



SERVE ILLINOIS



**Commission on Volunteerism
and Community Service**



Annual Report 2015

Letter from Executive Director and Commission Chair

2015, the Year of the Volunteer, was a big year for volunteer service in Illinois!

Serve Illinois' mission is to build an ethic of service in Illinois, and our State has a strong tradition of neighbors helping neighbors. Illinois volunteers save lives every day. They give comfort to the homeless, help educate our students, respond to disasters, and so much more. Over 2,500,000 Illinoisans gave back to their communities through service. Their 274 million hours equated to a \$6.8 billion investment in our communities. Their hard work made Illinois the most volunteering state of the largest states in the Union!

Everything we are, and everything we will become is because of a volunteer. Think about that for a moment. We all have that person. They were that coach, teacher, or maybe even a stranger who came to us in our moment of need. That moment when we didn't know where to turn. Just when we thought, we had failed, a volunteer stepped into our lives. They took our hand and led us out of that darkness. Think about that person for a moment. Think about whom they are, or were, and what you owe them.

Now, we want you to know this. **YOU ARE THAT VOLUNTEER!** To someone else, you were that light in the dark. You may not even know it. In fact, you probably never will. It could have happened on what you thought was your worst day. You may have just gone home without a clue. In truth, that was the day you saved a life. That was the day that you touched someone.

With all of the good news you will read in this annual report, we want you to remember that only a quarter of Illinoisans volunteer each year. That 25.9% does amazing work, but they cannot make positive change for Illinois alone. Every day, thousands of volunteer positions go unfilled. If you already volunteer, bring a family member, friend, or co-worker. If you have never volunteered before, visit www.Serve.Illinois.gov and find an opportunity that interests you. Just imagine what we can do if all of us gave a few hours back. Just imagine the world where we all serve.

Thank you for your service!

Yours in Service,



Frederick Nettles,
Chair



Scott McFarland,
Executive Director



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The Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service Act (PA91-798, 20 ILCS 710) enabled the creation of a Commission to promote community service and volunteer participation as a way to foster community and state problem-solving; to encourage and support voluntary citizen involvement in government and private programs throughout Illinois; to establish a long-term, thorough vision and plan of action for national volunteerism and community service efforts in the state; and to serve as the liaison between Illinois and national or state organizations that support its mission.

Mission

The mission of the Serve Illinois Commission is to improve Illinois communities by supporting and enhancing traditional volunteerism and community service and the administration of the AmeriCorps program.

Vision

The Serve Illinois Commission envisions an Illinois where all citizens recognize their ability and responsibility to help strengthen their communities through voluntary service. The Commission strives to create expanded and meaningful volunteerism throughout rural, suburban, and urban Illinois involving people of all backgrounds, cultures, and ages. The Commission envisions volunteers making measurable differences in their communities because they are well trained, supported, and on the cutting edge of problem solving.

Purpose

“The purpose of the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is to promote and support community service in public and private programs to meet the needs of Illinois citizens; to stimulate new volunteerism and community service initiatives and partnerships; and to serve as a resource and advocate within the Department of Human Services for community service agencies, volunteers, and programs which utilize State and private volunteers.” — 20 ILCS 710, Chapter 1278, paragraphs 3800 to 3806.



A Special thank you to the Serve Illinois Commission Staff and Jane Angelis for putting this Annual Report together.

In 1979, the Commission was founded as the Illinois Office of Voluntary participation. The office changed names and was housed in several different offices before finding its place in the Department of Public Health in 2014. After the implementation of the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service Act in 2000, the Commission was aptly named the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The Commission began using the “Serve Illinois” moniker in 2007. The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is currently housed within the Department of Public Health, Office of Preparedness and Response, located at 422 S. 5th Street in Springfield, Illinois.

State Overview



Numbers to Know

\$16 million-Federal Investment to Serve Illinois Programming

\$52 million in AmeriCorps Volunteer Impact

425,714 Disadvantaged Youth Served

39,728 Veterans and Military Family Members Served

3,042 victims of disaster served

\$50 to \$1 Return on State Investment



Illinois benefits when citizens, organizations, and businesses work together and strengthen their communities through volunteering and community service.

The Commission meets quarterly with the Commission staff to discuss all issues relating to community service in the state.

Working in cooperation with State agencies, individuals, local groups, and various other Illinois organizations, the duties of the Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service are as follows:

- Prepare a 3-year state service plan in an open, public process, and update it annually
- Fund and administer AmeriCorps*State programs
- Promote National Days of Service (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, AmeriCorps Week, 9/11 Day of Service)
- Coordinate training, projects, and other activities related to service
- Recognize outstanding community service accomplishments
- Support, expand and improve Illinois community service initiatives
- Prepare financial assistance applications

Volunteer Conferences

Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference

June 11, 2015 - Springfield, IL

102 Participants



Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration

August 13, 2015 - Chicago, IL

188 Participants



Northwestern Illinois Volunteerism Conference

October 16, 2015 - Moline, IL

87 Participants



Visit us at www.serve.illinois.gov



National Service Programs

The Serve Illinois Commission administers AmeriCorps*State programs and partners with other National Service programs that are overseen by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps*State Programs—Members perform direct service for organizations operating only in Illinois.

VISTA—Volunteers in Service to America— Members focus on capacity building and seek to end illiteracy, improve health services, increase housing opportunities, or eliminate poverty through their services. Individuals perform little or no direct service.

NCCC—National Civilian Community Corps is a residential service program that deploys teams of members to locations across the nation to instigate service projects with an emphasis on protecting the environment, promoting public safety, and responding to natural disasters.

National Direct Programs—Members perform direct service for organizations that operate in multiple states.



Senior Corps

RSVP—Retired & Senior Volunteer Program— This program utilizes the talents and time of individuals age 55 and over to serve communities in a variety of capacities.

FGP—Foster Grandparents Program— Participants in this program work directly with low income children.

SCP—Senior Companions Program— Individuals work with other seniors to help them maintain their independence.



AmeriCorps*State

Over 1,700 AmeriCorps*State members perform direct service for communities in Illinois. Additionally, 32,070 volunteers were recruited to work alongside them. Through their service, AmeriCorps*State members strengthen communities and build relationships with the organizations and people they serve. Their service includes, but is not limited to, tutoring and mentoring, family literacy, community outreach, restoring parks, recruiting volunteers, safety education, and prenatal care.

AmeriCorps members commit to full or part-time service over a 9-12 month period. During their service, members may receive health coverage, training, and deferment of student loans. About half of all members also receive a modest living allowance. After successful completion of their service term, members receive an education award that can be applied toward existing student loans or used to pay the current cost of attending a higher education program.

Members join together in October of each year for National Service Recognition Day.

Illinois
AmeriCorps



AmeriCorps*State grant funding is distributed by the Serve Illinois Commission. These funds are given to local non-profit, faith based and government organizations in the form of populated-based formula grants, and the remaining funds are awarded via a competitive grant process overseen by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

In program year 2015-2016, the Serve Illinois Commission awarded nearly \$4.1 million to formula grant programs and \$4.4 million to competitive grant programs. The total investment of AmeriCorps in communities was \$15.6 million.

- Academy for Urban School Leadership (Chicago)
- American Red Cross (Chicago)
- Asian Human Services of Chicago, Inc. (Chicago)
- Children's Home Association of Illinois (Peoria)
- City Year, Inc. (Chicago)
- East St. Louis School District Operation AmeriCorps (East St. Louis)
- Greater Chicago Food Depository (Chicago)
- Housing Forward (Oak Park)
- Illinois Bar Foundation (Chicago)
- Illinois Public Health Association (Springfield)
- Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House (East St. Louis)
- Literacy Volunteers of America (Chicago)
- Lutheran Social Services, Prisoner and Family Ministries (Marion)

- Northwestern University Settlement Association (Chicago)
- Public Allies, Inc. (Chicago)
- Rend Lake College (Ina)
- Sauk Valley Community College (Dixon)
- Schuler Family Foundation (Lake Forest)
- Southwestern Illinois College (Belleville)
- Springfield Urban League (Springfield)
- Teach for America (Chicago)
- University of Illinois (Chicago)
- Western Illinois University (Macomb)
- Western Illinois University (Quad Cities)
- Youth Organization Umbrella, Inc. (Evanston)
- YMCA of Rock River Valley (Rockford)
- Youth Guidance (Chicago)

Governor's Volunteer Service Awards

2015 marked the sixth year of the Governor's Volunteer Service Awards in Illinois. These awards recognize individual volunteers through a statewide award program to highlight the importance of volunteerism and community service in the State of Illinois.

Awards are presented annually in April. In 2015, the ceremony took place at the Hoogland Center in Springfield. Special guest, Illinois Deputy Governor Trey Childress, spoke at the ceremony and thanked the volunteers for their dedication to service.

Each year, Commissioners review the nominations and jointly decide on a winner in each award category. Awards are presented to one Youth (18 and under), one Adult (19-54 years old), one Retiree/Senior (55+ years old) and one AmeriCorps, Senior Corps member and one business in each of the Commission's five service regions across the state (Northeast, Northwest, East Central, West Central and Southern Illinois). Nominees for each award category serve in one of the following focus areas: Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Conservation, Disaster Preparedness/Response, Health, and Veterans Affairs.

In 2015, the Commission received an astounding 170 nominations from across the state. 28 awardees were honored. Full biographies can be found at www.Serve.Illinois.gov.



Southern Illinois Award Recipients

Adult: Dominic Goggin - Greenville
AmeriCorps Member: Maria Madrid - Fairfield
Business: Mt. Vernon Outland Airport
Senior: Bev Virobik - Centralia
Senior Corps Member: Judie Loudon - Belleville
Youth: Savannah Beck - Mt. Vernon

East Central Illinois Award Recipients

Adult: Ed Maubach - Peoria
AmeriCorps Member: Cecilia Montesdeoca - Normal
Business: Wells Fargo Home Mortgage - Springfield
Senior: Trisha Horner - Bloomington
Senior Corps Member: Vera Bright - Clinton
Youth: Allison Schmidt - Altamont

West Central Illinois Award Recipients

AmeriCorps Member: Nick Swope - Macomb
Business: Keller Williams Realty - Peoria

Senior: Cindy Schuford - Washington
Senior Corps Member: Alan Kulczewski - Monmouth
Youth: Alexis Grace Lawson - Colchester

Northwest Illinois Award Recipients

Adult: Scott Brouette - Moline
AmeriCorps Member: Etta LaFlora - Kewanee
Senior: Sharon Kersten - Dixon
Senior Corps Member: Barbara Novak - Moline
Youth: Ashlee Werkheiser - Kewanee

Northeast Illinois Award Recipients

Adult: Kenneth Jennings - Chicago
AmeriCorps Member: Dylan Mooney - Wayne
Business: Groupon, Inc. - Chicago
Senior: Dan Kenney - DeKalb
Senior Corps Member: Rita Murphy - Yorkville
Youth: Nicole Harrington - Winthrop Harbor



National Service Recognition Day

Governor Rauner proclaimed October 21st National Service Recognition Day in Illinois, and Serve Illinois celebrated it with nearly 1,000 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps volunteers. The day culminated with a parade to the Old State Capitol in Springfield where the volunteers were joined by the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Wendy Spencer and Serve Illinois Executive Director Scott McFarland, who led the members in the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps pledges, where volunteers proclaimed their commitment to a year of service to Illinois. "Illinois' AmeriCorps and Senior Corps volunteers are working on the front lines to improve our communities," McFarland said. "They dedicate millions of hours a year at over 2,000 locations throughout Illinois. We are very proud of their service, and we are honored to recognize their dedication to our State."

"I am proud to welcome these new AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers into the national service family – they are the heart of everything we do," said Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. "National service is an indispensable resource for nonprofits, communities, and the individuals they serve, uniting Americans of all backgrounds with a shared goal: to make a lasting impact on the toughest challenges facing our nation. I salute all the AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers for their dedication, and thank our outstanding partners who make their service possible."



Serve Illinois on the Web

Serve Illinois Facebook Page



Facebook

Serve Illinois Facebook gained 141 new likes in 2015. Along with that, Serve Illinois had 161 posts with 654 page visits and almost 61,000 impressions! In 2016, Serve Illinois hopes to increase the likes and post on Social Media to better improve marketing the message.



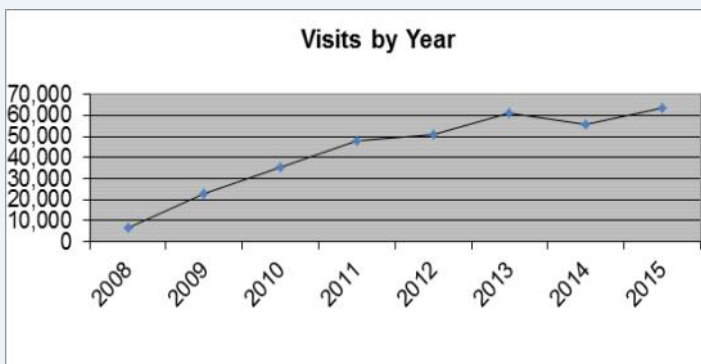
Top Tweet in 2015

Twitter

2015 was a big year for Serve Illinois on Twitter. In total, the Commission tweeted 606 times with 160,411 impressions, 6,501 profile visits, 422 mentions and 425 new followers! With new social media plans, Serve Illinois hopes to increase these already great numbers in 2016.

Serve.Illinois.gov

The Serve Illinois website averages 130 views per day for a total of 63,719 visits for the year! 2015 was our most visited year and saw a 14.4% increase from 2014. Serve.Illinois.gov has more than 20,000 volunteer opportunities throughout Illinois and in bordering states. Volunteers can search based on location or area of interest, as well as by web-based, ongoing, or one-time volunteer opportunities.



Highlights

Serve Illinois had many strong points this year, here are a few.

Disaster Corps

After many devastating disasters in Illinois, Serve Illinois has stepped up and created the Illinois Disaster Corps, Illinois first statewide national service disaster response team. In partnership with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), AmeriCorps Members and Senior Corps volunteers will be trained in the operations of a Volunteer Reception Center.



Disaster Corps members will complete numerous online trainings through the Federal Emergency Management Agency followed by an intensive three-day training with IEMA.

It is the hope of Serve Illinois that Disaster Corps members will be on the scene at any disaster within Illinois and also able to assist surrounding states in times of need. Thirty-five Disaster Corps members began their training in 2015, and they will be certified in February of 2016.

Cities of Service

Cities of Service is a national initiative of over 200 cities in the US and UK, representing more than 52 million people in 45 states. Illinois leads the nation in Cities with 47 total as of 2015. 33% of Illinoisans live in a City of Service!

To become a City of Service, a Declaration of Service that highlights a commitment to community service and intention to create a service plan for the city must be signed by the mayor. There are no costs or requirements attached to becoming a City of Service, and once registered, a city will be eligible for a portion of a multi-million dollar grant pool each year.



CITIES OF SERVICE

If you would like more information on Cities of Service, please visit www.citiesofservice.org. To register as a City of Service, please contact info@CitiesOfService.org

Illinois cities include: Ashmore, Aurora, Belleville, Belvidere, Champaign, Chatham, Chicago, Columbia, Campton Hills, Dekalb, East Moline, East St. Louis, Elgin, Evanston, Forest Park, Franklin Park, Glendale Heights, Hazel Crest, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Island Lake, Jacksonville, Joliet, Kewanee, Libertyville, Markham, Midlothian, Moline, Montgomery, Mt. Vernon, North Chicago, O'Fallon, Olympia Fields, Palatine, Park Ridge, Peoria, Plano, Richton Park, Robbins, Rock Island, Rushville, Salem, Sauk Village, Silvis, Streamwood, University Park, and Waterloo.

The Year of the Volunteer

Contribution by Serve Illinois Commissioner Jane Angelis

The Year of the Volunteer emerged from a Senate Resolution citing “service instills the knowledge that citizenship brings responsibility and that everyone has talents and skills to make their community a better place.” The theme, “You are the difference” brought attention to the individual and the remarkable impact of one person.

As expected, we found examples of volunteerism in faith communities and on college campuses, in urban neighborhoods, and rural communities. The contributions of Illinois volunteers occur daily in schools, food pantries, libraries, in business workplaces, both Fortune 500 and small businesses alike.

Over the last 12 months, two streams of thinking resulted from monthly themes that targeted different sectors: first, the big picture, that is, the infrastructure of service, and second, becoming more mindful about the personal impact of volunteering. Four issues of *Continuance Magazine* in 2014 and 2015, provided highlights of the Year of the Volunteer about the structure of volunteerism, leadership, communication, civic engagement and stories from libraries, business, faith-based groups, education and communities.

We also encountered instances of volunteer burnout as some described poorly managed and conceived initiatives that sapped enthusiasm and eroded energy. These challenges for the future, not only to improve volunteer management but the experience itself. The following lessons learned during the Year of the Volunteer will target action in 2016.

2015: The Year of the Volunteer was Sponsored by Generations Serving Generations, the Serve Illinois Commission, the Illinois Department on Aging, the McCormick Foundation, the Illinois Senate and more than 100 education, aging, business and non-profits. Generations Serving Generations is a public/private partnership established in 1986 and selected by the National Governors Association effort on civic engagement in service, learning and work. Congratulations to the McCormick Foundation for HB4025 that will give high school students greater civic opportunities.



Thumbs Up for the Year of the Volunteer and the 2.5 million Illinoisans who give their time so generously!

New Directions in 2016

- 1. Service is for a Lifetime:** From the earliest moments of life until the last, serving others is part of the American experience and the mark of a good citizen.
- 2. Volunteering is Enriched by Reflection**
Reflecting on the service experience—formally or informally, alone or in groups, through quiet reflection, writing in a journal, or discussing the experience with others—is the key to making service a worthwhile learning opportunity at every stage in life.
- 3. Volunteering Connects People and Organizations**
Communication is key. However, one message channel won't work for everyone. Current and potential volunteers have preferences about the best way to reach them.
- 4. The Infrastructure Is Vital for the Growth of Service in Illinois.**

During 2016, the Serve Illinois Commission will sponsor hearings to gather information for preparing the 2017-2020 State Service Plan. By listening to individuals of all generations, the Commission will advance strategies that strengthen the infrastructure of service throughout Illinois.

Go to the Serve Illinois website to find the full report on the Year of the Volunteer, *Continuance Magazine*, and recommendations on how you can get involved.



**Commission on Volunteerism
and Community Service**

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