

National Service Impact in Pennsylvania

AmeriCorps

The Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps program (Service Making an Impact through Learning Experiences) is a school and community-based AmeriCorps program that encompasses 14 counties in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The program focuses on rural communities and is the only AmeriCorps presence in the counties it serves. The 170 AmeriCorps members serving as tutors and mentors are vital to the 27 Title One school districts in which they serve. Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps extends services to more than 6,200 students through academic, alternative education, mentoring, and service-learning programs each year. Members also serve 21 nonprofits with after-school and summer programs to provide safe havens, meals, and academic engagement to high-risk children from low-income communities. Eligible members participate in member development activities, and all members are CERT trained and participate in a disaster simulation coordinated by an emergency response team.

AmeriCorps NCCC

Mayor Michael A. Nutter's Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service (MOCEVS) requested an AmeriCorps NCCC team to partner with the PhillyRising Collaborative. PhillyRising targets neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia that are plagued by chronic crime and quality of life concerns, and establishes partnerships with community members to address these issues. NCCC members, partnering with the community, removed 10,360 pounds of trash, started seven community gardens, and cleared 31 vacant lots. The team also worked with students to create three murals.

AmeriCorps VISTA

At Philabundance, the Agricultural Initiatives AmeriCorps VISTA member has been integral in helping the organization develop new source streams for obtaining produce. Over the past few years, Philabundance has seen a drastic decrease in produce acquisition from local ports and other traditional sources. Yasmin Roberti, a VISTA member, has been working with local farmers and volunteer organizations to set up the infrastructure to glean local, seasonal produce from farms in the Delaware Valley. During the summer 2012 growing season, Yasmin led several pilot gleans that yielded a total of 13,342 pounds of food, utilizing the help of more than 50 volunteers. This summer, plans are underway for additional gleaning in four counties, hoping to significantly increase their produce acquisition.

Senior Corps

RSVP of Montgomery County responded to the need of local children for appropriate adult attention and support with skills development by developing Protégé, a relationship-driven mentoring program through which 52 RSVP volunteers provide friendship, guidance, encouragement, goal-setting, and enrichment to students. Mentors and mentees meet at least once per week for a full calendar year and take advantage of tickets to cultural and sporting events. Of the at-risk youth who participated during the last program year, 85 percent reported that they have positive relationships with their mentors, and 100 percent were promoted to the next grade level or graduated.

Social Innovation Fund

Partnering with Social Innovation Fund intermediary Jobs for the Future, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) is expanding its targeted training and technical assistance to at least 23,000 low-income individuals while also addressing the critical skill needs of more than 1,000 employers. In Pennsylvania they are working with two nonprofit subgrantees: Job Opportunity Investment Network (JOIN) – United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Fund for Workforce Solutions/United Way of Pennsylvania. Each of these received an initial subgrant of \$600,000 over two years from Jobs for the Future, which they will match dollar-for-dollar with nonfederal funds. JOIN aims to leverage its two-year award to serve 2,188 incumbent workers, assisting 917 to obtain wage increases. In addition, it will also help 184 jobs seekers with a goal of placing 134 into jobs. Pennsylvania Fund for Workforce Solutions will serve 2,854 job seekers, placing 1,084 in permanent employment and an additional 1,016 incumbent workers helping 551 obtain wage increases.