

AmeriCorps State

Last year, 15 Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence AmeriCorps members impacted the lives of thousands of Wyoming people living in fear and violence, provided response to victims, changed societal attitudes about interpersonal violence and related issues. In addition to working one-on-one, some members facilitate peer education support groups, provide quality prevention education and awareness, work extensively with community partners including law enforcement, schools, social service agencies, and civil and criminal legal systems to address victim blaming issues and to promote victim-friendly response systems. AmeriCorps members inspired community volunteers to give more than 5,000 hours of their time and resources to victims of violence, which in turn increases the capacity of the local programs to meet the overwhelming community need. In addition to meeting or exceeding their goals, WCADVSA members served more than 700 victims and provided financial literacy to more than 200 victims of domestic violence, enabling them to further secure their futures.

Big Brothers Big Sisters' Mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring professionally supported one-on-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. Big Brothers Big Sisters' vision is that all children achieve success in life. The AmeriCorps program helped achieve this mission by providing outreach and support to new mentors as well as recruited additional AmeriCorps mentors to improve the lives of youth in Wyoming. Last year, the Greater Wyoming Big Brothers Big Sisters' AmeriCorps program created nearly 250 matches and of those matches, 100 percent have been in place for six months to one year. These mentoring relationships create opportunities for Littles to increase positive youth outcomes in educational expectations, scholastic competency, improvement in risk attitudes and academic engagement. Members recruited more than 800 volunteers who donated almost 20,000 hours of their time.

AmeriCorps VISTA

As an AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate serving with Sheridan Senior Citizens, Inc., Tabitha Logan helped 113 low-income individuals apply for the Wyoming Department of Health Tax Refund for the Elderly and Disabled. She also was the primary organizer of the Sheridan Senior Center Garage Sale, which raised more than \$2,600 to support Senior Center services. Through a partnership with the local Habitat for Humanity and AARP chapters, Logan assisted several individuals with yard work and house cleaning, and continued research on a thrift store that has now opened as a continuous revenue stream to support Senior Center programs in Sheridan. To inspire other young people to serve, Logan also penned an article, "Why I Chose to be a VISTA Volunteer," for The Sheridan Press.

Lovell, Inc. Big Horn Basin Food Hub in Lovell was awarded a \$25,000 USDA grant written by AmeriCorps VISTA member Remy Cline. The grant supports a regional food assessment focusing on evaluating the potential for a Regional Food Hub within a four-county region of rural Wyoming. The primary expected outcome is the Big Horn Basin Food Hub Feasibility Study which will guide regional food strategies and examine a variety of regional food issues including a number of sub-reports identifying storage, packaging, and distribution needs; along with a marketing report and a value add opportunities report. Priority for awards was given to project proposals that were located in and/or serve populations in at least one area of concentrated poverty with limited food access.

AmeriCorps NCCC

Habitat for Humanity of the Eastern Bighorns sponsored an AmeriCorps NCCC team during the spring of 2014. Habitat for Humanity's mission is to eliminate poverty housing from Sheridan County and make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Since 1995, HFHEB has partnered with homeowners, volunteers and community organizations to build affordable homes in northeastern Wyoming. During their time in Wyoming, the team spent time constructing four different homes. The team installed window sills, trim, and bathroom fixtures. Members also weatherized homes, sealed the concrete floors, painted exterior and interiors, applied wainscoting to the front porch, and added shingles to the roof. Corps members had the opportunity to help construct one house by building, raising, and securing walls, trusses, sheathing and siding during a Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build. The team also completed general worksite cleanup by removing debris and landscaping homes. In addition, the team coordinated 26 volunteers during their service in Wyoming. Corps members worked at the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, where the team cleaned and organized product shelves and helped retrieve donations.

The Wyoming Free Tax Service, a program of the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, which is a major federal anti-poverty program supporting the Earned Income Tax Credit Program. This program offers direct financial support to low to moderate wage earners and is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the nation. AmeriCorps NCCC members prepared tax returns and increase the number of income taxes filed. Prior to the team's arrival the Wyoming Tax Service, the program had reached its capacity as was not able to meet the current demand from local residents. The team prepared 767 tax returns for many of who earned little to no income and 317 of whom were senior citizens, saving taxpayers \$115,050 in tax preparation fees and facilitating \$886,800 in refunds. The team also organized a Community Day at the Natrona County Public Library in downtown Casper to attract new volunteers and clients to the Wyoming Free Tax Service. The event allowed the team to inform local residents about the AmeriCorps NCCC program and their work in the community. They also participated in a cleanup at the Izaak Walton League campgrounds, where they collected trash and cleared brush.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

A Foster Grandparent serving with Cathedral Home for Children in Laramie Wyoming was assigned to a 6th grade student to help him with spelling, an area he had struggled his entire school experience. The Foster Grandparent and the student worked daily on his goal to be able to spell at grade level and by the end of the year he won the spelling bee. A 4th grade teacher told the Foster Grandparent, "Your persistence and calm 'high' expectations are helping to change these boys' attitudes towards school. You are brightening the lives of many". The three Foster Grandparent programs in Wyoming cover 17 of the 23 counties and the Wind River Indian Reservation. Last year 150 Foster Grandparents served 193,140 hours one-on-one with 3,063 youth in 80 schools and nonprofit youth organizations.

Senior Corps RSVP

Last year, 76 Cheyenne Housing Authority RSVP volunteers served with four hospitals in Laramie, Albany, and Carbon Counties, and the VA Hospital in Cheyenne by providing information, patient assistance, and access to care for 63,000 individuals. Thirteen RSVP volunteers assisted 3,067 economically disadvantaged families, including homeless individuals, to obtain affordable housing and other resources through four nonprofit organizations; and 12 RSVP CERT-trained volunteers assisted local Sheriff, Police and the State Highway Department as trainers serving 120 hours in training for rescue efforts and other disaster preparedness. Cheyenne Housing Authority RSVP is currently the only RSVP in Wyoming, with 232 volunteers serving a total of 29,551 hours in eight rural Wyoming Counties: Lincoln, Uinta, Sweetwater, Carbon, Albany, Laramie, Platte and Goshen.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

A homeless veteran started serving this last year as a Senior Companion in Cheyenne and is now self-sufficient and in his own apartment. Throughout Wyoming, 91 Senior Companions served 74,409 hours last year with 789 at-risk seniors through the Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc. Senior Companion Program. Of those, 40 of the 91 Senior Companions were veterans serving 200 veteran clients, helping to retain their independence and delay use of Medicaid funds for nursing home placement. The average daily cost of care in a nursing home is \$72,635 per year. For those 789 seniors the cost would have been \$57,309,015. The annual cost to operate Senior Companion programs in Wyoming is \$498,926.

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 Oklahoma, 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 \$121,548 in expanding the impact of one nonprofit in Wyoming.