



Commission on Volunteerism
and Community Service

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



*Working Together
to Strengthen
Illinois Communities*



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Letter from the Chair and the Executive Director



When you hear the word infrastructure, you generally think about bridges and buildings, railroad tracks and highways. The infrastructure represents the building blocks of a connected society, and the foundation of communities. Just as first-rate physical infrastructure is critical to commerce and health and safety, the volunteer and service infrastructure is arguably just as critical to society's progress and success. At the Serve Illinois Commission, we take seriously the responsibility of strengthening that infrastructure. We are convinced that no one sector alone has the silver bullet to tackle the most challenging problems facing our communities; we are confident, however, that through increased voluntary service and civic engagement across sectors, promising and sustainable solutions are more likely to emerge.

In the annual *Volunteering and Civic Life in America* report, we continue to see our great state rise in the rankings for volunteerism. The 2.73 million of you who volunteered dedicated a combined 360 million hours of your time to strengthening your communities; this laudable work is assessed at \$8.1 billion in value. We are proud to have the highest volunteer rate of the country's 10 largest states, a testament to our robust service infrastructure.

But just as physical infrastructure constantly requires restoration and reinforcement, our service ecosystem can always be enhanced. The Commission has taken a leadership role on several initiatives designed to achieve our mission of enhancing volunteerism across the state. We are calling on all mayors in Illinois to commit to join the *Cities of Service* network, thereby pledging to develop a community blueprint to harness the power of volunteers. At the end of 2012, 22 Illinois mayors have signed on to this bipartisan coalition, making us the national leader. That number continues to increase week by week, and just imagine the possibilities if each mayor in Illinois signs on. Other promising initiatives include partnerships with other state agencies such as the Illinois Emergency Management Agency on disaster volunteer coordination, the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs as we attempt to recruit more transitioning veterans to national service, and the Illinois Department on Aging through an intergenerational service initiative called *Generations Serving Generations*.

These initiatives, and several others, can be found at the Commission website at www.Serve.Illinois.gov. Here there is always a volunteer opportunity awaiting you, over 100,000 of them, so come join us in making 2013 an even more productive year of service than the highlights you will see in this 2012 annual report.

Yours in service,

Serve Illinois Commission Members

The Commission is appointed by the governor and consists of 25 bipartisan voting members and 10 bipartisan nonvoting members. Commission members are diverse in areas of expertise, race, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, and geographic location. At least 25% of the members must be from the City of Chicago and no more than 50% of the commission may be from the same political party. Voting members serve 1 to 3 year terms, and nonvoting members serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Members are:

Jill C. Heise, Chair (2011-2013)
Frederick D. Nettles, Chair (2013 -)
Don Baden, Vice Chair (2013 -)
Jane Angelis
Kathleen Blair
Julian Brown
Barb Byrne
Bechara Choucair
Merri Dee
Evelyn J. Diaz
James Dixon
Robert Dwyer
Kathy Engelken
Alvin Goldfarb
Amanda Guinn
John Hosteny
Nancy K. Jameson
Christopher A. Koch
Marc J. Lane
Howard L. Lathan

Michael Mangan
Debra Martón
Bob McCammon
Garry McCarthy
Jenné Myers
Hannah Porter
Toni Preckwinkle
Robert "Al" Riddley
Joseph Rives
Giraldo Rosales
Anne Schuman
Cynthia Sims
Ilya Sheyman
Stephen Silberman
Lonnelle Stonitsch
Ruth Thompson
Barbara Tubekis
Jeff Turnbull
Heather Way
Jennifer Witzel

Serve Illinois Commission Staff

Brandon Bodor, Executive Director
Scott McFarland, Deputy Director
Lisa Fernandes, AmeriCorps Program Officer
Karla Kunzeman, Volunteer Programs Manager
Mike Stehlin, Training Officer
Lois Barnhart, Inclusion Officer
Lanie Cooper, Graduate Public Service Intern
Adam Weiner, Dunn Fellow, Local Government Liaison
Ana Golovashkina, New Media and Marketing Intern





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

Duties

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

History

In 1979, the Commission was founded as the Illinois Office of Voluntary Participation. The office switched names and was housed in several different offices before finding its place in the Department of Human Services in 1998. 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 office began using the “Serve Illinois” moniker in 2007. The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is currently housed within the Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Community Services, at 815 East Monroe Street in Springfield, Illinois.

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





Overview

Over 2.73 million Illinois citizens are currently volunteering with national and local nonprofits, schools, religious organizations, and other groups in Illinois.

- 2,600 individuals are AmeriCorps members
- 17,000 citizens are Senior Corps members

Facts and Statistics

- In Illinois, 27.2% of citizens volunteer.
- Illinois' "volunteer rate" ranks 25th among states. Although Illinois' volunteer rate generally lags behind most other states in the Midwest, the state exceeds the national average each year.
- Last year, the Corporation for National and Community Service gave more than \$28,800,000 to support the national service initiatives in Illinois.
- The top volunteer locations in Illinois are religious organizations (35.5%) and educational organizations (25.8%.)
- In the past year, Illinois citizens volunteered 359.4 million hours; which equals over \$8.1 billion in impact.
- Illinois is ranked #1 in volunteer service rate among the top ten largest states in America.

Sources: Volunteering in America: <http://www.volunteeringinAmerica.gov/IL>;
Corporation for National and Community Service: <http://www.nationalservice.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

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.

National Civilian Community Corps— NCCC 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.

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



Senior Corps Programs

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 1,200 AmeriCorps*State members perform direct service for communities in Illinois. 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. In the 2011-2012 program year, AmeriCorps*State members in Illinois received over \$3.9 million in education awards.

Members join together in October of each year for National Service Recognition Day. More information about Recognition Day can be found on page 17.

AmeriCorps*State Grant Funding

AmeriCorps*State grant funding is distributed by the Serve Illinois Commission. These funds are given to local non-profit groups 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 2011-2012, the Serve Illinois Commission awarded nearly \$4.4 million to formula grant programs and \$4 million to competitive grant programs. A list of grantees can be viewed on the next page.

Illinois' AmeriCorps Grantees (and Headquarters)

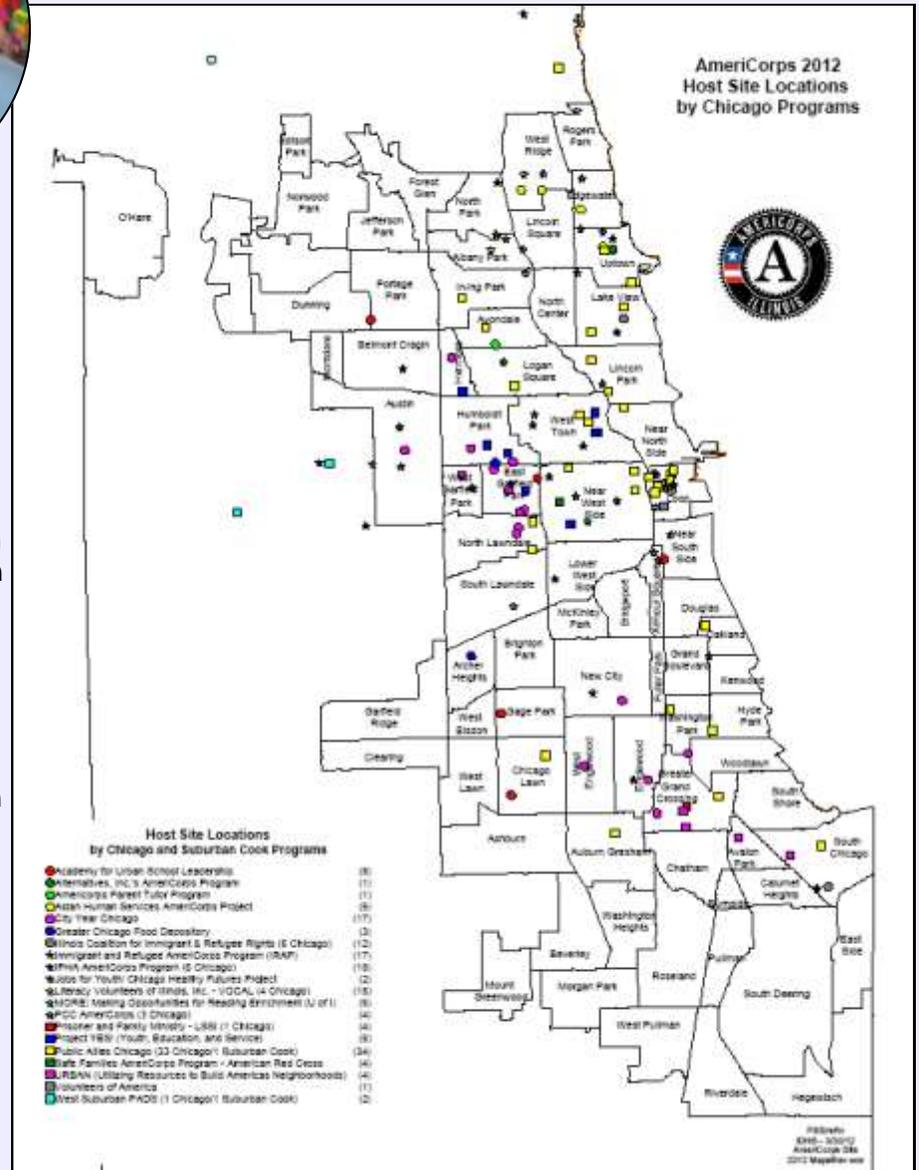
- Academy for Urban School Leadership (Chicago)
- American Red Cross (Chicago)
- Asian Human Services of Chicago, Inc. (Chicago)
- Chicago Bar Foundation (Chicago)
- Children's Home Association of Illinois (Peoria)
- City Year, Inc. (Chicago)
- Greater Chicago Food Depository (Chicago)
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (Chicago)
- Illinois Public Health Association (Springfield)
- Jumpstart (Chicago)
- Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House (East St. Louis)
- Literacy Volunteers of America (Chicago)
- Lutheran Social Services, Prisoner and Family Ministries (Marion)
- McHenry County Mental Health Board (McHenry)
- Northwestern University Settlement Association (Chicago)
- PCC Community Wellness Center (Oak Park)
- Public Allies, Inc. (Chicago)
- Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (Chicago)
- Rend Lake College (Ina)
- Sauk Valley Community College (Dixon)
- Schuler Family Foundation (Lake Forest)
- Southwestern Illinois College (Belleville)
- South Suburban Training and Rehabilitation Services (Chicago Heights)
- Springfield Urban League (Springfield)
- Teach for America (Chicago)
- University of Illinois (Chicago)
- Western Illinois University (Macomb)
- Youth Organization Umbrella, Inc. (Evanston)
- West Suburban PADS (Oak Park)



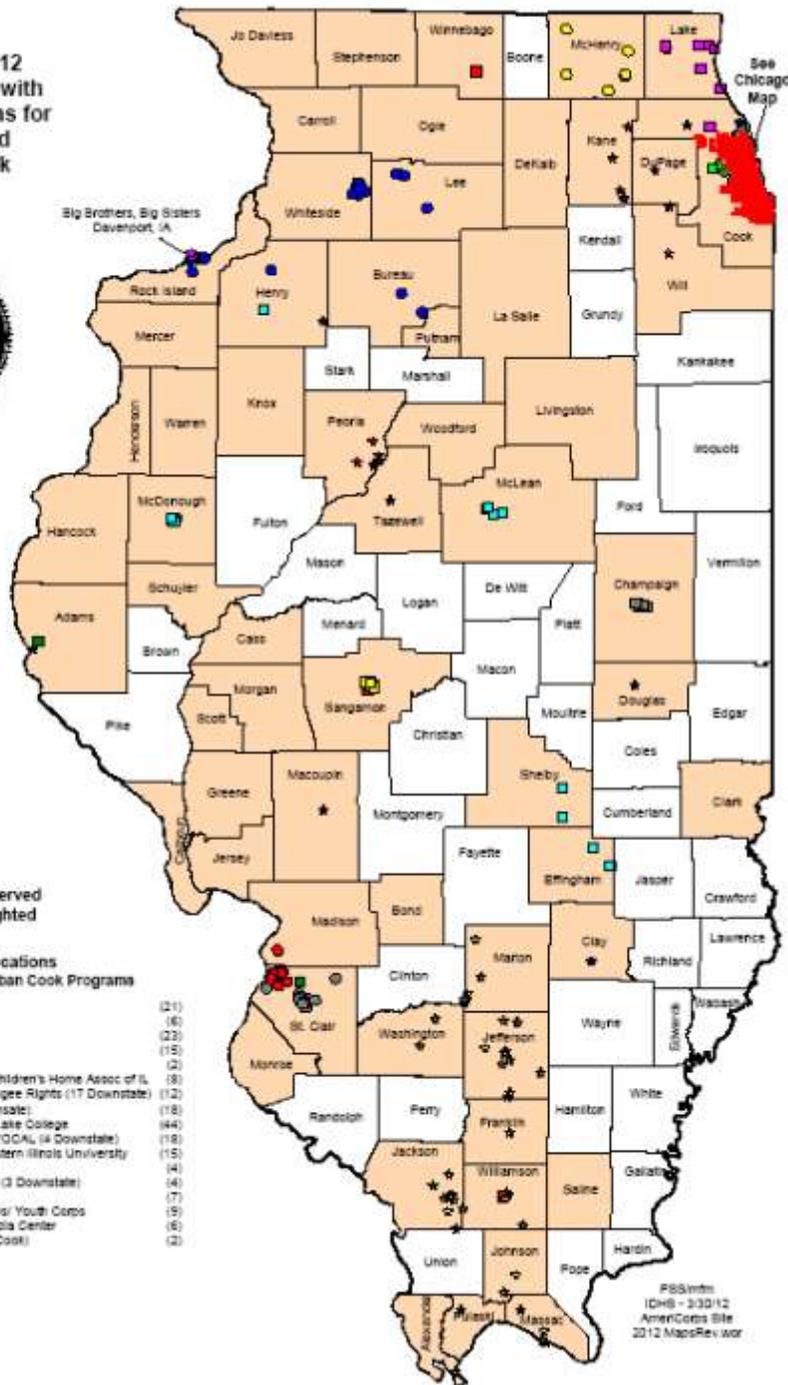


Each program determines where its Members can best carry out their service to their target communities. Some programs operate at a single site or in a single city or county. Other programs operate with several partner sites in multiple counties. The maps on the following page show host sites for all AmeriCorps*State programs. Cook county sites have been broken out for easier viewing. Counties that receive support from AmeriCorps*State Members are colored in beige. Host sites and their number of locations are listed in the keys on each map.

Map of AmeriCorps*State Programs



**AmeriCorps 2012
Counties Served with
Host Site Locations for
Downstate and
Suburban Cook
Programs**



Volunteering in Illinois



Volunteer Management Network

The Illinois Volunteer Management Network (VMN) seeks to cultivate an extensive resource network of voluntary agencies and associations, small and large, across Illinois. The purpose of the network is to help address the primary concerns of these agencies' hardworking volunteer managers and administrators, including recruitment and retention of volunteers, local organizational capacity-building efforts, and ongoing training and professional development opportunities for volunteer managers.

The state of Illinois is divided into five networks: East Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southern, and the West Central. Each region holds an annual conference that includes sessions and workshops targeted toward individuals who currently work with or are interested in working with volunteers. The West Central region did not host a conference this year.

2012 Conferences:

 East Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference
June 7, 2012 - Mattoon, IL
100 Participants

 Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration
August 9, 2012 - Chicago, IL
180 Participants

 Southern Illinois Volunteerism Conference
November 1, 2012 - Mt. Vernon, IL
120 Participants

 Northwestern Illinois Volunteerism Conference
September 27, 2012 - Moline, IL
100 Participants



Disability Inclusion Project

The Illinois Disability Inclusion Project promotes inclusion of people of all abilities as members and volunteers in National Service Programs. To achieve this goal, Serve Illinois promotes service opportunities as a viable option to persons with disabilities and agencies that provide services to them. We encourage partnerships between National Service Programs and Disability agencies to work side by side to address needs in their communities.

Inclusive service experiences enhance the quality of life for all people, with and without disabilities. Inclusive service programs support opportunities for people with disabilities to actively take part in service activities with dignity in an atmosphere that promotes physical, social and psychological involvement of people with diverse experiences and skill levels.

The Commission offers Inclusion Team support, education and training, assessment and funding for accommodations, service day activities, inclusion planning, and outreach initiatives.

The Illinois Disability Inclusion Team (IDIT)

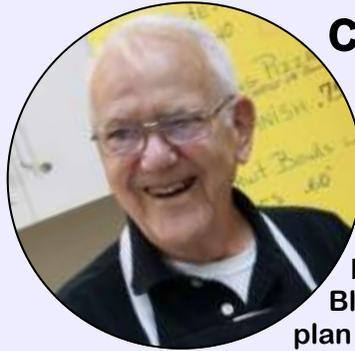
The Serve Illinois Commission initiated a Statewide Inclusion Team in May 2011. The IDIT reviews and makes recommendations regarding best practice and policies influencing the inclusion of members with disabilities in Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) programs; specifically the inclusion, recruitment, disclosure, and accommodation policies regarding members with disabilities. The team's objective is to increase the number of persons with disabilities who participate in the CNCS programs. One of the Team's focal points is to explore ways to promote an ethic of civic engagement, developing a continuum of service for people with disabilities throughout their life span. The IDIT has generated a Guidebook to Creating an Inclusive Volunteer Programs available on the Serve Illinois website. This Guide is intended for use by any volunteer program interested in acquiring tools for becoming more inclusive.

The IDIT will assist in providing updated information regarding trainings, resources, and other tools and/or links on the Disability Tag on the Serve Illinois website. The IDIT has committed to provide Inclusion Training to all the Volunteer Management Network Regional Conferences supported by the Commission. The IDIT will continue to provide supports and training to AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs (Foster Grandparent, Retired Senior Volunteer Programs, Senior Companion) throughout the state via webinar and/or conferences. The Serve Illinois Commission has committed to ongoing training to CNCS programs to continue to promote Inclusive practices utilizing the IDIT as a resource for training expertise/development.





Cities of Service



Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009 by 17 mayors from across the nation, Cities of Service aims to create a vibrant network of municipal governments effectively leveraging citizen service as a reliable, viable tool to achieve measurable impact on pressing local challenges. The coalition builds on the work of New York City Mayor Michael R.

Bloomberg, who created the nation's first high-impact service plan in April 2009 and appointed the nation's first municipal Chief Service Officer. By accelerating the service movement at the most local level—connecting local needs to the supply of willing volunteers in innovative and impactful new ways—Cities of Service aspires to create a new chapter in America's longstanding history of service while making local government more effective.

Today, the Cities of Service coalition includes over 150 mayors, representing over 50 million Americans. Like the founding mayors, each coalition member has made a commitment to work with other mayors around the country and advance service strategies in their own city by crafting a high-impact service plan.

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.

Recently, the Serve Illinois Commission has moved to increase the number of cities committing to service. Through outreach to mayors across the state, service and volunteerism has become a topic of interest for many municipalities. Because of this effort, Illinois now has twenty-two Cities of Service, making the top state in the nation. These cities include Chatham, Chicago, Columbia, East Moline, Elgin, Evanston, Forest Park, Glendale Heights, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Island Lake, Joliet, Libertyville, Midlothian, Moline, Montgomery, North Chicago, O'Fallon, Salem, Silvis, Streamwood and Rock Island. The Commission hopes to improve upon these numbers and showcase the willingness to serve of many Illinoisans while maintaining the number one ranking for Cities of Service in America.

If you would like more information on Cities of Service, please visit www.citiesofservice.org. To register as a City of Service in Illinois, please contact Adam Weiner at adam.weiner@illinois.gov or at (312) 814-6777.

Serve Illinois Newsletter

The Serve Illinois newsletter is issued three times per year—spring, summer and fall—and includes information about upcoming events and recent happenings. The newsletter is comprised of sections devoted to National Service, Volunteerism in Illinois, Happenings, and Training & Professional Development. The newsletter also features full-page spread devoted to an AmeriCorps*State program. Volunteer programs throughout the state may submit articles about their programs or specific volunteers who have achieved noteworthy accomplishments.

The fall 2012 newsletter was mailed to more than 10,800 individuals. The newsletter is also available online at the Serve Illinois website.

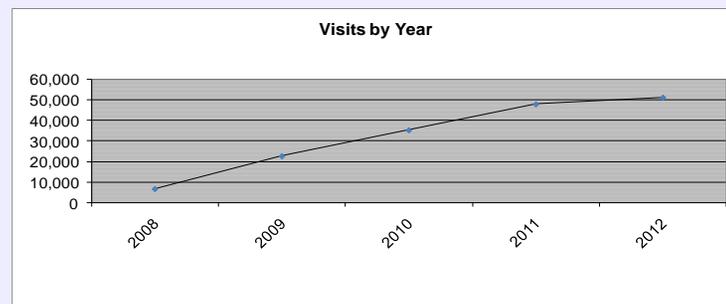


Serve.Illinois.gov

Serve.Illinois.gov was established in fall 2008 and is used by community-based organizations and individuals seeking to connect volunteer needs with volunteer resources. Organizations can post opportunities, and prospective volunteers can search for opportunities by zip code, county, state or category of service. There are currently more than 140,000 volunteer opportunities listed. The Serve Illinois Commission partners with Network for Good to coordinate statewide volunteer opportunities from multiple databases into one search that is available on the Serve.Illinois.gov website.

Over 45,000 individuals have utilized the Volunteer Opportunity Portal on Serve.Illinois.gov to search for volunteer opportunities. The most popular searches are for opportunities that involve volunteering with animals and the environment (4,590 searches) and children and youth (4,387 searches.) These searches have led to visitors clicking on opportunities over 128,000 times.

Since it was launched on September 1, 2008, Serve.Illinois.gov has received over 163,000 visits (as of February 1, 2013). There is an average of 94 visits per day, and website traffic continues to increase annually.





The proper recognition of volunteers is an important component in any volunteer program, large or small. With ongoing issues relating to volunteer retention nationwide and in all types of organizations, the Serve Illinois Commission encourages some form of appropriate volunteer recognition. Although recognition is given on a national level and through private/service organizations, the Commission recognizes volunteers in the following ways:

The Governor's Volunteer Service Awards

2012 marked the third 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 at the Executive Mansion in Springfield. Each year, Commissioners read 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 and Learn and Serve member 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 2012, the Commission received 123 nominations from across the state. To see a list and short biography of current and past recipients of the Governor's Volunteer Service Award, visit the Serve.Illinois.gov website.

Volunteer Recognition Certificates

These certificates, printed in full color on ivory parchment paper, are provided free of charge to volunteer programs in Illinois. Each certificate includes a name blank to be completed by the program, and the signatures of the Governor of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Human Services Secretary, and the Chair of the Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The certificates are available year-round by contacting the Commission and are a great way to recognize volunteers for their service. Over 1,800 certificates were distributed to volunteers in 2012.

National Service Recognition Day

The 2012 Illinois National Service Recognition Day was held on October 18, 2012 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center and the State Capitol in Springfield. Nearly 1,000 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members from across the state took part in the event, which recognized programs and energized members for the upcoming service year.

The celebration began with lunch at the Prairie Capital Convention Center, and several speakers provided encouragement and professional development messages for members. Speakers included Bill Basl, the new Director of AmeriCorps, and Chad Pregracke, a nationally known environmentalist. A new feature was added to Recognition Day in the form of break-out sessions and ten sessions were offered throughout the day. A Central Illinois Community Blood Center blood drive was also hosted and AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members were encouraged to donate.

After lunch and break-out sessions, members then began their march from the Prairie Capital Convention Center to the State Capitol Complex. The march was led by city police cars and a fire engine. Many programs marched with banners displaying their program name; other members carried balloons or small American flags. On the steps of the Capitol, at the base of the Abraham Lincoln statue, members reaffirmed their Oath of Service to America.

Frederick Nettles led AmeriCorps members in the oath, proclaiming their commitment to a year of service to Illinois. The Serve Illinois Commission hopes members left the event with a renewed commitment to service and a feeling of excitement for their upcoming year of service.





To best prepare volunteer managers and Commissioners for the challenges they may face in the realm of volunteerism, the Serve Illinois Commission hosts multiple training sessions each year.

Program Director Training

Each year, Serve Illinois staff hosts mandatory training sessions for new and tenured AmeriCorps*State program directors. These trainings last 2 days. In 2012, the training occurred in August. Through the training, program directors discussed challenges they have encountered within their organization and proposed solutions. They also shared ideas for strengthening performance measures, data collection systems, and data analysis. Attendees learned about fiscal and grants management, how to manage members, the basics of National Service, and received Commission updates.

Commissioner Training

Commissioner training sessions are held annually and are organized by the Commission staff. The 2011 training session was on October 17. Through the training, Commissioners learn duties and expectations and are educated on the best practices in Commission structure and organization. Additionally, they received reports from the National Association for State Service Commissions, and reviewed information in order to plan for service in Illinois.

Cross Streams Training

Serve Illinois offers and sponsors program development and training sessions for AmeriCorps*State programs and other National Service programs such as Senior Corps and Learn and Serve. Each year in October, Serve Illinois invites National Service programs to meet in Springfield for National Service Recognition Day (see page 17 for more information.) Additionally, Serve Illinois sponsors five regional Volunteerism Conferences (East Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference (ECIVC), Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration (ICOVA), Northwestern Illinois Volunteerism Conference (NWIVC), Southern Illinois Volunteerism Conference (SIVC), and West Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference (WCIVC.) These conferences are open to any volunteer managers, volunteers, National Service Members, and the general public. Each conference offers a wide array of information dealing with all facets of service.

Illinois State Service Plan

The 2009-2012 State Service Plan was developed through an open and public process in which all Illinois citizens were encouraged to contribute feedback to the State Plan.

The State Service Plan discusses the following strategies, focus areas and ongoing efforts:

- A focus on outreach to community and faith-based programs and intermediaries that may be interested in operating an AmeriCorps program: The Commission will collaborate with other state agencies, conduct annual listening sessions throughout the state, and begin targeted recruitment efforts to outline the AmeriCorps program application process
- A mission to improve Illinois communities by supporting and enhancing volunteerism and community service to create an Illinois where individuals are encouraged to solve community problems through service
- Increase and facilitate opportunities for AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Learn & Serve America programs, support the efforts of various organizations (including but not limited to businesses, universities, faith communities and social & service communities) and recruit and engage volunteers from a variety of backgrounds
- Offer training to help organizations build capacity and recruit/retain highly motivated volunteers
- Engage and utilize the skills of adults age 55 and older
- Create sustainability of National Service Efforts by exploring financial, in-kind and other support of the private sector, foundations and other entities and individuals

To view the complete Illinois State Service Plan, visit the Serve Illinois Commission website and click on “Rules and Planning” beneath the “About Us” tab.





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Volunteerism and Community Service
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