

National Service Impact in North Carolina

State Commission

The North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service works to enhance the quality of life and ensure long-term prosperity of North Carolinians by promoting the capabilities of people, communities, and enterprises and using community service and volunteerism as an integral part of the growth of the state. Above all, the Commission provides vital support for the state's growing force of volunteers who impact the lives of others and meet critical community needs. In the 2014-2015 program year, more than 400 AmeriCorps members served more than 350,000 hours in North Carolina. For the current year, the North Carolina Commission was awarded \$4,246,587 in funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service, which the Commission subgranted to 15 organizations. A total of 515 AmeriCorps members are serving 550,000 hours in more than 60 counties throughout North Carolina.

AmeriCorps State

Carolina College Advising Corps AmeriCorps members increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and under-represented students entering and completing higher education. The program trains 35 full-time AmeriCorps members who are recent University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduates and places them in more than 40 underserved high schools across the state. The program helps students navigate college admissions, financial aid requirements, and assists students in getting into colleges or trade schools. AmeriCorps members served more than 3,100 high school students during the 2014-2015 academic school year, with 2,100 of those served matriculating to post-secondary education.

AmeriCorps Project Conserve, located in Hendersonville, has 32 full-time AmeriCorps members who meet critical conservation needs in western North Carolina through their service with more than 30 local environmental and conservation nonprofits in 25 different counties. Members focus on improving at-risk ecosystems and increasing community awareness and support to address unmet needs. AmeriCorps members improve public lands and trails, recruit volunteers for ecosystem restoration and protection projects, and provide disaster training and mitigation services. They also educate youth and adults through environmental education, outreach activities, and training workshops to encourage adoption of environmentally-conscious practices. For the 2014-2015 program year, the program treated more than 250 miles of trails or rivers, 179 acres of parks or public lands, and provided education or training in environmental stewardship to more than 20,000 North Carolinians.

AmeriCorps National

Citizen Schools is a nonprofit organization that partners with middle schools to expand the learning day for children in low-income communities. AmeriCorps members serve at public schools in Charlotte and Durham, leading real-world learning projects, providing academic support, and helping all students discover and achieve their dreams. In their two years of service, AmeriCorps members serve as Teaching Fellows, providing students with months of extra learning through academic mentoring and skill-building apprenticeships that translates into college readiness and career opportunities. Citizen Schools has been recognized as a leader in engaging volunteers, generating student impact, and balancing direct service with systemic change efforts. Students who are supported by Citizen Schools graduated from high school within four years at a rate of 71 percent, compared to 59 percent among matched peers, and 61 percent of Citizen Schools' alumni enroll in college.

College Advising Corps has 55 AmeriCorps members serving full-time as college advisors at 55 rural high schools in North Carolina. 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. 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 55 AmeriCorps members served 16,500 students, held 12,963 one-to-one meetings, and met with 10,612 students in group sessions or classroom presentations. They helped 4,968 seniors submit 14,808 college applications and have helped students amass over \$36 million in scholarships and institutional aid for the coming school year.

American Conservation Experience, a Corps Network affiliate which operates out of Asheville, enrolled 39 AmeriCorps members who worked on environmental conservation projects. Members built and maintained trails, improved waterways, and removed invasive species. In 2015, AmeriCorps members improved or restored 360 acres of land and built or restored 52 miles of trail.

FoodCorps has 14 AmeriCorps members serving in Charlotte, Cherokee, Edgecombe County, Gaston County, Goldsboro, Guilford, Moore County, Scotland County, Warren County, and Wilmington. 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 the past year, the FoodCorps members in North Carolina served 19,771 children, built or brought back into use 73 school and community gardens, harvested 3,548 pounds of produce, and recruited 1,308 community volunteers.

Mt. Adams Institute VetsWork AmeriCorps members serve with public lands management and natural resource agencies to meet land improvement needs that would otherwise be unmet. AmeriCorps members maintain trails, clear non-native invasive species, maintain recreation areas, engage volunteers, do technical writing, and evaluate and document archeological sites. In Nantahala National Forest, two VetsWork AmeriCorps members gave 1,665 hours of service, maintained 33 miles of trail, taught 250 students, and maintained 19 facilities.

Two Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Corps AmeriCorps members served this past year at Wake Area Health Education Center in Raleigh and Eastern Area Health Education Center in Greenville. YMHFA is a certification course that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of adolescent mental health problems, focuses on the importance of early intervention, and teaches how to help adolescents who are in crisis or having a mental health or substance use challenge. The AmeriCorps members, who are trained YMHFA instructors, certified 252 community members in the program. A follow-up survey revealed that YMHFA strategies helped 416 adolescents who struggle with a mental health challenge or illness.

AmeriCorps VISTA

The Asheville Learning Links (ALL) AmeriCorps VISTA initiative helps low-income students in Asheville schools achieve academic success. VISTA members support a range of activities to help the school district support students: research, assessment, and evaluation of community needs and current projects; developing outreach and engagement programs for parents, families and community volunteers; and promoting collaborative solutions to education issues through developing school-community partnerships. In the 2014-2015 school year, VISTA members helped local nonprofits and schools obtain \$238,000 cash and \$100,500 in in-kind resources. VISTA members also engaged 1,694 volunteers in over 24,000 hours of community service. Over 250 of these volunteers work with the same student each week for the entire year. In an end of year survey, 99 percent of teachers reported that volunteers increased student success and teacher morale. VISTA members offer high-quality volunteer training opportunities and formed several key partnerships with University of North Carolina-Asheville Athletic Department; Warren Wilson College Service Learning Department, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Peacehaven Farm serves as an intermediary sponsor supporting 11 AmeriCorps VISTA members at nonprofit organizations throughout greater Greensboro/Winston-Salem, North Carolina. These VISTA members are strengthening anti-poverty programs that serve individuals with developmental disabilities, homeless individuals, veterans, seniors and ex-offenders living in poverty. In the past year, VISTA members recruited more than 400 volunteers who have served over 1,600 hours. VISTA members have also written over 35 grant applications, resulting in \$305,000 of funding for their host organizations. One example is a \$6,000 grant received by Lifespan in Greensboro. Former NFL star Ricky Proehl's Proehlfic Park Fitness Center funded a 12-week Boot Camp called Iron Spirit. The grant provided weekly workouts for 47 individuals with disabilities and 3 staff members. The program's goal was to prepare participants to walk a mile and to become more active.

AmeriCorps NCCC

Medoc Mountain State Park is in the process of reviving its Invasive Species Control plans and implementation processes. An AmeriCorps NCCC team was brought in to support these efforts, primarily through the mapping and treatment of invasive species, including kudzu and privet. The team worked closely with the State Park to remove the invasives so that native plants could grow and restore the natural ecosystem of the park. The project consisted of flagging the areas that contained the most privet, mapping these areas with a GPS mapping device, and utilizing several removal methods: the cut stump method, basal bark treatment, and root removal. Members' service will enable the wildlife to regain areas that were previously overrun with invasive vegetation. Furthermore, the completed project will allow state park employees to focus less time on the issue, and will ultimately make the remainder of the removal tasks more manageable for all parties involved.

The Outer Banks Group of North Carolina is made up of three units of the National Park Service (NPS): Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Wright Brothers National Memorial, and Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. An AmeriCorps NCCC team was requested to help improve public safety by assisting in the clearing of vegetation along park roads and roadside along the Bodie Island section of Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The team cleared scrub brush, tall grasses and reeds to provide safe passage along the roadway, clear lines of sight at intersections, clear views of roadway signs, and clear drainage ditches to eliminate water ponding on roads. In addition, members worked on a variety of other activities including invasive control at Wright Brothers National Memorial and winter weatherization at Bodie Island Lighthouse.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

Senior Resources of Guilford places 73 Foster Grandparents in schools and Head Start centers in the greater Greensboro area to provide one-on-one tutoring to children with special needs in reading and reading comprehension. Over the past year, 213 students participated in the program, with 90 percent of them demonstrating improvement in literacy by the end of the year. This impact includes 69 students in early childhood programs who demonstrated improved readiness to enter kindergarten. More than 140 elementary students received classroom tutoring, with 89 percent of participants being promoted to the next grade level. The Foster Grandparent Program works with 11 partners in Guilford County and is in high demand in the community, with a wait list of more than 30 income-eligible seniors ready to begin service with the program.

Senior Corps RSVP

RSVP volunteers with New Hanover County Government in Wilmington provide numerous services for their communities. In total, 711 RSVP volunteers served 115,190 hours in 2014-2015. Volunteers prepare income tax returns as part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Taxes are prepared free of charge to persons with low to moderate income, seniors, and those needing assistance with tax preparation and filing. During the 2014 tax season, 127 RSVP volunteers provided 3,482 hours of income tax assistance to 4,871 New Hanover County residents. This resulted in \$3,362,850 in federal refunds and \$325,085 in state refunds. Fifteen RSVP volunteers trained by the North Carolina Department of Insurance in the Senior Health Insurance Information Program provided 1,003 hours of Medicare counseling to 823 persons in fiscal year 2014-2015. Ninety-three RSVP volunteers provided 7,913 service hours delivering 73,336 healthy meals to homebound clients. Meals are personally delivered by trained RSVP volunteers every weekday.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

Appalachian Senior Companion Program serves northwestern North Carolina, one of the most mountainous and rural regions of the state. In this area, 19 percent of elderly residents reside alone, with little or no family support. The frail elderly need assistance with activities of daily living and transportation due to age or illness. Skilled care is not required; therefore, most do not qualify for access to healthcare, putting them at risk for institutionalization. Last year, Senior Companions served 72 clients. Year-end evaluations show 85 percent continued to live at home as they were able to manage daily living with help from a Senior Companion. Healthcare costs were reduced by \$2,844,000, based on cost of \$6,000 monthly for institutional care. Respite services were also provided for caregivers needing time away to attend to their own health needs, run errands, or maintain employment. Senior Companions provided respite on a weekly basis for 57 caregivers. Year-end evaluations completed by caregivers show that 97 percent reported less stress and a greater sense of wellbeing due to the respite services received.

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. SIF is supporting nonprofits focused on issues such as strengthening the workforce and improving educational opportunities for youth throughout the state. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$900,000 in expanding the impact of three nonprofits in North Carolina.