



2014-15 Virginia AmeriCorps Story

Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service
and Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism



A Spirit of Service is alive in Virginia.

It has been an exciting year for national service and volunteerism in Virginia! The Office on Volunteerism and Community Service (OVCS) sharpened its focus on tackling Virginia's most pressing problems by expanding its reach with strong, effective AmeriCorps programs, hosting its largest Volunteerism and Service Conference ever, and continuing to expand and strengthen the Virginia Faith Based and Community Initiative.

Virginia's national service programs leveraged 6,400 members, serving at 560 locations across the Commonwealth – recruiting volunteers and making a direct impact on individual communities! For the first time, Virginia also launched several programs as part of the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Volunteer Generation Fund program. These programs worked to boost the impact of volunteers in addressing critical community needs. We are also thrilled to announce that several of Virginia's most successful AmeriCorps programs were awarded Competitive Funding freeing up more AmeriCorps State dollars to fund more programs.

This report details the incredible success stories in volunteerism and service over the past year. As we look to the new year, we are confident and extremely motivated to continue our momentum in building stronger, safer, and happier communities throughout the Commonwealth through service.

Sincerely,

Gail Harris, Director
Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service

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AmeriCorps in Virginia

An Overview

National Service is strong in the Commonwealth with more than 9,300 individuals across Virginia making a difference at more than 1,300 program sites across Virginia. From working to improve literacy rates to helping homeless families find housing, these program members – and the thousands of volunteers they recruit – positively impact lives, strengthen their communities and encourage civic involvement. This year, the Corporation for National and Community Service will commit more than \$12 million to support Virginia communities through three national service programs.

AmeriCorps State programs operate through the Virginia Department of Social Services' Office on Volunteerism and Community Service (OVCS) with the support of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism. AmeriCorps State grants are provided to public and nonprofit organizations that sponsor service programs throughout Virginia, including faith-based and community organizations, higher education institutions, and public agencies.

Grants assist these groups in recruiting, training and placing AmeriCorps members to meet community needs. Members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve. AmeriCorps members who complete their terms of service may be eligible to receive:

- An education award that may pay for college, graduate school, or qualified student loans (full-time members).
- A partial education award (part-time members).
- A modest living allowance during their term of service.

“As an AmeriCorps (member) I am boots on the ground for our veterans and I get the job done.”

Nycholle Gater, AmeriCorps Member,
Virginia Wounded Warrior Program
(Hampton)



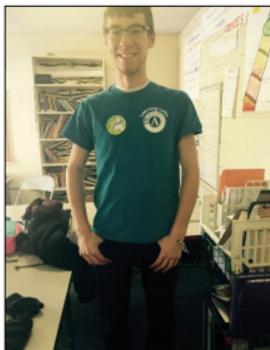
“I think this is the best experience I have ever had in my life!”

Stephanie Gittinger, AmeriCorps NCCC,
DCR - Southern Region



“I can be sure that the service I do here is making a positive difference in peoples' lives.”

Noah Bourlett, AmeriCorps Member,
Greenbrier Learning Center (Arlington)





Economic Impact of National Service in Virginia

The economic value of service hours & volunteers is more than \$18 million!

In 2014-2015, nearly 6,400 people of all ages and backgrounds made a difference in communities serving at more than 560 locations across Virginia. From mentoring children to restoring the environment, members and volunteers served through National Service programs -- touching lives, strengthening communities and encouraging civic involvement.

In the 2014-2015 program year, the Corporation for National and Community Service committed nearly \$12 million to support Virginia communities through national service initiatives. The Commonwealth of

These funds leveraged another \$6 million in member service hours and recruited volunteer time during 2014-2015. The **combined impact makes more than \$18 million** in human capital available to organizations helping others through volunteerism and community service.



2014-15 AMERICORPS IN VIRGINIA

\$5.4m

ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF AMERICORPS
STATE*
(12.5% INCREASE
OVER 2013-14)

300

SERVICE HOURS PER
MEMBER (23% INCREASE
OVER 2013-14)

9,450

VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED
BY AMERICORPS
MEMBERS (29%
INCREASE OVER 2013-14)

*BASED ON 2014 VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME IN VIRGINIA OF \$24.90

2014-15 Virginia AmeriCorps State Programs

ACES - City of Richmond

(Richmond) The [ACES \(Action for Community Enhancement Services\)](#) program focus was to reconnect fathers with children, improve behaviors/ educational outcomes for at-risk males, provide opportunities for teen girls to increase self-esteem/positive behaviors in preparation for their passage into womanhood, and recruit volunteers to enhance the delivery of services.

AmeriCorps Community Care - Occupational Enterprises, Inc.

(Lebanon) [AmeriCorps Community Care](#) provided services to nonprofits, local departments of social services and community action agencies to contribute to the vision to promote self-sufficiency for low-income families; address re-entry, recovery and reunification in families; increase/improve access to high quality services and support; and mobilize volunteers.

AmeriCorps Interpretive Project - DCR Division of State Parks

(Woodbridge) [AmeriCorps Interpretive Project](#) members performed a variety of functions designed to reveal meaning and relationships of cultural and natural heritage to guests of Virginia State Parks through first hand involvement with objects, facts, and landscapes.

Appalachian Community Action and Development Agency, Inc.

(Gate City) The [Appalachian Community Action and Development Agency](#) offered programs focused on the areas of business and economic development, children's programs, housing and community solutions, volunteer programs and emergency services.

Arlington County Public Schools - Arlington Works!

(Arlington) The [Arlington Works!](#) Program is a partnership between the Arlington Public Schools/REEP, Educación Para Nuestro Futuro, and the Arlington Employment Center. AmeriCorps members expanded and enhanced programs and services for foreign born residents with a focus on skill development in the areas of language, technology, employment, and civic participation.

Be Great: Graduate Program - Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lynchburg

(Lynchburg) The goal of the [Be Great: Graduate Program](#) was to support Lynchburg City School District in its effort to increase graduation rates among African-American students. Members worked with the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lynchburg to provide weekly one-hour mentoring sessions to youth who are at-risk of dropping out of school.

Beans and Rice, Inc. - U Serv

(Pulaski) [Beans and Rice](#) addressed economic and financial, academic achievement, and parent educational attainment and engagement needs in the New River Valley. Project activities focused on improving academic outcomes for young children, reducing barriers to economic opportunity, and increasing self sufficiency of economically disadvantaged parents by promoting job preparation and adequate employment.

CALM AmeriCorps

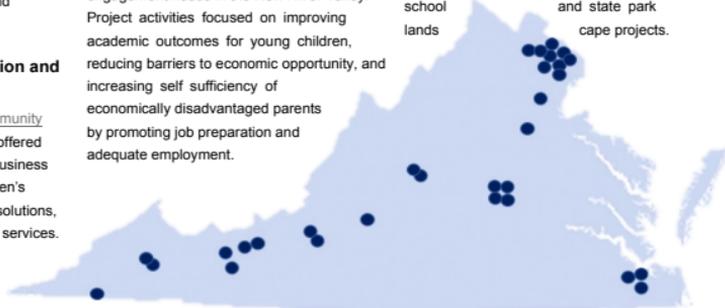
(Charlottesville) [CALM AmeriCorps](#) members participated in activities related to the following programs and initiatives: K-12 tutoring, Senior Solutions, Parish Nursing Initiative, Individual Development Account Program, and Hispanic Outreach. Members also assisted with volunteer recruitment and fundraising.

CARITAS AmeriCorps

(Richmond) [CARITAS AmeriCorps](#) members provided essential furniture and household items for adults and families moving from a shelter to permanent housing and to provide an intensive job-readiness program that will assist men with obtaining permanent employment.

Carroll County Public Schools - Reading for Life

(Hillsville) [Reading for Life](#) is a tutoring AmeriCorps program sponsored by the Carroll County Public School Board. Tutors of reading and math were placed in nine schools serving grades K-12. Community involvement includes food, toy, school supply drives; assistance for the Free Clinic of the Twin Counties and the Family Resource Center for domestic violence victims; Head Start school beautification projects; ESL Family Literacy Night; and school and state park cape projects.



ChildThrive! - Alexandria Department of Human Services

(Alexandria) AmeriCorps [ChildThrive!](#) members worked with the Alexandria Department of Recreation and Cultural Activities and nonprofit groups to provide services to individuals and families who reside at Brent Place, a subsidized rental community owned and operated by Homes for America. Members developed recreational activities for youth, conducted outreach to residents on domestic violence prevention, provided assistance with employment skills development, and helped with the application process for various types of public assistance.

Community Residences, Inc.

(Chantilly) [Community Residences \(CR\)](#) offered individuals with disabilities supportive housing and the physical, mental and emotional services needed to facilitate independent and dignified living within the community.

Council of Community Services

(Roanoke) The [Council of Community Services](#) provided leadership for organizations and individuals in the areas of planning, information, and referral services to improve the quality of life in Roanoke Valley communities.

ESOL and Family Learning Programs Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

(Falls Church) AmeriCorps [ESOL and Family Learning](#) program members served as lead classroom instructors for adult beginning learners of English -- enhancing the employability of these economically disadvantaged students and empowering them to become more active citizens. The small-

group classes were offered by the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, Loudoun Literacy Council, and BEACON for Adult Literacy at sites throughout Northern Virginia. Members taught classes; registered and tested students; recruited, trained, supervised and supported volunteer teachers; collaborated with partners at sites; and participated substantively in organizational management of the literacy councils.

Goodskills Literacy Corps - Rappahannock Goodwill Industries

(Fredericksburg) [Goodskills Literacy Corps](#) /AmeriCorps members built the literacy, numeracy and basic computing skills of adults in the Fredericksburg region. At the end of the three-year project period, GoodSkills Literacy Corps will have graduated 300 participants with the new skills necessary to knock down barriers, increase self-sufficiency and to pursue dreams of higher education and/or better career opportunities.

Learning Links - Greenbrier Learning Center

(Arlington) The [Learning Links](#) AmeriCorps program allows members to reach across the three main aspects of a child's daily experience: during the school day, after school, and in the community. Learning Links built on partnerships with four local elementary schools and the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing to provide after school tutoring and enrichment activities in the Columbia Heights West and Pike Village Center neighborhoods of South Arlington. Members brought regular topic-based workshops to parents to support their children's academic progress, created an optimum home life, and developed leadership skills.

New River Community Action AmeriCorps Program

(Radford) [New River Community Action](#) members provided developmental literacy activities and support to pre-school children and their families; coordinated the distribution of emergency resources to local residents in need; conducted Renter Education Workshops to educate clients and community residents of renters' legal rights; provided health awareness and assist low-income families in transporting their children to medical appointments; ensured qualified clients receive applicable earned income tax credits and child tax credits before filing; and coordinated the collaboration of local churches and volunteers to provide shelter for homeless men during winter months.

PASS - Alternatives, Inc.

(Hampton) [PASS \(Peninsula AmeriCorps Serve and Support\)](#) supported strategies identified in Hampton's Community Plan with programs designed to enhance life skills; health and wellness; workplace readiness skills and career preparation; participation in the arts through visual art, music, videography, dance and theatre; and expansion of service learning and civic engagement opportunities that build a commitment to service and altruism.

Peninsula Serve & Support for Learning (PASSL) - Alternatives Inc.

(Hampton) [Alternatives AmeriCorps](#) Members provided mentoring, implemented pro-social skill building instruction, and provided academic enrichment activities at Jane H. Bryan Elementary in Hampton, and at Horace H. Epes Elementary, Willis A. Jenkins Elementary, and L F Palmer Elementary in Newport News.

TAF AmeriCorps -

The Advancement Foundation

(Vinton) [The Advancement Foundation](#) leveraged community resources for the benefit of large-scale impact -- coordinating comprehensive efforts of the community at large. AmeriCorps members provided micro-enterprise technical assistance and training, taught English as a second language, implemented a new mentoring program; taught relationship building concepts to at risk girls, worked with adults with special needs developing necessary employment skills, provided interpretation services for Spanish-speaking Head Start parents, and assisted low-income clients utilizing free tax preparation.

United Way of Southwest

Virginia, Inc.

(Abingdon) The [United Way of Southwest Virginia](#) sought to improve education so that children enter school on track, help people achieve financial stability and advancement, and promote healthy lives for adults and youth.

VCU AmeriCorps and

America Reads

(Richmond) Established in 1995, the [Virginia Commonwealth University \(VCU\) AmeriCorps Program](#) is the foundation of a comprehensive effort in the City of Richmond designed to ensure that every child in the region reads well and independently by the end of the third grade. It is a partnership between VCU and other local colleges and universities, community-based organizations, and the local business sector, who have committed themselves to helping improve the literacy skills of local children and families in communities characterized by high unemployment and low school achievement and graduation rates.

Virginia College Advising Corps -

The Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia

(Charlottesville) The [Virginia College Advising Corps](#) placed recent graduates in public high schools throughout the Commonwealth to assist students with college admission, financial aid, and scholarship applications. During the year, Guides spent 40 hours-a-week mentoring students and creating much-needed educational programming to the high school students and their families in underserved areas.

Virginia Reading Corps -

The Literacy Lab

(Washington) [Virginia Reading Corps](#) is an integral part of a national effort to bring to scale a proven model that leverages the power of community service to dramatically improve students' reading levels and strengthen local communities. AmeriCorps members leveraged volunteers to serve in Alexandria Head Start pre-kindergarten classes and provide literacy interventions to pre-kindergarten students that result in students being verified as ready for kindergarten and on-track to become proficient readers by Grade 3.

Virginia Service and Conservation

Corps - DCR Division of State Parks

(Woodbridge) [Virginia Service and Conservation Corps](#) members served at parks throughout the Commonwealth from April through August to work on projects like trail building, volunteer recruitment, and interpretive programming.

Virginia Veterans Corps - Virginia

Department of Veterans Services

(Hampton) The [Veterans Corps](#) program operated initially in the Tidewater region, home

to one of the largest concentrations of veterans in the U.S. AmeriCorps members served as Navigators -- veterans assisting other veterans and their families in navigating the resources and services that are available, but in many cases not known or out of reach for veterans and their families.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute

and State University -

VT Engage AmeriCorps Network

(Blacksburg) The [VT Engage AmeriCorps Network](#) placed members in community-based organizations working with two primary focuses: 1) early childhood literacy and 2) disaster preparedness and response. Current partnerships are with Smart Beginnings of the New River Valley and the American Red Cross Virginia Mountain Region. Volunteer recruitment, management, and professional development programming is a focus of VT Engage.

YWCA South Hampton Roads -

YWCA KIDS Before &

After School Program

(Norfolk) AmeriCorps [YWCA South Hampton Roads](#) members served and leveraged additional volunteers to implement service learning programs as well as provide instruction, reflection and tutoring; in the distressed city of Norfolk in four elementary schools serving economically disadvantaged students. At the end of the program year, improved academic performance in literacy and/or math and significant improvement in academic engagement through student behaviors was evident.

Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference

Service leaders and national service members gather to learn and exchange ideas.

The annual **Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference** is the Commonwealth's leading conference for organizations and individuals making a difference in their communities. The [Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service](#) and the [Virginia Service Foundation](#) host the conference which features a diverse array of workshops, networking events, opportunities of service and the Virginia AmeriCorps Launch Event.

The 2015 Virginia Volunteerism Conference was held at the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel, September 30-October 1. Nearly 540 individuals attended, including representatives from National Service Programs, Community Action Programs, Faith-Based Programs, and Neighborhood Assistance Programs.

The highly-interactive conference offered a diverse array of workshops, networking events and opportunities for service. There were more than 30 workshops on topics from volunteer recruitment to technology to leadership development. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in one of several service projects around the Roanoke area. More than 200 volunteers served at three project sites leaving a lasting impact on the community.

Teresa Thompson, an AmeriCorps member with the Reading for Life AmeriCorps program received the 2015 Robert E. Wone Award for Exemplary Service at the conference. Teresa was honored for her efforts encouraging students to rise above their behavior and attitude issues, as well as her work recruiting speakers to talk to the students about employment and other post-school opportunities.

Conference Volunteers Made an Impact on Roanoke Community

- 10,220 pounds of food items were packed at Feeding America Southwest Virginia.
- 11,000 meals were packaged for Stop Hunger Now
- 3,000+ items were collected and sorted for The Salem VA Medical Center
- Various duties were performed at the Rescue Mission, including stuffing 30,000+ direct mailers.
- Community resiliency expert Dr. Anita Chandra held a discussion on how communities can bounce back in the face of natural disasters and other emergencies.
- Microsoft and Global Student Connect demonstrated how organizations can connect with other organizations and their constituents using technology by conducting a live discussion with a classroom in Pakistan.



Conference attendees served at several organizations in the Roanoke community, including Rescue Mission.



More than 200 Virginia AmeriCorps members took an the AmeriCorps Pledge as they were sworn in for a year of national service across the Commonwealth.



Wone Award winner Teresa Thompson was honored for her work with Virginia's K-12 students as part of the Reading for Life program.

2014-15 Governor's Advisory Board on Service & Volunteerism



The Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism communicates with the Governor and Cabinet Secretaries on national and community service programs in Virginia and fulfills the responsibilities and duties prescribed by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service related to the AmeriCorps Program.

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USAR, RET

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Director, Southgate Community Fairfax County Center

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Elizabeth B. Childress | Richmond
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Vanessa Diamond | Richmond
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Laurie S. Turner | Herndon
Public Affairs Representative, The Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints, Washington, D.C.

James H. Underwood | Midlothian
Business Manager, Local Union No. 666, IBEW 666

Leslie Van Horn | Norfolk
Executive Director, Federation of Virginia Food Banks



Virginia Service Foundation

The Virginia Service Foundation supports the activities of the Governor's Advisory Board in its role to promote volunteerism and national service. Its purpose is to promote volunteer involvement, civic engagement, and citizen participation in programs to serve the needs of the Commonwealth of Virginia and its communities. In 2015, the Foundation sponsored the Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards Ceremony (April), 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance, and the Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference.

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