

State Commission

In 2014-2015, the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism administered 15 AmeriCorps State programs, deploying 627 AmeriCorps members. These AmeriCorps members recruited an additional 9,943 volunteers who served a combined 53,563 hours in areas of education, community cleanup, environmental services, veterans and military families, refugee services, nutrition and health, and other areas related to human needs. Based on the Independent Sector's estimate of the value of volunteer time, this equates \$1,245,875 worth of services provided by volunteers directly recruited by AmeriCorps members. The Corporation for National and Community Service invested \$3,437,917 to organizations located in Georgia. As a result of this federal investment, subgrantees of the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism leveraged an additional \$1,698,095 in cash and in-kind resources. Volunteer, in-kind and cash leverage totaled \$2,943,970. This was almost dollar-for-dollar leverage due to the CNCS investment in programs overseen by the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism.

AmeriCorps State

Covenant House of Georgia has ten AmeriCorps members who serve Atlanta 18 to 21-year-old youth who are homeless, have run away, or are at risk of homelessness. Homelessness is a priority focus area for AmeriCorps in Georgia. The AmeriCorps members help give the youth at Covenant House the tools they need to become stable, gain life skills, and move from the streets to self-sufficiency. Members work one-on-one with youth to develop individualized goals and plans, and mentor them through the plans for up to a year. In the last year, the AmeriCorps members helped 557 youth, which is 77 percent of all youth served by Covenant House during that time. The members also engaged more than 800 people as volunteers at Covenant House. The members, along with the community resources they bring in to support Covenant House, are essential to changing the lives of youth who are served there.

Youth Villages in Douglasville, has 22 AmeriCorps members living and serving on-site at one of the state's largest psychiatric residential treatment programs. It provides residential and community-based treatment and accredited educational services for youth from ages 5 to 21 who are considered difficult to reach. They are referred to Youth Villages by state agencies, mental health professionals, and advocacy offices, often as an alternative to youth detention. The AmeriCorps members tutor the youth, organize service-learning activities, and run community-strengthening activities. When needed, they also provide disaster response throughout the state. In the past year, AmeriCorps members tutored 102 students in life skills, and 92 percent of a sample group showed improvement. The members also tutored 101 students in academic areas, and 82 percent of a sample group increased their academic skills and knowledge. After 211 students participated in service-learning activities, 90 percent of a sample group reported an increase in civic engagement. The members engaged 2,024 volunteers who gave 5,069 hours of service.

AmeriCorps National

College Advising Corps has 28 AmeriCorps members serving full-time as college advisors at 22 high schools in Atlanta, Athens, Augusta, Conyers, Norcross, and Thomson. These members are placed underserved high schools and work to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students who enter and complete higher education. The AmeriCorps members provide the counsel and encouragement that students need to navigate the college admissions process. They help students plan their college searches, complete admissions and financial aid applications, and enroll at schools that will serve them well. In 2015, these 28 members served 6,600 students, held 6,870 individual meetings with students, and met with 5,207 students in classroom presentations or group meetings. They organized college representative visits for 1,256 seniors and helped 1,570 seniors submit 5,298 college applications. They have helped students amass over \$9 million in scholarships and institutional aid for the coming school year.

FoodCorps has eight AmeriCorps members serving in Atlanta, Athens, and Habersham and Rabun Counties. FoodCorps is a nationwide team of AmeriCorps leaders who work under the direction of local partner organizations to connect children to real food and help them grow up healthy. They teach children hands-on lessons about food and nutrition build and tend school gardens, teach cooking lessons, and help change what's on lunch trays so that children can eat healthy food from local farms. In program year 2014-2015, the FoodCorps members in Georgia served 19,290 children, built or brought back into use 29 school and community gardens, harvested 1,690 pounds of produce, and recruited 554 community volunteers.

AmeriCorps VISTA

The Step Up Savannah AmeriCorps VISTA project has helped strengthen partnerships between Step Up and four host agencies. Host agencies include Georgia Legal Services Program, Consumer Credit Counseling Service, United Way of the Coastal Empire, and the Wesley Community Center. The VISTA project has enabled these agencies to build capacity through increased fundraising, enhanced use of volunteers, and program development. Through VISTA support, the project reached 195 percent of its overall goals of 8,000 individuals served, and 255 percent of its goal for individuals served through asset building programming. Volunteers were recruited for programs like the Pro Bono project, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, poverty simulations, financial coaching, and grant review committees. More than \$60,000 of cash and in-kind resources were secured through the VISTA program.

AmeriCorps VISTA members serving at Athens Land Trust (ALT) have helped the organization to strengthen its capacity to build safe, sustainable, and healthy communities. Athens and the surrounding counties served through the ALT have some of the highest poverty in the state. The VISTA team has built beneficial relationships with organizations from the University of Georgia and other local nonprofits and has significantly increased the resources of ALT. The VISTA Development Assistant has been invaluable in identifying and pursuing resources for fundraising, submitting 15 grant applications since December 2014. Six of these grants were awarded to ALT: A \$20,000 National Community Land Trust Network Catalyzing Impact grant for an affordable housing program; a \$10,000 Seeds of Change grant for West Broad Market Garden; a \$4,000 grant from Wells Fargo for first time homebuyer education; a \$2,500 CSX Beyond Our Rails grant to support nutrition education and wellness programs at West Broad Market Garden; a \$2,500 Bank of America Foundation grant to support ALT's Homebuyer Education and Credit Counseling Program; and a \$29,000 Enterprise Community Partners grant.

AmeriCorps NCCC

An AmeriCorps NCCC team partnered with the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to maintain trails and create a sustainable road-bed that was severely eroded during a flood in 2009. The purpose of the park is to preserve, protect, and interpret, for the benefit and inspiration of the people, the historical and natural features of this major battle site in the American Civil War's 1864 Atlanta Campaign. The park is the largest contiguous green space in the Atlanta metro area with nearly 3,000 acres and 22 miles of hiking trails. In the park, the team dug irrigation systems, built erosion controlling walls, water bars and steps, restored a mile and a half of trail, repaired a scenic overlook, restored a streambed, cleared invasive species, and helped supervise a YMCA camp that helped get city kids into green spaces. Last year, 2.1 million people visited the park, and the park employs only 19 people. The members' work has kept the trails in shape not only for hikers' comfort but for hikers' safety as well and has allowed for work to get done that was beyond the capacity of the park's staff and volunteer base.

In partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), an AmeriCorps NCCC team assisted with managing invasive species and other projects. The mission of the DNR is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of the commerce and industry that utilizes sound environmental practices. The NCCC team began its project in Brunswick, navigating the Altamaha River and treating it for water hyacinth. The team then spent a majority of its time removing invasive species from Cay Creek, Sand dunes in Townsend, the Earth Day Trail, and Sapelo Island. Afterwards, members worked with the Historical Brunswick Foundation assisting in the restoration of the Smith House, supported St. Simon's Land Trust with oyster bed restoration, trail work and stream bank stabilization projects, and lastly worked at the Sapelo Island visitor's center clearing trails and tending the center's garden. The team accomplished much that the DNR, and its partner organizations, have had difficulty completing in a timely manner.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

Economic Opportunity Authority's (EOA) Head Start Program has provided education for pre-school children for 48 years. The Head Start program is a community action program that provides comprehensive early childhood education to low-income children. To be eligible, a child must be 3 -5 years of age, reside in Chatham or Effingham Counties, and meet the program's low-income eligibility guidelines. Without intervention the identified children will not acquire the skills necessary to be successful in school. The extensive resources and funding for one-on-one intervention is limited. The EOA's Foster Grandparents help provide the support needed. Foster Grandparents assist pre-school children to develop the skills they need to prepare for kindergarten by giving them the extra attention and skill building they need to prepare for educational success. Of the 87 children served by Foster Grandparents, 68 (78 percent) of them demonstrated significant gains in social and emotional development.

Senior Corps RSVP

Thirteen RSVP volunteers serving through the Atlanta Regional Commission engaged 899 individuals through disaster preparedness activities which included educational presentations, fairs, outreach events, and materials distribution. Many of the events and activities under the disaster preparedness work plan were community fairs or events where volunteers spoke one-on-one with individuals. Of the disaster preparedness presentations provided, 163 participants turned in surveys after disaster presentations. Of these, 99 percent of the respondents felt the information shared on disaster preparedness was important for them, and 96 percent felt they knew more about how to prepare for disasters after the presentation was completed. Almost everyone (99 percent of the survey participants who responded) indicated they would take some kind of action with the information they learned during the presentation.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Georgia Southern University (GSU) Senior Companion program provides an invaluable service to low income, isolated, and/or disabled seniors living in rural communities. GSU serves nine rural counties in South Georgia. Research shows rural elders tend to have fewer individuals available to provide support than their urban counterparts. Senior Companions serving through GSU provided support and respite services to 34 home bound low income seniors. In so many ways Senior Companions help to save the lives of elders. A GSU Senior Companion serves a frail elderly couple in a very rural area. The husband is a WWI veteran. Upon arriving at the couple's house, the Senior Companion could not get the couple to answer the door. Upon gaining entry into the house, the Senior Companion found that both the wife and husband had fallen. The Senior Companion was able to get both seniors the critical assistance they needed. Because of the intervention of the Senior Companion, the couple was able to avoid a long hospitalization or serious injury and return to their routine activities.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) transforms lives by using evidence to find what works and make it work for more people. The SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success programs harness the expertise of grant-making intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits serving low-income communities across America. Through Soccer for Success in Atlanta, more than 650 youth were provided with physical activity, nutrition education, mentorship, and family engagement opportunities that combat childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$52,500 in expanding the impact of one nonprofit in the state.