

AmeriCorps State

Families & Youth, Inc. (FYI) provides critical services to underserved communities in Dona Ana County. Located in southern New Mexico, Dona Ana County is home to 37 of the state's 55 federally designated underdeveloped communities, also referred to as "colonias". According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 97 percent of colonias residents are Hispanic, with an average annual income of \$5,000. Many of these communities are also without safe, sanitary, and affordable housing or drinkable water, sewer, and/or drainage systems. FYI has operated an AmeriCorps program for 18 years and has served more than 7,000 youth throughout Dona Ana County. This year, in collaboration with Las Cruces Public Schools' Turnaround Initiative, 30 AmeriCorps members are operating programs aligned with a comprehensive school turnaround plan to enhance student learning experience and obtain the skills necessary to meet their goals. AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improved academic performance, academic engagement, and attendance outcomes.

AmeriCorps National

New Mexico's response to the HIV epidemic is challenged by the rural nature of the state and limited HIV-specific resources. To help address the HIV in their communities, 10 full time AIDS United AmeriCorps members provide direct services including HIV testing and counseling, health care access, prevention outreach, prevention education, and emotional and social services to at-risk populations in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Since 2007, AIDS United AmeriCorps Members have informed more than 3,000 individuals of their HIV status through HIV rapid testing and counseled them on their risk behaviors. Additionally, AmeriCorps members have reached almost 30,000 individuals through community outreach and education, providing information about HIV/AIDS risk reduction, community resources, and how to access medical care. Members have also mobilized more than 1,300 volunteers in New Mexico.

AmeriCorps VISTA

Boys and Girls Clubs In Indian Country VISTA members provide tangible impact by creating targeted cultural programs for Native youth. AmeriCorps VISTA members with the Wiyot Tribe and at the Passamaquoddy Boys & Girls Club implemented language learning programs, while a VISTA member at the Boys & Girls Club of Brookings was awarded a key grant to help open a new facility for the Club's Native Unit. This new Clubhouse will allow teens to be offered additional mentoring programs for the first time. Two VISTA members serving Boys and Girls Club's Native Service Unit researched the tribal nations affiliated with all Native Clubs, creating a resource for staff to consult when visiting tribal lands. VISTAs report that service gave them the opportunity "to educate throughout the Boys and Girls Clubs the diverse beauty of Native lands" and "to bring culture back to a place that has lost it," and it was "the best kind of work that I can ever imagine doing."

Southwest Youth Services is a successful AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsor that partners with Native American communities across the state to create education, health and nutrition, and leadership and life skills programs. In partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps, Southwest Youth Services manages the Native Youth Wellness Corps Project, which focuses on social, youth, and economic development with Native communities in New Mexico. Julian Sandia, a VISTA serving with the Jemez Department of Education, created an afterschool language program that incorporates local culture, tradition, and the Towa language for young children. Sandia also pursues grants to support language preservation.

AmeriCorps NCCC

An AmeriCorps NCCC team spent their last round working in Roswell and Lake Arthur, New Mexico with Embrace Inc., a non-profit organization helping improve food security and promoting healthy lifestyles for low income families in southeastern New Mexico's Chaves County. In collaboration with Enchanted Farm and Lake Arthur Municipal Schools, Embrace Inc. enlisted the help of NCCC to address the rapid growth of food insecurity within the region. At Enchanted Farm, Corps members maintained garden plots, designed a hydroponic model that will be used in the future, and planted a variety of crops that will eventually feed over 100 families in the community. Additionally, the team worked with Lake Arthur Municipal Schools to help restore an old school house into a museum, by painting and clearing the interior of the school, as well as built a greenhouse. The work completed by Corps members will benefit all in the community by providing food for individuals and families in need and creating awareness of the issues of poverty and food insecurity.

An AmeriCorps NCCC team partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Farmington, NM to provide tutoring and mentoring to at-risk youth. The Boys and Girls Club is a youth development organization with more than 50 years of experience developing programming geared toward the physical, mental, social, cultural and educational well-being of the youth it serves. There, the Corps members tutored students, watched over children, and implemented 5 educational programs to over 1,850 kids. Additionally, the team provided 732 hours of support to three local organizations. At the ECHO Food Bank, Corps members packed over 500 bags of food for low income families. At the Salvation Army, the team helped to organize over 20 boxes of clothing and painted a portion of their chapel. Finally at New Beginnings, members removed debris and cleared a pathway to the community garden. The NCCC team's efforts have strengthened the reputation of the Boys and Girls Club of Farmington as a safe, fun place for their children to stay and to grow as leaders. The work completed at the ECHO Food Bank, Salvation Army, and New Beginnings created efficiencies for those organizations, increasing their impact in the community.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

The Grant County Foster Grandparents are providing one-on-one attention to 26 students throughout Grant County. The schools that are serving as volunteer stations include Mesa View Elementary; San Rafael Elementary; Mt. Taylor Elementary; Milan Elementary; and Los Alamos Mid School. Foster Grandparents are assisting students with reading skills. Teachers have identified students at the beginning of the school year that are in need of assistance with reading. Foster Grandparents work one-on-one with the students to help them increase their vocabulary, reading proficiency, and increase word identification. This is measured by the Program Assignment Plan which is completed by the teacher at the beginning of the school year, at midyear, and at the end of the school year.

Senior Corps RSVP

Chaves County RSVP is committed to increasing food security in the community. More than 59 percent of families and children in Chaves County are dependent on meals from public sources and 10 percent are missing meals on a daily basis. Chaves County RSVP has 37 volunteers who work as a team at the Good Samaritan food pantry to distribute food to individuals and families in need. In the past six months, RSVP volunteers have distributed food packages to 1,118 individuals.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

Twenty-three Senior Companion Volunteers serve through the Community Services Center Senior Companion Program in the Portales area. The Senior Companion volunteers are very dedicated to their clients. Last year they served more than 18,000 hours. Senior Companion are alleviating loneliness and isolation and helping keep seniors living as independently as possible for as long as possible. The community Services Center also provides Senior Companion volunteers with valuable training throughout their service. Volunteers then give information learned in trainings to their clients, empowering community members to collaborate in reducing community problems.