



2016 Is A Great Year For Service!

And we are only getting started



Apathy and cynicism are attitudes we all must face. It becomes easy to look at the world around us and decide we are powerless to change things. We ask ourselves, "How can I possibly make a difference with the little time I have in the day?" Sadly, about 75% of Illinoisans leave it right there.

According to the latest [Volunteering in America Report](#), only 25.9% of us volunteer annually. But the amazing part is what those 2.51 million volunteers did for Illinois. In one year's time, they gave back \$6.8 billion to their communities, and they changed countless lives for the better. Their stories can be a catalyst to drive the 75% to realize that they can make a difference. They can turn the tide.

That is why I am happy to present to you the new Serve Illinois Newsletter.

We will be using this newsletter to highlight the great work being done throughout the State of Illinois. We will show you the people who are devoting their personal time to make someone else's life a little better. We will give you ideas on how you can give back. Most importantly, we will strive to show you what our communities need.

This is a work in progress, so please share with us your stories and ideas. With your help, we can take Illinois to a place where we all understand our worth and we all know we can volunteer.

Yours in Service,

Scott McFarland
Executive Director



**Volunteers Recognized by
Governor Rauner**

The seventh annual Governor's Volunteer Service Awards were held at the Old State Capitol in Springfield on April 13, 2016.

There were a series of first for this year's awards. For the first time ever over 200 Illinois volunteers were nominated for this award. Of those 200, thirty recipients were chosen through the judging of Serve Illinois Commissioners. Included was the youngest recipient of the award thus far, Kellon Oldenettel, 7, from Jacksonville, and the most senior awardee, Bennie Mae Gavin, 91, of Joliet.

In addition, this year marked the first time the Governor was able to attend the event. Governor Rauner addressed the awardees with a speech, a thank you for their service, and engaged in a group picture for all to remember.

Additionally, Serve Illinois was pleased to welcome Director of Public Health Nirav Shah, Deputy Director Win Rawls, and State Representative Pat Verschoore.

We hope to continue to grow the event. Join our mailing list to learn how to nominate volunteers for next year!

[Learn more about the winners.](#)



Mayor and County Day of Recognition for National Service

In Illinois 110 elected officials participated in Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service, representing jurisdictions from 3 counties and approximately 106 cities, villages, and townships. Nationally, 3,539 officials signed on making the day one of the largest of its kind in the history of the nation.

In Illinois, National Service members volunteer in 2,200 service locations and help tens of thousands of community members in all 102 counties.

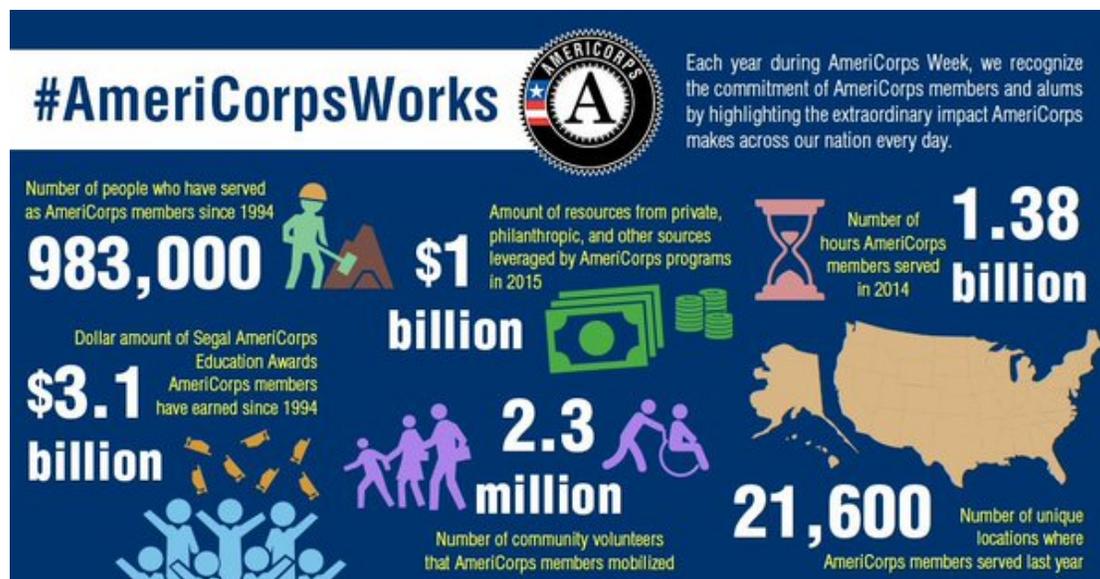
The flagship event took place in East St. Louis where AmeriCorps Vista Director, Max Finberg, was in attendance. Two Local Mayors thanked Operation AmeriCorps and Vista members for their service to East St. Louis School District 186. ESL High School students built an AmeriCorps bench to commemorate the day. [Learn More](#)

Illinois Disaster Corps

The town is torn apart, homes are destroyed and thousands of people are displaced. National and local news is rushing to cover the devastation. Various community organizations and governmental agencies are on the scene. Thousands of volunteers are converging on the location. Community resources are already stretched thin. Who will coordinate the many kind souls who are there to lend a hand to those in need? Illinois Disaster Corps.

In the past few years, disasters in Illinois have become commonplace. Whether it is Fairdale in northern Illinois, Washington in central Illinois or Harrisburg in southern Illinois, in the past five years, tornadoes have affected thousands of Illinoisans. One thing all these disasters have had in common is that volunteers come to help communities in times of need. When countless volunteers show up from around the country, localities struggle with managing those spontaneous volunteers. At a disaster, when thousands of volunteers show up, it strains local community resources to screen, train and place volunteers at sites that match their skill-set.

Illinois Disaster Corps aims to help assist local communities in that struggle. The Illinois Disaster Corps is a partnership between the Serve Illinois Commission, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service. Through this program, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps will join forces in training for and setting up Volunteer Reception Centers (VRC) in communities hit by disaster. Through extensive training from Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Illinois Disaster Corps members, consisting of both AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, will have the skills to come to a community and take the burden of volunteer management off the hands of the local community. They will screen volunteers, use on time training methods, and place them in a disaster site that needs their services. In the event of a disaster, Illinois Disaster Corps will be there to help.



AmeriCorps Week

March 5-12

Governor Rauner proclaimed March 5-12 as AmeriCorps week to highlight the extraordinary service that AmeriCorps members bring to our communities. 2016 saw the most successful AmeriCorps week yet! 785 members participated, recruiting 382 additional volunteers and assisting almost 700 people (plus a few cats and dogs)!

[Learn More](#)

Spotlight on Service Learning

Allison Acevedo's class was our Serve Illinois Volunteer of the Week for the week of March 28th. The class has done and continues to do student created and planned service projects throughout their community. Learn more about the Citizenship through Community Service class, their teacher, and their club on our [blog!](#)



Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service



January 18, 2016 was proclaimed Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service by President Obama and Governor Rauner. In Illinois, 849 AmeriCorps members participated in service projects, recruiting 2391 volunteers and assisting 20,422 community members!

Illinois AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members truly made MLK day "a day on not a day off".



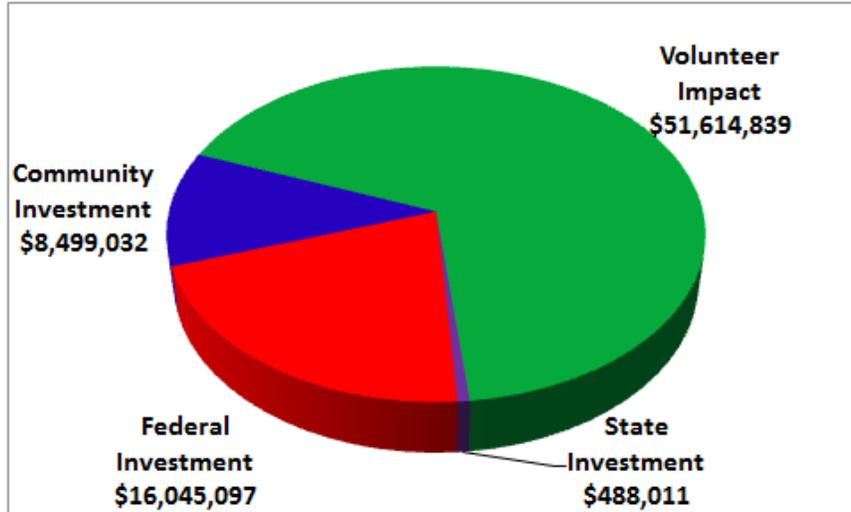
City Year Chicago's 206 AmeriCorps members joined hundreds of volunteers and Governor Rauner and Congresswoman Duckworth to transform and beautify Thomas Kelly High School and Brighton Park Elementary School. They did so by painting classrooms, decorating the halls with murals and inspirational quotes and building benches to be placed on school grounds for students to enjoy. [Learn more.](#)

Service by the Numbers



★ AmeriCorps Return on Investment ★

How much Impact For Your Dollar?



Federal Return on Investment: 4 to 1
 State Return on Investment: 156 to 1
 Local Return on Investment: 8 to 1

Upcoming Events



Senior Corps Week

May 16-20



Conference on Volunteering and Service

Detroit, MI - June 27-29



Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference

University of Illinois, Springfield - June 2



North Central National Service Conference

Indianapolis, IN - June 8-10



2016 ICOVA
The Times They Are a-
Changin'



[Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration](#)
Metcalf Federal Building, Chicago - August 10

[Midwest Community Development Institute](#)
Stoney Creek Inn, Moline - August 15-18

[Visit Serve.Illinois.gov](http://Serve.Illinois.gov)

