



Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service) Quarterly Report: July 1 – September 30, 2023

AmeriCorps:

The new AmeriCorps program year began in August. Across the 19 AmeriCorps State programs in Iowa, more than 800 members will serve in organizations throughout the 2023-2024 program year. Two of the 19 operational programs in Iowa are focused on public health, which was the target of a special competition for AmeriCorps. There will also be four planning grants operating this fall. These planning grantees will be focused on developing new programs or redesigning current AmeriCorps programs to identify which program design and interventions will meet the changing needs of Iowa communities. The Request for Applications for competitive 2024-2025 AmeriCorps grants was released in September.

Commission Business:

Angela Jiskoot was re-appointed as Commission Chair, along with Dan Cataldi as Vice Chair. Dan Koster was appointed to chair the Volunteer Engagement Committee. Monica Chavez-Silva and Tim Jacobsen will co-chair the Programs and Development Committee.

Disaster Response:

Michael Rojas, Disaster Program Officer, is leading the AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (A-DRT) response in Hawaii. More information will be provided in the FY24 Q2 report. Throughout the quarter, meetings and trainings have been held with emergency managers, community organizations active in disaster (COADs), and communities on developing plans for managing volunteers in times of disaster and leveraging national service resources.

Iowa Mentoring Partnership (Iowa MENTOR):

Many opportunities for professional development are being offered by Iowa MENTOR. A series of Mentoring Matters seminars with MENTOR National presenters will be offered to mentoring program staff this fall. Staff attended a national Train the Trainer for Mentoring Mindset and Become a Better Mentor. Staff from schools receiving Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) Mentoring grant funding attended training on the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring in person in August. Additionally, we are closing out technical assistance contracts with programs for FY23 with the National Mentoring Resource Center, bringing in over \$25,000 in revenue.

Volunteer Recognition

Governor's Volunteer Awards: The 2023 Governor's Volunteer Awards hosted the final two of five regional ceremonies in Ottumwa on July 21 and in Storm Lake on September 14, 2023. Nearly 600 individuals and groups serving in over 200 communities were recognized for their volunteer efforts over the summer.

RSVP

Volunteer Iowa issued contracts to provide state funding to support 19 organizations providing RSVP programming to 66 Iowa counties. The RSVP program engages individuals ages 55 and older in volunteer service to address community needs and to provide high quality volunteer experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.

Service Enterprise

Several organizations continue to work toward their Service Enterprise recertification, and a new Central Iowa in-person training cohort has begun. Current cohort members include:

- Children and Family Urban Movement
- Animal Rescue League
- Des Moines Playhouse
- Table to Table
- Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC)

Training

Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps program staff held an in-person AmeriCorps Program Staff training on August 3 for new program staff to introduce them and train them on state and federal regulations, the basics of operating an AmeriCorps program, and to set expectations for the AmeriCorps program year. AmeriCorps program staff also provided a three-part "AmeriCorps Member Support" virtual training series to program staff. Topics covered included: supervising members, supporting members and member retention strategies. Additionally, fiscal staff working on AmeriCorps grants attended a virtual AmeriCorps financial training webinar provided by Volunteer Iowa.

9/11 Day of Service Grant

Volunteer Iowa was awarded a new three-year 9/11 Day of Service grant. This grant has three components, each providing training and coaching culminating in a 9/11 Day of Service project on 9/11/2024. Funding for 10 cities to participate in the City Volunteer Engagement Initiative, 10 organizations to participate in Service Enterprise, and 10 nonprofits to develop youth volunteer opportunities. Applications for all three components will open this fall.

Volunteer Generation Fund

Volunteer Center subgrantees continue to provide training locally to nonprofits and engage volunteers meeting local community needs. A statewide Skills Based Volunteering Bootcamp webinar series for nonprofits is being held in partnership with the Volunteer Centers of Iowa.

Service Learning

Volunteer Iowa welcomed a new VISTA member, Kathlyn Wagner, to support our service-learning work. For 9/11 Day of Service, Volunteer Iowa collected act of services stories from Iowans across the state to

recognize their service and inspire others to get involved. Volunteer Iowa hosted three service-learning trainings for staff from schools that received a service-learning grant. Additionally, K-12 schools from across the state were invited to participate. As a result of the trainings, school staff will be equipped with the knowledge and resources need to lead their students through an authentic service experience that draws upon their curriculum.

AmeriCorps Seniors

Volunteer Iowa established 11 volunteer stations across five counties in Iowa. These counties include Polk, Marion, Appanoose, Boone, and Cass. There are currently nine active volunteers serving 45 youth as Foster Grandparent volunteers and three potential volunteers completing onboarding. Volunteer Iowa continues to recruit volunteers to serve in their community and organizations to host volunteers.

AmeriCorps VISTA

A request for applications for new project host sites was released in September. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis for start dates beginning in October 2023 and ending in August 2024.

Volunteer Iowa currently has 28 active VISTAs serving with 19 host sites across Iowa to help overcome barriers for unserved and underserved populations related to poverty. From July to September there were 12 new year-long VISTAs who joined and 17 summer associate VISTA members that served throughout the state. A new VISTA Leader started in June 2023 to help support member recruitment and development. There are four additional sites in active recruitment for open VISTA roles.