

National Service Impact in South Dakota

AmeriCorps

Ninety-nine percent of Red Cloud Indian School students are Native American and live in Shannon County, America's second poorest county. With 80 percent of residents unemployed and a per capita income of \$6,200, 51 percent of Shannon County residents live below the federal poverty level. Low educational attainment compounds these problems and directly results from them. Since the Teca Oyate Waonspekiya ("Teaching the Young People") AmeriCorps program began at Red Cloud Indian School in 2000, matriculation of graduates into higher education, vocational training, or the military rose from 13 percent to an astonishing 98 percent. AmeriCorps members are living examples of what it means to give back to your community, and the students are getting the message. Recently, a Red Cloud senior and Gates Scholarship finalist said, "I don't want to be a statistic I guess. People look at the reservation and think we're a hopeless generation, especially the teens. I want to prove that there's still some of us who want to move forward." Twenty-four AmeriCorps members, consisting of 12 local residents and 12 from other parts of the country, are providing service to Red Cloud School in Pine Ridge and Porcupine, and they dedicate approximately 40,000 hours to the students. They serve Red Cloud Indian School in roles such as teachers, teaching assistants, substitute teachers, and librarians.

AmeriCorps NCCC

Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota (LSS-SD) is a statewide human services agency with a range of programs in 30 communities. Large parts of the capital city of Pierre and neighboring Ft. Pierre were evacuated May 26, 2011, due to unprecedented flooding along the Missouri River. The river remained above flood stage throughout the summer. AmeriCorps NCCC teams were deployed and continued responding until June 2012 in partnership with Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota. Tasks included removing sandbags; conducting damage or needs assessments; mucking, gutting, and sanitizing homes; and refurbishing homes for disaster survivors. In addition, teams mucked and gutted four public buildings including the Pierre Auditorium and Amphitheater. Members gained knowledge of disaster relief and recovery efforts.

AmeriCorps VISTA

Volunteers of America Dakotas Brighter Tomorrow AmeriCorps VISTA members were successful in working at 12 sites statewide helping people rise from poverty with new sites at the Cheyenne River Youth Project and Ground Works. VISTA members were instrumental to help these host organizations grow and meet critical community needs by raising \$469,544 in cash and in-kind donations, recruiting and managing 2,082 volunteers, and serving more than 13,338 hours. More than 56,400 disadvantaged youth and 1,043 veterans and military family members received assistance through activities supported by the VISTAs.

Senior Corps

The Eastern South Dakota RSVP rallied behind the need to assist the school districts special needs groups in the area of education by tutoring or mentoring 163 children with disabilities. The economically disadvantaged students were reading below the basic level in their grades and with South Dakota ranked 43rd among states in the amount of spending per pupil, the low resources hit the small districts especially hard. Twenty-nine RSVP volunteers served the 163 identified children at 11 stations and the results were very successful, with 98 percent of the children who were tutored improving their reading skills and reading scores and 885 of the children mentored improving their socialization and self-esteem.