aimed at middle-school children:

Davenport – The Governor's After-School initiative has leveraged summer opportunities in the neighborhood. Because of the AmeriCorps and after-school program, a partnership was formed with the elementary building across the playground to bring outgoing fifth graders into the summer program, enabling a transition into the intermediate program for the fall.

Dubuque – AmeriCorps members have developed one-on-one relationships with many at-risk students, including students who are at risk of losing high school credits. Students have shown improvements in attendance, grades and behavior. The school district is not able to support this type of extra assistance to students without the help of the AmeriCorps program.

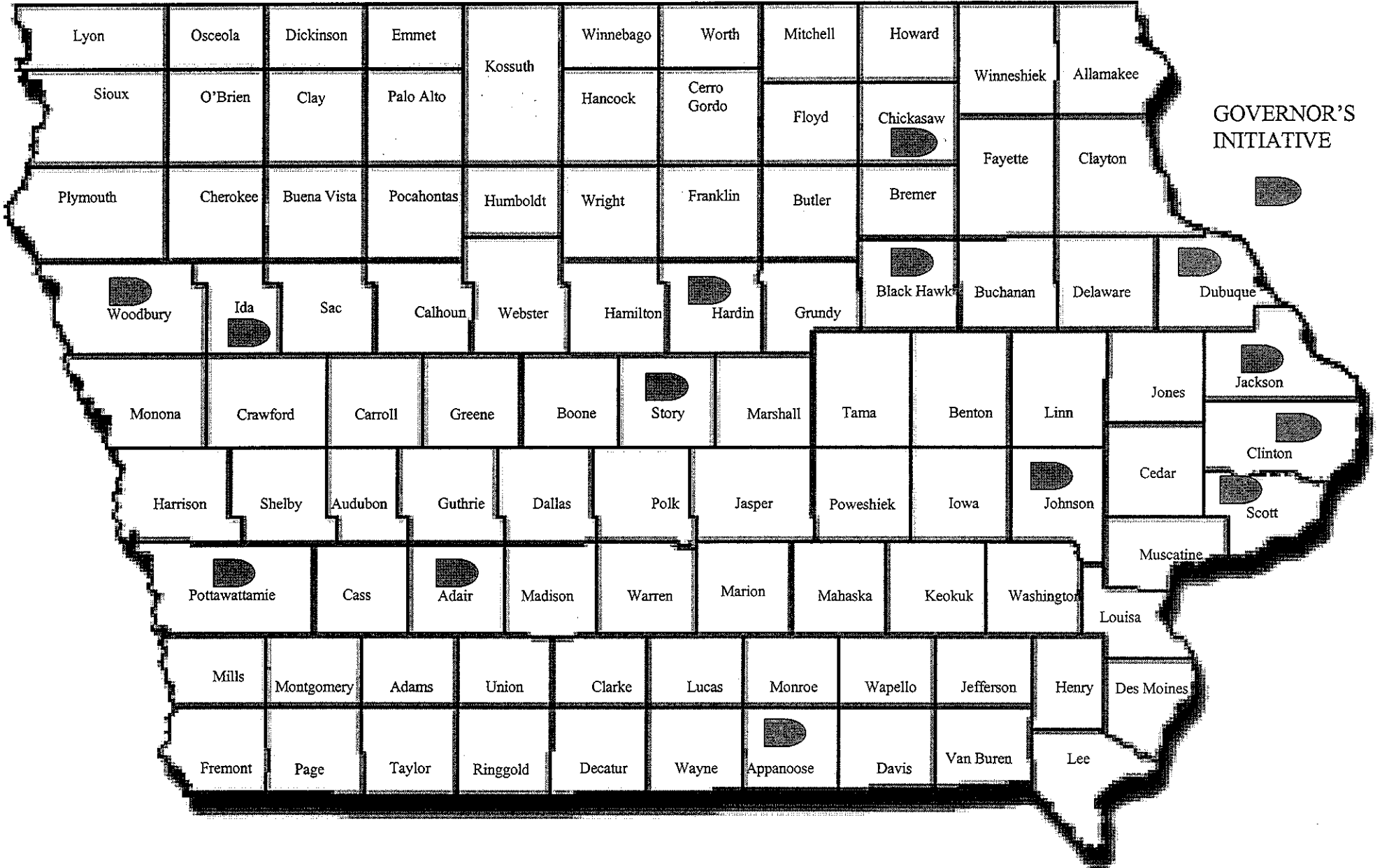
Eldora-New Providence – Several middle school students cleaned a local park that had recently been vandalized. The park ranger shared with the site supervisors that after the youth began regularly cleaning the park, the amount of park vandalism and littering decreased dramatically.

Fontanelle – The Governor's After-School Program has provided Nodaway Valley Middle School students with a plethora of learning and community service opportunities. The AmeriCorps members continually problem solve to identify areas of need and involve parents/community members in this effort. Initially, AmeriCorps members set up an information table during our Parent-Teacher Conferences in October. They offered information to parents/guardians and students about tutoring services, gathered critical information from a need assessment survey, and recruited parents/guardians for future assistance. The response was overwhelming, and the information is used often during our weekly core team planning meetings.

Besides the top-notch tutoring services, AmeriCorps members continually provide students with other after-school opportunities. Following a week of Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, the members organized an after-school Basic Skills Bash. Over 60 students attended the bash and participated in a variety of games and activities. A highlight of the bash was making door decorations for Blank Children's Hospital. Students took great pride in their work and sent special messages to the patients.

For more information about the AmeriCorps After-School Initiative, contact Mike Milligan at 515-281-0161.

IOWA COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEER SERVICE 2001 GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE PROGRAMS



GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE

GOVERNOR'S AMERICORPS AFTER-SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Fiscal Year 2001

Projected Expenditures

<u>SCHOOL DISTRICTS (County)</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Total</u>
Centerville (Appanoose)	3.0	32,976	12,625	45,601
Calamus/Wheatland (Clinton)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Battle Creek-Ida Grove (Ida)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Davenport (Scott)	3.0	32,976	12,625	45,601
Des Moines (Polk)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Dubuque (Dubuque)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Eldora-New Providence (Hardin)	3.0	32,976	12,625	45,601
Nodaway Valley (Adair)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Maquoketa (Jackson)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Nevada (Story)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Sioux City (Woodbury)	2.5	27,480	10,523	38,003
Waterloo (Black Hawk)	3.0	32,976	12,625	45,601
Iowa City (Johnson)	1.5	16,488	6,314	22,802
Council Bluffs (Pottawattamie)	2.0	21,986	8,418	30,404
New Hampton (Chickasaw)	<u>1.5</u>	<u>16,488</u>	<u>6,314</u>	<u>22,802</u>
TOTALS	30.0	\$329,762	\$126,267	\$456,029

Projected Expenditures 2001