

For Immediate Release

May 27, 2010

Media Contact:

Jairo Moncada · 916.606.6107

CaliforniaVolunteers Convenes Bi-Partisan Cities of Service Coalition to Discuss Service and Volunteering as a Strategy to Address Critical Community Needs

Secretary of Service and Volunteering and Sacramento Mayor Deliver Keynote Addresses

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – CaliforniaVolunteers, in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies, today convened California mayors from the Cities of Service coalition, a bi-partisan coalition of mayors from large and small cities across the nation who have pledged to work together to expand high-impact service and volunteering. The California Cities of Service mayors convened to learn and share innovative strategies to harness the power of volunteers to help address critical community needs. The meeting included a guided exercise on developing a comprehensive high-impact city service plan, a panel on cultivating business partnerships as a service strategy, and opportunities for mayors and city staff to network and share best practices.

“Service is the backbone of our country and one of the best ways people can make a difference in their community,” said Mayor Kevin Johnson, a founding member of the Cities of Service coalition. “I am honored to be a part of a coalition that shares a commitment to using volunteerism as a power tool to address our city’s most pressing challenges. My hope is that we continue to inspire mayors from across this country to get involved and lend a hand to making their cities better places to live.”

“Every day, mayors are at the front lines addressing our nation’s most pressing challenges,” said James Anderson of Bloomberg Philanthropies. “A growing number of mayors and city managers believe that innovative solutions to many of these challenges can be found through citizen service. And we are so excited that CaliforniaVolunteers is leading the way to support them in these efforts.”

Currently, eighteen California cities are members of the Cities of Service coalition and Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and Los Angeles Mayor Antonito Villaraigosa are founding members. Their respective cities were selected to receive a *Cities of Service Leadership Grant* funded by the Rockefeller Foundation in January 2010. The grant provides resources to hire a Chief Service Officer dedicated to developing and implementing a citywide plan to increase volunteerism and leverage volunteers to address the city’s greatest needs. Due to the overwhelming response to the first round of grants, Cities of Service released a second round funded jointly by the Rockefeller Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Several other California cities have applied for the second round of grants, with an announcement scheduled for June 2010 at the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in New York City.

“California is at the forefront of the service movement and we are so proud of the eighteen California cities that have accepted the challenge to find innovative ways to leverage service as a strategy for addressing critical community needs,” said Secretary of Service and Volunteering, Karen Baker. “The economic downturn has forced the nonprofit sector to do more with less, and by cities stepping forward to engage volunteers in pressing issues, we will help tackle some very difficult challenges in education, healthcare, poverty and other areas. We invite additional cities to join the service movement and stand with us.”

CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program, Business Partner Program and the Governor and First Lady Service Awards. Through the innovative Web site, CaliforniaVolunteers.org, individuals and families can find more than 50,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation’s first state cabinet secretary of service and volunteering leads the organization and First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chairperson. For more information, please visit www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.

Cities of Service

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and 16 other founding mayors – including Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa - launched Cities of Service on September 10, 2009. This bipartisan coalition of the mayors of large and small cities across the country is working together to engage citizens to address the great challenges of our time by finding new and innovative ways to harness the power of volunteerism. Cities of Service empowers mayors to work together to mobilize millions more Americans in a new era of service - one that is firmly rooted in strengthening communities and investing in human capital. The coalition has rapidly grown since its inception in September and now includes roughly 100 Mayors representing more than 46 million Americans across the nation. For more information, please visit www.citiesofservice.org.

#