

## State Commission

Volunteer Tennessee is the Governor's commission on volunteerism and service. Its mission is to encourage volunteerism and community service. The commission consists of a 25-member, bi-partisan volunteer citizen board appointed by the Governor and 11 State Government ex-officio positions. Annually, Volunteer Tennessee provides more than \$4.5 million in AmeriCorps and Volunteer Generation Fund grants to local agencies throughout the state to engage volunteers to meet community needs in education, environment, public safety, human needs, and homeland security. Almost 900 AmeriCorps State members help meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement across Tennessee. Volunteer Tennessee launched the first-ever statewide volunteer recognition event in 2008. The Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards honors many unsung heroes and inspires even more Tennesseans to get involved in their communities. To strengthen the service infrastructure across the state, Volunteer Tennessee also hosts the annual Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning, which brings together experts and practitioners in the volunteer and service-learning fields.

## AmeriCorps State

Teach for America Memphis sees the power of its work in the stories of the thousands of students that members have reached in Memphis and Shelby County. For example, Hardy changed the way his students thought about themselves and their city by showing them how to pursue their passions while they helped improve the world around them. Through his Let's Innovate Through Education project, students created businesses or nonprofits – from autism centers to music studios to healthy food awareness campaigns – and competed to design the best budgets, marketing strategies, and five-year timelines. AmeriCorps members served more than 20,000 students from low-income communities in over 100 district and charter schools, including Soulsville Charter School, where every student was accepted to a four-year college last year. AmeriCorps Members serve at every grade level and teach every core subject, English as a Second Language, and special education. They are a critical human capital pipeline for local schools to hire teachers in critical-need subjects. Without these AmeriCorps members, 66 high-need classrooms in the state's largest school district would not be led by highly-qualified teachers.

Impact America Tennessee AmeriCorps members serve with FocusFirst, a high-tech vision care initiative that gives free vision screenings and subsidized follow up care and to children from 6 months to 5 years old. Members check the children's vision, then process the results to determine which children are referred to Sight Savers America and the Southern College of Optometry for follow-up care. In the current program year, FocusFirst has conducted 181 screenings sessions. These sessions served 5,397 children in the Memphis area; 648 of the children (12 percent) were referred for follow-up care. AmeriCorps members have also spent more than 100 hours training for SaveFirst, a free tax preparation program for Memphis families. They were certified at the advanced IRS level and trained to be site coordinators at four Memphis-area tax sites. They recruited college volunteers from Rhodes College, Christian Brothers University, and the University of Memphis, then gave the volunteers 8 hours training and a 3-hour exam. The members have recruited and trained more than 90 volunteers. SaveFirst tax sites opened on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

## AmeriCorps National

The Southeast Conservation Corps operates with a conservation-service philosophy in an area that is under represented with conservation opportunities. AmeriCorps members serving with the Southeast Conservation Corps improved 16.5 miles of trail and 29 acres in its first year operating out of Chattanooga. The program tripled the number of AmeriCorps members serving on Tennessee's federal, county, and nonprofit lands. This growth led to the engagement of more youth in meaningful conservation service to meet its partner's great need to address conservation issues. Some of the growth in the number of AmeriCorps members was possible thanks to a 21CSC initiative to engage more young people in service on public land. Six AmeriCorps members were supported by a Chattanooga foundation invested in youth engagement, the environment, and public service. In the fall of 2015, three members graduated to Assistant Crew Leader positions. All of these Crew Leaders are from the local area and are dedicated to the success of their mission. The majority had no prior conservation corps experience or knowledge of before beginning their service.

Youth Volunteer Corps has four AmeriCorps members who serve Nashville. Last year, those members engaged 963 youth, including 48 disadvantaged youth, in 3,755 hours of service. The youth volunteers participated in 342 projects for 26 community agencies, including The Ronald McDonald House, Sole Hope, Second Harvest Food Bank, and the Cumberland River Project.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

The University of the South AmeriCorps VISTA Program, in partnership with South Cumberland Plateau Community Fund, lead a collaborate effort with the University's Dining Service to become a sponsoring agency under the USDA 2015 Summer Food Service Program to bring summer meals to three-county area in the heart of South Central Appalachia. Grundy County, a distressed county where 30.6 percent of residents live in poverty including 45 percent of its children, was the main partner area for the program. AmeriCorps VISTA Member Kelly Farina led the project and signed up 24 partner sites. Through the effort, more than 900 children and teens participated and 8,089 meals were served. This program also worked with more than 60 community volunteers who helped with meal delivery, site supervision, and program publicity. In addition, the AmeriCorps VISTA Member worked with partner sites to develop educational materials regarding nutrition, recycling, home safety, and fitness games that volunteers used as activities to engage students during their time at the sites.

The AmeriCorps VISTA project at Urban Green Lab (UGL) builds systems and capacity teach participants practical sustainable living skills which both enhance STEM education through hands on activities and contribute to self-sufficiency and sound financial management practices among clients. By participating in UGL's mobile lab educational programs, students learn tangible ways to live more sustainably and act on them. Urban Green Lab sponsored three AmeriCorps VISTA members who worked on program evaluation, resource development, and community engagement. In the first five months of service, members recruited 68 volunteers, managed 84 volunteers, and leveraged a combined total of \$42,659 in cash and in-kind resources. In September 2015, the Program Evaluation and Development VISTAs wrote and received a grant award of \$91,000 over two years from the Environmental Protection Agency to support the UGL Mobile Lab to launch in Metro Nashville Public Schools during the spring of 2016.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

The mission of Pickett CCC Memorial is to preserve a classic, rustic park environment for public use and enjoyment, and to preserve the park's origins and contributions from the Civilian Conservation Corps. During the summer and fall of 2014, an AmeriCorps NCCC team was requested to support these efforts by completing the first phase of development on a new trail system, the Pogue Creek Trail. Some portions of the designated trail area were steep and uneven, requiring the creation of 18 stone steps, 62 feet of boardwalk, and even a hand-chiseled walkway through a rocky bluff. Other areas required different kinds of troubleshooting, from obstacle removal with a chainsaw or pickaxe, to the fortification of a creek that intersected with the trail. Additionally, the team restored three structures on the park grounds, removed 900 pounds of fallen trees from the park's lake, beautified three acres of the park's visitor area, built 12 hand-crafted signs, and constructed 75 feet of fencing around a habitat of the protected Cumberland Sand Wort. AmeriCorps NCCC member's service on this project will help provide area residents and visitors with an increased capacity to experience the great outdoors.

The mission of the City of Memphis is to create a safe and vibrant place for people to live, learn, work, and play. The goal is to create thriving communities through people, services, programs, parks, and facilities. During the spring of 2015, an AmeriCorps NCCC team supported the city's efforts by preparing public pools for the season and building community gardens. The team collectively cleaned 13 pools and pool houses, removing a total of 3,200 pounds of vegetation. Additionally, the team was able to build and plant four community gardens at different community centers throughout Memphis. Three of the gardens consisted of raised beds and the other was an in-ground garden. Additionally, AmeriCorps NCCC members also helped with the cleaning of 33 pavilions at various parks throughout Memphis. The team power-washed the tables at each pavilion and removed graffiti when present.

## Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

The mission of First Tennessee Human Resource Agency is to improve the quality of life for the people of Northeast Tennessee through effective delivery of social services. The agency sponsors 74 Foster Grandparents in rural Greene County. These senior volunteers, age 55 and older, served more than 72,000 hours in a six month period. Foster Grandparents in Greene County served 124 low-income or special needs children, with 108 of those children achieving gains in social or emotional development. Additionally, 182 children completed a supported education program with 155 of those students reporting improved academic performance in literacy or math. This program celebrated its 45th anniversary at a recognition event honor the Foster Grandparent volunteers in April 2015. At the recognition, there were six volunteers age 85 or older, with the two oldest being age 92. Both those volunteers credit the Foster Grandparent Program with helping them maintain an active lifestyle and having a reason "to get up in the mornings."

## Senior Corps RSVP

FiftyForward's RSVP program supports at-risk youth, frail seniors, and veterans across Davidson and Williamson counties. In 2015, FiftyForward's 531 RSVP volunteers supported 2,500 U.S. armed forces members, 1,200 service family members, and 500 veterans. The RSVP signature program is Friends Learning in Pairs, an intergenerational volunteer tutoring program. Through weekly one-on-one tutoring sessions throughout the school year, RSVP volunteers provide the individual support, encouragement and friendship struggling young students need in order to succeed. During the 2014-15 school year, 124 RSVP volunteers provided one-on-one academic assistance to 446 elementary school students, contributing a total of 4,556 service hours. Over the program's 21-year history, 82% of participants met academic benchmarks.

## Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Van Buren Community Services Development Board Senior Companion Program provides resources that empower caregivers to reclaim a little piece of themselves and restore balance to their lives and relationships. The Senior Companion Program addresses the needs of caregivers and the people that they care for by increasing social support for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. Their mission advances the CNCS focus on healthy futures through tracking the number of individuals receiving independent living services and number of individuals with increased social support as a result of the Senior Companion volunteers. The program empowers its volunteers, family caregivers, and clients through pre- and in-service trainings, which address the need for good nutrition, preparation of healthy meals, diabetic care, exercise, and the effects of over the counter medications. In 2015, 47 Senior Companion volunteers served 52 clients and 13 care providers, providing 49,076 hours of respite for clients and their families in need of relief services.

## 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. The SIF Pay for Success programs in the state are being led by the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative and working to address healthy living through asthma-related projects. The Social Innovation Fund is investing in expanding the impact of 2 nonprofits in Tennessee.

## Volunteer Generation Fund

To increase volunteer recruitment and expand the use of volunteers to address education challenges in Tennessee, Volunteer Tennessee has collaborated with Volunteer Centers across the state to form the Tennessee Volunteer Generation Fund Coalition. Hands On Nashville, the United Way of Greater Chattanooga, the United Way of Greater Knoxville, the United Way of Williamson County, and Volunteer Tennessee make up the coalition. Each of these partners plays a role in implementing the volunteer management grant with Volunteer Tennessee serving as the lead agency. The partners in the coalition have a great deal of experience in promoting service. With the combined effort of the members of the coalition, Volunteer Tennessee will continue to build and improve the infrastructure to support the engagement of citizens to participate in structured service activities. Each partner is committed to improving volunteer recruitment and expanding the use of volunteers in Tennessee schools and afterschool settings.