

AmeriCorps State

The Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps program serves 12 counties in rural Northwest Pennsylvania. This year, 227 AmeriCorps members will serve with the program. Ninety-one percent of rural superintendents named academic support programs for students as an essential element of meeting federal mandates. However, only 18 percent of eligible students received tutoring. SMILES members will provide more than 5,000 children with one-on-one academic assistance and mentoring throughout the school year.

This year, 646 AmeriCorps state members serving with seven different programs will make an impact in Philadelphia. Members will serve in the Philadelphia school district, in the Philadelphia Parks Department, and in food banks in Northeast Philadelphia. The commitment of the school district and the city to continue to provide match to AmeriCorps programs despite financial shortfalls demonstrates how vital these programs are Philadelphia. AmeriCorps State members in Philadelphia schools support attendance initiatives, provide one-on-one academic support to students, and provide after-school programming so that students have a safe place to continue learning after the school day has ended. Members also provide IT assistance to teachers, assist Philadelphia residents to gain access to affordable computers, and help parents with computer skills so that they can access their children's student information online. In addition to serving the youth of Philadelphia, four of the AmeriCorps State programs located in the city enroll disadvantaged youth as AmeriCorps members. These programs enroll high school dropouts in programming to receive their GED and receive job skill training while also serving the community; recruit formerly adjudicated youth to participate in AmeriCorps; or recruit recent low-income Philadelphia School District graduates to provide service while earning IT credentials.

AmeriCorps National

College Possible Philadelphia, serving 500 students, is closing Pennsylvania's degree divide and building a competitive workforce for the future. By 2020, 63 percent of jobs in Pennsylvania will require a post-secondary education, but only 8 percent of low-income students nationally earn a college degree by age 24. College Possible Philadelphia'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 Pennsylvanians.

AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA member Christopher Bradford serves with the National Nursing Centers Consortium in Philadelphia. He has worked to strengthen the InsurePA program to increase the number of uninsured Pennsylvanians to access affordable coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. With Chris's assistance, the National Nursing Consortium was able to successfully train 40 Counselors, who assisted more than 20,000 Pennsylvanians to assess their options, resulting in more than 4,000 new enrollees. Individuals who were not eligible for Medicaid nor federal subsidies were routed to health centers offering quality services regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. The project maintains a list of approximately 900 individuals who will be newly eligible for assistance once the state launches its version of coverage expansion, Healthy PA in December 2015.

The Philadelphia School District has faced an unprecedented budget crisis over the past few years, all while facing long-standing school performance problems. Philadelphia is home to half of more than half of the schools on the Pennsylvania State Department of Education's list of "failing schools." AmeriCorps VISTA members with the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development have responded by building capacity for the School District's Office of Strategic Partnerships to work with outside partners to improve education for Philadelphia's children. They have implemented a School Partnerships Database to catalogue and track partners across the District as well as a web-based intake system for potential collaborators.

AmeriCorps NCCC

An AmeriCorps NCCC team served with Pennsylvania State Parks' Raccoon Creek State Park in Hookstown, Pennsylvania. Team members restored cabins that were built by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), AmeriCorps NCCC's predecessor. During their service, the team cleaned and organized a 500 square foot lumber shed built during the CCC Era in the 1930s. Corps members repaired two bridges and disassembled another bridge that was destroyed by a flood. The team created a sandstone path from a cabin to the bathroom facility. The team assembled and installed 20 picnic tables in camp sites around the park. They scraped, primed, and painted a 300 square foot building and 24 lamp posts. Corps members removed 2500 pounds of wood and laid gravel. They also removed 215 pounds of invasive plants, honeysuckle, and participated in a controlled burn of four acres. The team was able to salvage siding from eight different cabins and remove roof materials from a CCC cabin. In addition, corps members were also able to assist in the park's annual trout replenishment, over 4000 trout were added to the lake. Raccoon Creek State Park first became an AmeriCorps NCCC project sponsor in 2004.

AmeriCorps NCCC Cont'd

Streamside Camp provides a week of leisure and outdoor activity to kids from the inner cities of Philadelphia, New York, Newark, and Patterson. Streamside Camp strives to help youth develop emotionally, socially, and spiritually. During AmeriCorps NCCC's service with Streamside Camp, the team completed several projects. Their first project was to complete a nature center. The team dug holes to establish its foundation, framed the structure, built walls and a roof, and installed a new door. The team also constructed and assembled a butterfly house for campers' education and enjoyment. Corps members worked on trail maintenance, trail restoration, and preventing pest infestation in cabins. During rainy days the team painted the interiors of campers' cabins. This was AmeriCorps NCCC's first project with Streamside Camp and Retreat Center.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

Luzerne Wyoming Counties' Bureau For Aging engages Foster Grandparent volunteers to serve as tutors to special education students in the Wilkes-Barre Area District who are at-risk of failing due to academic problems, reading deficiencies, behavioral and attention difficulties, as well as problems at home. Of the 208 students served by 33 Foster Grandparents through the instructional support team, 88 percent have demonstrated improvement in their reading skills, 86 percent have demonstrated improvement in math and spelling, and 93 percent have shown improvement in their acquisition of life skills.

Senior Corps RSVP

The Montgomery County RSVP has piloted and is now expanding an innovative, web-based math tutoring program called My Free Tutor. RSVP volunteers developed the program, including the software package. The program started in 2013 in Norristown with volunteers – mostly retired engineers and computer scientists – serving 20 kids per semester. In 2014 the program expanded into the Kensington Health Sciences Academy with another 20 children per semester. The RSVP will be expanding the program into additional schools in 2015 and will be adding chemistry.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The York County Senior Companion Program engaged 54 Senior Companions to meet the needs of nearly 200 isolated seniors in need of support to remain independent. The program recently celebrated its 15th year of operation, during which time Senior Companions have provided more than 559,000 hours of friendship, caring and support to more than 1,570 clients. More than 80 percent of clients and caregivers reported a positive impact by the Senior Companions.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund transforms lives and communities using limited federal investment as a catalyst to grow the impact of nonprofits with evidence of strong results. It harnesses the expertise of grantmaking intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits and engages funding partners to contribute nearly three dollars to every one federal dollar invested. As the Social Innovation Fund network grows programs that work in Pennsylvania, more people are able to overcome their most pressing challenges in the areas of economic opportunity, health, and youth development. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$563,196 in expanding the impact of four nonprofits in Pennsylvania.