

AmeriCorps State

YWCA Adams County AmeriCorps deploys AmeriCorps members to address community-identified needs in Adams, Nuckolls, Clay, Kearney and Webster counties. At the YWCA and throughout these counties, the AmeriCorps members serve afterschool programs, provide one-on-one training and job interview opportunities for women, assist Adult Education Instructors by providing instruction in English as a Second Language, and help connect homeless or near homeless with services. In 2014-2015 AmeriCorps members assisted more than 300 women with career services, in which 55 women found employment. Members also assisted 128 youth with homework and served 3,421 meals through food programs. Also the past year, AmeriCorps members helped 228 adults with classroom instruction, and 86 adults receiving GED preparation.

Nebraska Economic Opportunity Corps is an AmeriCorps State program of Lutheran Family Services. The program's mission is to improve the economic opportunities of at-risk youth, new Americans, and veterans through education and employment programs that empower individuals toward self-sufficiency. AmeriCorps members serve through 25 programs operated by Lutheran Family Services and 12 partner nonprofit agencies. Members work to improve the economic prospects of clients as measured on a Self-Sufficiency Matrix. In the 2013-2014 program year, there were 1,400 beneficiaries of AmeriCorps services with members reporting 644 beneficiaries displaying a 25 percent improvement in self-sufficiency.

AmeriCorps National

College Possible Omaha, serving 2,000 high school and college students, is closing Nebraska's degree divide and building a competitive workforce for the future. By 2020, 71% of jobs in Nebraska will require a post-secondary education, but only 8% of low-income students nationally earn a college degree by age 24. College Possible Omaha's AmeriCorps coaches guide low-income students through all aspects of preparing for, applying to and enrolling in college, and support students all the way through college graduation. Ninety-eight percent of College Possible students earn admission to college, and they are ten times more likely to graduate from college than their low-income peers. A 2013 Harvard randomized controlled trial confirmed the impact of College Possible's AmeriCorps-based program model, finding that students in the program had a significant positive increase in four-year college enrollment. By harnessing the power of national service, College Possible creates better futures for all Nebraskans.

AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA members serving with the City of South Sioux City are improving the city's capacity to better serve its residents and provide economy opportunities for low-income residents. The VISTAs assist with economic and workforce development, housing, and grant writing. In their first year, the VISTAs secured nearly \$500,000 in cash resources and \$80,000 in non-cash resources. The VISTAs secured almost \$8,000 to start a small business incubator and business toolkit to inform low- to moderate-income individuals. They cultivated partnerships with the College Center, SCORE, and the Rural Enterprise Assistance Project's Hispanic Business Center. They also adapted a funding resource guide for small businesses. To address the lack of affordable housing in South Sioux City, VISTAs identified 11 areas where homes can be built for low- to moderate-income families to purchase. At the end of the first year, eight homes had been built and sold. The program also conducted an area wide assessment of 100 homes that need rehabilitation. More than \$500,000 was secured to help the owners return these homes to safe and habitable living conditions.

More 208,000 people in Nebraska are living in poverty and food insecurity according to the USDA. Food Bank for the Heartland AmeriCorps VISTA members in Omaha are building relationships in 77 of the 93 counties to ensure that each person living in poverty and food insecurity will receive at least 37 pounds of nutritious food. During the first year of the project, VISTA member partnerships have resulted in 12 new counties becoming food secure by offering mobile food pantries, the distribution of pantry boxes and distribution of benefits information to pantry providers.

AmeriCorps NCCC

An AmeriCorps NCCC team worked with ServeNebraska, Nebraska's Volunteer Service Commission, in responding to tornadoes in the spring of 2014. ServeNebraska coordinates and supports community involvement by Nebraskans that address the needs of our communities. The first AmeriCorps NCCC team that aided in disaster relief, coordinated and sorted donations, and assisted in managing the donation distribution center. They helped meet the area's needs by allowing the center to remain open for extended hours, which would have otherwise not been possible. The team also spent two days assisting volunteers with the coordination effort and debris cleanup. The second team spent four weeks cleaning up and rebuilding after the devastation from a tornado. They assisted homeowners through repair and reconstruction efforts: clearing water-damaged debris from businesses and homes. The team assisted with reconstruction activities throughout the disaster area by scrapping and repainting buildings, installing rafters and siding, and performing roof repair. In addition, Corps members organized two disaster response trailers and fixed and repositioned seven tombstones in the community's cemetery.

AmeriCorps NCCC

The Forest Service's mission is Caring for the Land and Serving People. This mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people. During the summer of 2014, an AmeriCorps NCCC team helped them advance this mission by completing 5.5 miles of the Pine Ridge trail to clear, mark, or reroute damaged areas by installing 140 poles and 70 posts. Members also installed 30 water bars to prevent trail erosion and cleared seven dams, totaling an area of over 1200 feet, which involved moving 12 piles of wood to locations that would not damage the dams. In addition, Members assisted the education and research center, Hudson-Meng, by weeding landscaped areas and a trail, cleaning exhibits and building rooms, and replacing worn signs leading to the center. The work completed by AmeriCorps NCCC members improved public safety and access to the natural areas, provided sustainable maintenance for historic and public infrastructure, and improved the status of earthen dams. Members contributed to healthier fire regenerative grasslands and forest ecosystems.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

The Senior Action, Inc. Foster Grandparent Program in Hastings has been responding to the Nebraska Department of Education School Report Card Data that some students in the service area are scoring below the state standards in reading. Foster Grandparents are placed in the schools to serve one-on-one with these students. Twenty Foster Grandparent volunteers helped 118 children with activities to improve their reading vocabulary, comprehension, and general reading grade level. Fifty-one percent of students who received tutoring assistance showed improvement in areas of need identified by the classroom teacher and at the completion of the school year, and 78 percent of the students served were reading at or above grade level.

Senior Corps RSVP

Northwest Community Action Partnership of Nebraska RSVP program has been serving the community for 26 years. When disaster affected the community, RSVP volunteers responded. Natural disasters (forest fires in 2006 and 2012 and a blizzard in 2013) swept through rural Northwest Nebraska and drastically impacted the local economy and food pantries were stretched to their limits. Volunteers responded by providing support and collecting and distributing food to area pantries. More than 650 individuals have been helped in the past year. Ninety-five percent of the individuals served reported increased food security. To increase the amount of food collected, RSVP recruited Chadron State College students and the Chadron and Crawford local schools to join a one day effort in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. which collected more than 1,400 non-perishable food items for the area pantries. In an area where limited services are available, RSVP volunteers continue to address those critical community needs.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging engages 75 Senior Companions to serve the counties of Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties. Senior Companions provided more than 65,000 hours of companionship and non-medical in-home care services to 191 clients during the past year. Senior Companions assisted with activities including transportation to medical appointments, home safety checks, referring clients to needed community resources, activities of daily living, recreational activities, encouraging therapy and redirecting potentially stressful situations. Eighty-five percent of the clients served reported increased social ties/perceived social support and were able to remain independently living in their own home as a result of the Senior Companion services. In an effort to have the most qualified Senior Companions serving clients, the program has partnered with the Respite Resource Center to provide Respite Education Support Tools Certification Training to 21 Senior Companion volunteers.