

## State Commission

The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) administers AmeriCorps programs for the State of Missouri. The Commission, appointed by the Governor, approved 20 grants for the year 2014-2015, allocating \$1,847,819 in competitive funding and \$2,041,861 in State Formula funding. AmeriCorps members funded by the Commission served 75,205 disadvantaged children and youth, mentored 5,843 children including 116 children of incarcerated parents, supported 716 veterans or family members, provided disaster services to 3,452 individuals, and provided independent living services to 436 individuals. The Commission also hosted a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. service project which collected 850 pounds of food and 500 clothing items. The Commission's Annual Celebration of Service and Volunteerism recognizes individuals and organizations engaged in community service by presenting the Show Me Service Award, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Award, the Partners in Service Award, the Partners in Service Education Award, and eight Monsanto High School Scholarships to college bound high school students in Missouri. MCSC has a long tradition of serving the people of Missouri and encouraging volunteerism in the state.

## AmeriCorps State

AmeriCorps St. Louis and its thirty-five full time AmeriCorps members serve in teams to prepare for and respond to disasters across Missouri and by invitation in other states. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) has deployed to disasters in more than 50 Missouri counties and 30 states. During non-disaster times members serve on conservation corps across Missouri, Illinois, and Montana. AmeriCorps St. Louis Service Corps partners with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Department of Natural Resources, the United Way, Federal Emergency Management Administration, State Emergency Management Administration, the U.S. Forest Service, state and local disaster agencies, the state commission and other emergency managers to support and coordinate disaster response and recovery. The agency has been included in numerous national and regional disasters and remains one of the most respected emergency response teams in the United States. Late in 2015, AmeriCorps St. Louis was selected to head a multiple agency response to the winter flooding in 18 Missouri counties. The coordinated effort was a model response that included National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, state, and federal efforts with more than 100 volunteers daily to identify and respond to the damage done by the flooding during their full deployment.

Children in the Kansas City area benefit from the efforts of the AmeriCorps program Child Abuse Prevention Association (CAPA) whose mission is to prevent all forms of child abuse. CAPA works to create changes in individuals, families, and in society in order to strengthen relationships and promote healing. CAPA and its 20 AmeriCorps members provide free therapeutic counseling services to children and families who experience abuse or related traumas. Members also provide weekly in-home health education and case management for high-risk families with infant and toddler age children. Members provide educational activities addressing prevention across the Kansas City Metro area. These activities include safety skills and other workshops for children and parents. CAPA is a model program that achieves outstanding results in their work with at risk families and children.

## AmeriCorps National

City Year Kansas City AmeriCorps has 16 AmeriCorps members who serve full-time at two schools, helping more than 1,064 students at greatest risk of dropping out. City Year AmeriCorps members work alongside teachers, using research-based tools to improve students' attendance, behavior, and performance in math and English. The members also lead afterschool programs and school-wide initiatives to improve school culture.

College Advising Corps has five AmeriCorps members serving full-time as college advisors at five high schools in St. Louis. The members are placed in underserved high schools and work to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students who enter and complete higher education. The members provide the counsel and encouragement that students need to navigate the college admissions process. The AmeriCorps members help students plan their college searches, complete admissions and financial aid applications, and enroll at schools that will serve them well. In 2015, these five members served 1,500 students, held 1,168 one-to-one meetings and met with 4,323 students in group sessions or classroom presentations. They have organized college campus visits for 196 students and have helped 578 seniors submit a college application. They have helped students amass over \$2 million in scholarships and institutional aid for the coming school year.

The Mt. Adams Institute VetsWork AmeriCorps members serve with public lands management/natural resource agencies to help with land improvement needs that would otherwise be unmet. Members maintain trails, clear non-native invasive species, maintain recreation areas, engage volunteers, do technical writing, and evaluate and document archeological sites. In Mark Twain National Forest, ten VetsWork AmeriCorps member gave 10,785 hours of service. They cleared 7 acres of non-native invasive species, maintained 40 miles of trail, maintained or assessed 286 miles of road, marked 214 acres of timber, and maintained 121 facilities.

Youth Volunteer Corps has two AmeriCorps members who serve St. Joseph. These members engaged 173 youth, including 30 disadvantaged youth, in 2,590 hours of service last year. These youth volunteers served on 98 projects for local agencies, including Juda House, Rotary Club, St. Joseph Public Library, and Mid City Excellence.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

In 2015, Mission: St. Louis hosted 11 AmeriCorps VISTA members who focused on empowerment and the development of inner city neighborhoods. The AmeriCorps VISTA members coordinated and supported 775 community volunteers. The majority of volunteers serve at least three times, mainly with youth academic programs and the Job and Leadership Training program. In summer 2015, Mission: St. Louis hosted nine AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associates whose goal was to prepare disadvantaged youth and empower at-risk men (including men in Ferguson) to succeed. While these summer VISTAs served with the Beyond Jobs program, they created assessment tools to determine the needs of the community. They also used mental health research to evaluate the men's curriculum for significant patterns so the program could increase retention and graduation rates. They focused on finding significant ways to show the data from Mission: St. Louis programs. The Beyond School Summer Associates worked with 25 students to improve literacy and combat "summer learning slump." All of the students advanced at least six months in reading level.

AmeriCorps VISTA members serving with the Waynesville R-VI School District organized the 3rd Annual Adult Dodge Brawl Tournament fundraiser to support its Snack in a Pack program. It was the AmeriCorps VISTA program's most successful fundraising event to date. VISTAs reached out to the community to donate, volunteer, and participate. They raised more than \$3,500 and recruited more than 400 volunteers, partners, and participants. Snack in a Pack gives weekend meal packs to more than 315 local, food-deficient students, an increase of 13 percent over the previous year. Of the 5,900 district students, 76 percent are military affiliated, and more than 55 percent leave and are replaced each year because of military relocations. Thanks to the collaborative partnerships VISTAs have built, the program has partnership with Colton's Steak House & Grill of St. Robert, which help negotiate food prices on the program's behalf and ensure its delivery. Transitioning the program to community partners is a promising step toward sustainability. Snack in a Pack's partnerships yielded more than \$6,700 in cash and food donations in November 2014 alone.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

Next Step Kansas City asked an AmeriCorps NCCC team to come support its goal of serving at least 8,000 low-income taxpayers. The team helped with tax preparation at the Full Employment Council, the First Baptist Church of North Kansas City, and at Catholic Charities/EI Centro. The NCCC members' free service saved clients the cost of a paid preparer to file their federal and state taxes. The members helped complete more than 3,000 tax returns, which returned more than \$2 million to the community. The team's sponsor once said that on average, taxpayers pay \$261 to have their returns filed by a paid preparer. Clients who were helped by the NCCC team will not only keep the money they would otherwise have spent for a tax preparer, but also any tax refund they might get. The tax refunds clients receive have helped them pay for bills, utilities, medicine, rent, and groceries.

The West Plains Community Garden was established in 2009 to combat hunger, poor eating habits, and the financial burden of high grocery bills. In November and December 2014, it welcomed a team of AmeriCorps NCCC members to renovate its garden to prepare for its sixth season of "Sowing Seeds for a Better Community." The organization serves a rural area that has historically been troubled by education, employment, and health challenges. The community garden has made a real impact on the lives of those who use it. The NCCC team helped it take care of significant maintenance issues and the poor access for people with limited mobility. The team pulled out all existing vegetation from the garden, including the invasive Bermuda grass that covered it. They treated and prepped lumber for 22-foot-long garden beds and assembled raised beds that are suited for wheelchair access. Thanks to the NCCC team's service, the community has a well-designed, easy-to-maintain, accessible garden. The garden will be more productive, more individuals will be encouraged and able to garden, and the community garden will be sustainable for years to come.

## Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

The Kansas City Foster Grandparent Program of Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties, sponsored by Reconciliation Services, has 86 Foster Grandparent volunteers who serve 180 children in K-12 with school readiness, child safety, welfare, and health programs. In Kansas City, only 33.8 percent of third graders are reading at or above grade level, but by the end of the last school year, 92 percent of K-12 children served by Foster Grandparents showed academic improvement. The program organized a Foster Grandparent Program 50th Anniversary event at the Missouri State Capital in March 2015. Foster Grandparent directors and volunteers from around the state gathered at the Capital Building in Jefferson City. State Senator Kiki Curls and State Representative Randy Dunn presented the 82 volunteers and directors with a state declaration honoring the 50th anniversary of the program.

## Senior Corps RSVP

In 2015, RSVP volunteers who serve through OASIS gave 17,520 volunteer service hours in intergenerational tutoring and the CATCH Healthy Habits programs in 45 volunteer stations. OASIS promotes successful aging for adults 50 and older through lifelong learning, health promotion, and volunteer engagement. In summer 2015, the OASIS Institute partnered with Earthdance Farms, Ferguson Municipal Public Library, and the Strength & Honor summer camp program for Ferguson youth to bring two of its highly-acclaimed intergenerational programs to Ferguson. CATCH Healthy Habits teaches children the benefits of regular physical activity and good nutrition. The OASIS Tutoring program helps students practice reading and writing and build confidence. Both programs were part of camp for 40 boys in the North County community. The RSVP volunteers distributed 60 backpacks to the children. In keeping with the #gimmefive theme of Let's Read, Let's Move, the volunteers gave each child five books to fill their backpacks.

## Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Senior Companion Program of Southeast Missouri has 32 Senior Companion volunteers who help seniors stay at home, living independently. Social isolation in the elderly is common, often brought about due to disabilities, illness, and loss of social support systems. Many clients have no living family member, or no family members nearby, to check on their well-being. Senior Companions' 33,663 hours of care and companionship meant that last year, 80 percent of their clients were able to remain in their home. Just as the elderly and disabled need support systems, so do their caregivers. Senior Companions gave 6,222 hours of respite care to 27 families last year. Not only do friends and families get respite support, the Senior Companions also give their loved ones important information to keep them healthy, as well as safe during a disaster. The Senior Companion Program's sponsor has an emergency preparedness focus, so volunteers get "Ready in 3" disaster preparedness pamphlets to share with clients.

## Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is supporting nonprofits in Missouri that work to improve the health of people living with HIV and that help people gain valuable work experience. The St. Louis Effort for AIDS BEACON Project has enrolled more than 300 people living with HIV since it opened in 2011. It has linked more than 80 percent of its clients to care. The SIF is investing \$57,442 to expand the impact of two nonprofits in Missouri. 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.