

Resource Guide for Communities and Nonprofits

IOWA™ Commission on Volunteer Service

Our Mission: To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

Volunteer Iowa (The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service) uses resources and partnerships to fulfill strategies outlined in the State Service Plan, which is updated and approved by the Governor every three years.

Our Programs



AmeriCorps State & National:

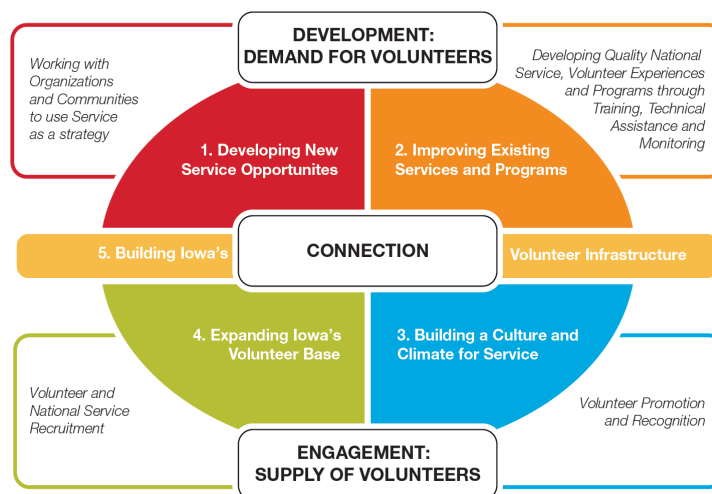
Volunteer Iowa awards and administers grants to organizations to host a team of national service

members who commit significant time to service designed to meet community needs. AmeriCorps State members provide service in education, environment, public safety, health, economic opportunity, and disaster. Grantee organizations recruit, train, and support their AmeriCorps members, who provide service based on the organization's identified needs, for example, facilitating afterschool programming, implementing conservation practices, mentoring first-generation college students, or coordinating volunteers to rehabilitate low-income housing.

AmeriCorps VISTA: A national service program whose members bring their passion and perseverance where the need is greatest: to organizations that help eradicate poverty. Members serve as catalysts for change, living and working alongside community members to advance local solutions. The Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA program places members throughout Iowa by partnering with local nonprofit organizations, local governments, state agencies, schools, and faith-based organizations to act as "host sites" for our members.

Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF): Volunteer Iowa provides VGF grants to organizations in Iowa to develop or expand the state's volunteer infrastructure to mobilize volunteers consistent with our State Service Plan. This includes partnering with the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, which helps connect Iowans with opportunities to serve, build the capacity of organizations to engage volunteers, promote volunteerism, and mobilize volunteers to meet community needs.

Volunteer Iowa State Service Plan Core Areas



Iowa MENTOR: Iowa MENTOR promotes, supports, and builds quality mentoring relationships by elevating the capacity of programs, systems, and policies. Its local mentoring program partners are offered training, consulting, volunteer recognition, advocacy, and marketing campaigns.

Volunteer Recognition Programs: Volunteer Iowa coordinates Iowa's three state-level volunteer recognition programs:

1. Governor's Volunteer Awards, an easy and cost-effective way for organizations to honor their volunteers;
2. The Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame, the highest state-level honor volunteers can receive; and,
3. Excellence in Mentoring Awards, giving Iowa MENTOR-certified programs an opportunity to recognize outstanding long-time youth mentors.



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Give Back Iowa Challenge: This initiative works to increase knowledge about the benefits of employer-supported volunteer programs; and provides resources and training for starting, improving, and promoting programs. The Challenge runs each spring from April 1st to May 31st, to encourage employees to volunteer.

Service Enterprise: Volunteer Iowa was the first government agency in the U.S. to receive the national Service Enterprise Accreditation. Volunteer Iowa now serves as a training hub, facilitating the process for organizations to become certified and leading the development of other hubs in Iowa. Service Enterprise organizations are uniquely positioned to leverage the time and skills of volunteers, which leads to greater programmatic impact and organizational effectiveness.

Volunteer Engagement Training: Volunteer Iowa, often in partnership with the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, offers a variety of beginning and intermediate level training on volunteer engagement topics. Dates and topics vary, reach out for current opportunities.

RSVP (formerly Retired and Senior Volunteer Program): Identifies and addresses priority community needs by mobilizing adult volunteers aged 55 and over. Volunteer Iowa coordinates state-funded grants that support each RSVP project serving Iowa.

Get Connected Online Portal: Volunteer Iowa offers a statewide system for volunteers and organizations to use to connect. Volunteers can look for opportunities to give their time, and organizations can post volunteer opportunities to serve.

Disaster Volunteer Planning: Volunteer Iowa provides resources to help emergency managers develop plans to mobilize and manage spontaneous volunteers after a disaster occurs, and hosts an online database of individuals willing to volunteer during times of disaster.

What's Your 50? Recognition: Volunteer Iowa encourages Iowans to volunteer at least 50 hours each year and features individuals or groups who achieve that goal through our blog and social media. Nominations can be submitted online at any time during the year.

Youth Volunteer and Service Learning: Informed by a statewide group of stakeholders, Volunteer Iowa works to increase opportunities for youth to volunteer by providing training and resources to nonprofits (how to involve youth and risk management practices), youth (how to be engaged as volunteers and advocate for volunteering and service learning in schools and communities), out-of-school time programming (how to incorporate volunteering and service learning into programming), and schools (how to incorporate service learning into the classroom) during the year.

Contact Us About:

- What we do
- Our programs and services
- How to improve your community through service
- Technical assistance and support services
- Capacity-building resources to help organizations effectively utilize the time and talent of volunteers and national service members