

State Commission

In 2014-15 AmeriCorps brought meaningful service to nearly 900 service locations across California. Collectively, 41 AmeriCorps State programs in partnerships with over 800 public and private organizations supported nearly 3,000 AmeriCorps members whose services positively impacted the lives of more than 72,000 economically disadvantaged Californians. In the area of education AmeriCorps services resulted in 13,324 of the 23,648 (56%) students tutored and/or mentored (who completed program participation) demonstrating significant academic gains and/or engagement. AmeriCorps member services further resulted in: 20,000 vulnerable individuals received disaster preparedness education; 10,685 homeless individuals and veterans connected to critical resources; 5,955 parents received child abuse and prevention services; and 152 public agencies and non-profit organizations reporting improved organizational effectiveness or increase implementation of effective volunteer management practices as a result of AmeriCorps member service activities.

AmeriCorps State

First 5 Service AmeriCorps members provide school readiness services to economically disadvantaged children ages 2 to 5 years in fifteen California counties. In 2014-2015, 98 AmeriCorps members provided one-to-one and small group instruction using evidence-based curricula to 3,446 children. At the end of the program year, 66 percent of the 2,114 children who received a dosage of 35 hours of instruction demonstrated gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills and met age appropriate developmental milestones for school readiness. AmeriCorps members leveraged an additional 1,197 volunteers to support school readiness activities. The program's quasi-experimental evaluation completed for the 2012-2014 grant cycle affirms that its integrated approach of high quality evidence-based preschool programming, meaningful parental education and engagement, and providing children's literature for at-home use is effective to achieve improved school readiness. First 5 Service Corps is a program of the California Children and Families Foundation implemented by the Prevent Child Abuse California organization based in Sacramento.

Each year millions of Californians are unrepresented in their family law, civil, or small claims cases. California JusticeCorps assists those community members—who are often low-income or non-native English speakers—by placing AmeriCorps members to assist in self-help legal access centers across California. In 2014-2015, 280 AmeriCorps members provided 114,727 instances of assistance to thousands of self-represented litigants. Each “instance of assistance” by AmeriCorps members means people received critical information, had more time to prepare for eviction, judgments were reached, forms were translated for non-English speaking litigants, and so much more. Through this service, access to justice is increased for the community and people are able to move to a place of greater stability in their lives after their cases are resolved. California JusticeCorps is supported by a strong collaborative where all facets of a community, from executive, judicial to local governments, come together with nonprofits to bring resources and efforts to address a pressing statewide need.

AmeriCorps National

Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Jose/Silicon Valley have 513 City Year AmeriCorps members who serve full-time at 46 schools, helping more than 39,550 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. In Los Angeles, 62 percent of middle and high school students who had intensive support from a City Year AmeriCorps member ended the year with a C or better in English Language Arts. In San Jose, 94 percent of students who had literacy tutoring and 91 percent of students who had math tutoring improved on state assessments, and 95 percent of teachers said the members improved overall student academic performance. In Sacramento, 80 percent of teachers agree that AmeriCorps members have a positive impact on schools and 90 percent of principals agree that City Year's after-school programs foster a positive learning environment.

Citizen Schools is a nonprofit organization that partners with middle schools to expand the learning day for children in low-income communities. Its AmeriCorps members serve at public schools in Oakland and San Jose, leading real-world learning projects, providing academic support, and helping all students discover and achieve their dreams. In their two years of service, the AmeriCorps members serve as Teaching Fellows, giving students months of extra learning through academic mentoring and skill-building apprenticeships that translate 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 20 AmeriCorps members serving full-time as college advisors at 14 high schools in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Garden Grove. These 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 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 20 members served 4,200 students. They held 6,876 one-to-one meetings with students and met with 9,069 students in group meetings. They helped 574 seniors register for the SAT or ACT and helped 2,217 seniors submit 9,441 college applications.

As California drought/deluge weather pattern has deepened, wildfires and floods have become big challenges. Conservation Corps North Bay's Natural Resources Program, which serves Marin and Sonoma counties, has responded by reducing fire fuels on public lands and managing vegetation in streambeds that can flood in heavy rains. The program deployed 30 AmeriCorps members to reduced fire fuels on 64 acres of public lands and prevent flooding in 6 miles of streambeds.

Civicorps, in the Oakland and East Bay Area, serves youth who are disconnected from their community. Civicorps provides appropriate work within the community, and operates many community engagement activities on- and off-site. Civicorps also hosts member events so the youth who are being served in the program have an opportunity to become more connected to each other. More than 75 percent of the youth who have been served through Civicorps feel greater connected with their community and their peers, according to pre- and post-participation surveys.

The young women and men of the California Conservation Corps work hard to protect and restore California's environment and responding to disasters, and become stronger workers, citizens, and individuals through their service. A third of the Corps' AmeriCorps members are economically disadvantaged and unemployed when they join the program. Of the members who participated in post-Corps tracking, 70.8 percent found a job within a year of leaving the program. The program operates sites in Redding, Chico, Siskiyou, Ukiah, Napa, Greenwood, Stockton, Fresno, Fortuna, Placer, Sacramento, San Diego, North County, Inland Empire, Pomona, Tahoe, Los Padres, Santa Maria, Monterey Bay Operations Center, Camarillo, Los Angeles, and Tent Camps.

FoodCorps has 15 AmeriCorps members serving in Calaveras County, Chico, Clearlake, Grass Valley, Los Angeles, Oakland, Pittsburg, San Diego, Santa Cruz, Sonoma County, Thousand Oaks, Ventura, and Watsonville. 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 California served 21,633 children, built or brought back into use 19 school and community gardens, harvested 4,990 pounds of produce, and recruited 560 community volunteers.

New Sector AmeriCorps members in the AmeriCorps RISE program complete high-impact capacity-building projects for organizations in the San Francisco area that focus on education and economic opportunity. Their service helps local nonprofits with projects ranging from volunteer engagement to performance measurement and beyond, and allows the nonprofits to create, improve, or expand services to their community. In the past year, 23 New Sector AmeriCorps members completed projects to strengthen organizations that serve more than 40,000 children and 3,500 low-income residents. The AmeriCorps members participated in up to 200 hours of training, mentorship, and coaching to strengthen their service and help them continue to serve through careers in the social impact sector.

Up2Us Sports' Coach Across America program trained and placed 29 members in Los Angeles in the past year. The members coached and led sports-based programming. They used mentoring and youth development skills to help young people learn life skills and improve health through sports. They served 3,520 youth – mostly minority youth from low-income families – at 15 host sites. At the end of the program, 83 percent of the youth were at a healthy fitness level for their age an improvement from only 70 percent of the youth at the beginning of the program. Additionally, 90 percent of the youth improved in one or more positive internal attributes that contribute to healthy decision-making, and 87 percent of youth reported that their coach was a good role model. This program is effective because it uses sports to engage under-represented populations into AmeriCorps roles and inspire in them a longer-term commitment to service. After they complete their service, half of the AmeriCorps member coaches plan to pursue careers and/or higher education in recreation or health fields.

AmeriCorps VISTA

California State University (CSU) VISTA members mobilize university and community resources for traditionally underrepresented students (students of color, low-income, first-generation, and women) to aspire to, excel in, and complete degrees in STEM fields through internships, service-learning courses, and undergraduate research. In the first year, the VISTAs recruited and managed 1,721 STEM and 131 non-STEM students who served 55,515 hours; expanded its services to 286 partners, including 85 K-12 schools, 22 nonprofits, eight government agencies, and 159 businesses; served 2,426 CSU STEM, 228 CSU non-STEM, and 6,415 K-12 students; offered 3,215 participants 598 hours of training at 303 events; facilitated community assessments for 23 organizations; and supported and/or helped implement seven new service-learning courses, 65 internships, 189 undergraduate research opportunities, and three learning communities. CCE staff designed and implemented a training plan that included a team-building retreat, orientation program, and a year-long professional development curriculum.

School on Wheels, a nonprofit serving Los Angeles and the surrounding counties, began an AmeriCorps VISTA project in 2013 in order to more effectively achieve its mission of enhancing the educational opportunities for homeless children in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Members have worked in a variety of roles including facilitating new partnerships, designing improved curriculum and outcome measures, implementing digital learning, and increasing individual contributions through marketing and development activities. Through the work of the VISTA members, School on Wheels provided 620 students with access to adaptive computer programs, and of these students, 96.7 percent showed academic improvements after six months of use. An additional 156 students received one-on-one tutoring from 50 virtual volunteers recruited and trained as part of a new online tutoring program. The members helped secure a \$57,000 grant from the Gesner Johnson Family Foundation to establish a digital learning center at the Skid Row site. The curriculum and outcomes VISTA members created include a set of assessments and curriculum aligned with the common core and designed to fill in the gaps in students' education. The VISTAs have been instrumental in partnering with over 18 nonprofits and 15 corporations. Earlier in 2015, the VISTA focusing on partnerships competed in the Social Ventures Partners' Fast Pitch sponsored by the American Honda Foundation and won First place and the Power of Dreams Award, totaling \$27,000 in awards for School on Wheels. VISTAs focusing on marketing and fundraising helped raise over \$630,000 in cash and in-kind donations to support the School on Wheels program. In addition to these four full-time VISTA positions, six VISTA Summer Associates provided tutoring for 156 students at the Skid Row learning center, chaperoned eight field trips, and collaborated with the students to organize a talent show. All of the VISTA members have increased the capacity and enhanced the programs of Schools on Wheels.

AmeriCorps NCCC

The Tuolumne River Trust worked with an AmeriCorps NCCC team on recovery projects from the 2013 Rim Fire. To support the recovery efforts, NCCC members removed unwanted brush and exotic vegetation across three acres of land to prevent the spread of future fires and constructed, repaired, and restored irrigation systems. Members also thinned and trimmed pines while serving with the Tuolumne Trails camp for the disabled. In addition, the team installed informative signs, facilitated workshops about sustainability, and helped restore three miles of riverbed. To engage students, the team provided presentations on the Rim Fire Recovery efforts at several schools in the impacted community. The Rim Fire was the third largest wildfire in California's history and the projects NCCC members completed were vital in preparing the area for the upcoming fire season and ensuring that facilities were safe.

In partnership with Camp Fire USA Inland Southern California, an AmeriCorps NCCC team provided operational and program support at Camp Nawakwa and Camp Blue Sky. The team completed infrastructure improvements around Camp Nawakwa and acted as counselors at both camps. At Camp Blue Sky, NCCC members served at two sites to assist 80 at-risk students that live in mobile home parks. They conducted summer programs for the youth at Camp Blue Sky and at Camp Nawakwa. At Camp Nawakwa, the team cleared brush surrounding 30 buildings to create a firebreak. Members unloaded 3,000 pounds of food and served 36 meals to more than 200 campers and staff in the Camp Nawakwa dining hall and by Jenks Lake. Members cleaned out an attic above the dining hall, trained 35 community youth leaders at the staff training for Camp Nawakwa, and counseled 120 children. More than 80 children had places to go to have fun and learn about nature, and the camps were made safer and more easily accessible thanks to the NCCC members.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

There is abundant research indicating that third grade reading proficiency is correlated with later academic success and also predictive of whether a student will graduate from high school. In San Diego County, 51 percent of the children attending 3rd grade are reading below basic grade level. The Catholic Charities, Diocese of San Diego Foster Grandparent Program addressed this issue by placing 24 Foster Grandparents at eight elementary schools in geographic areas with high poverty rates. The Foster Grandparents were trained and matched with 2-3 children who were identified as reading below grade level. They utilized "Everyone a Reader" research-informed instructional curriculum to help students reach their grade-level in reading. Outcome data provided by the individual sites and teachers revealed that 77 percent of the children showed satisfactory-to-good progress in test scores with a final performance outcome of 71 percent reaching grade level proficiency. In total, the Catholic Charities of San Diego Foster Grandparent Program engaged 98 Foster Grandparents in mentoring and education-related activities benefitting over 330 children and youth.

Senior Corps RSVP

North Coast Opportunities RSVP volunteers are playing a major role in responding to the widely varied needs of local residents in the wake of several devastating wildfires in Lake County in Northern California that have consumed more than 268 square miles, 21 percent of Lake County's total land area since late July. The fires have caused more than \$2 billion in damage, left at least 1,400 families homeless, destroyed hundreds of other buildings, and left behind hazy skies, charred landscapes, and devastated lives to mark one of the worst fire seasons in memory. As of the end of October, over 150 RSVP volunteers have served more than 2,000 fire victims in a variety of disaster recovery and mitigation activities including removal of debris, assisting disaster victims housed in temporary emergency shelters and encampments, offering peer counseling, distributing food and emergency funding, and collecting donations.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

California State University-Chico Senior Companion Program in Chico has forged an effective collaboration with a local Adult Day Health Center (ADHC). The Senior Companions have provided resource information to the project's 201 clients regarding ADHC services. This outreach has resulted in three Senior Companion clients enrolling in ADHC during the last year. The ADHC case manager contributes to the collaboration by screening attendees for possible matches with Senior Companions. Senior Companions coordinate their home visit schedules with shared clients to maximize the benefit from both programs. For example, a client who attends ADHC on Mondays and Fridays is scheduled for their Senior Companion home visits on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Some ADHC attendees live in rural areas outside of the transportation service zone provided by the center's van. In response to this need, Senior Companions drive two clients to and from the center each week. Due to their frailty, ADHC clients are at high risk for institutionalization. Integrating ADHC and Senior Companion services maximizes these client's ability to remain in their own homes.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is investing \$3,371,097 to expand the impact of 40 nonprofits in California. In 2015, 14 subgrantees were added to the SIF portfolio in California. The SIF programs use innovative approaches to address issues including homelessness, job training, youth literacy, and more. In 2015, SIF subgrantees served 2,212 individuals through the LISC Financial Opportunity Centers and placed a total of 564 people in jobs and increasing the net worth of 497 individuals.

Today's nonprofits face challenges that extend far beyond meeting the needs of their community and clients. Delivering on a mission means cross-sector collaboration, volunteer management, fundraising, performance measurement, and more. To meet these challenges, many nonprofits are turning to Service Enterprise, a strategy that helps nonprofits build their capacity and increase their community impact by maximizing their effective use of volunteers. Supported by the Volunteer Generation Fund, CaliforniaVolunteers and its seven local volunteer-center partners transformed and certified 68 nonprofits using the Service Enterprise model in FY 2014-15. Additionally, 43 organizations reported that capacity building helped make them more effective, 54 organizations implemented effective volunteer management practices, and 29,425 volunteers were managed by organizations or participants who contributed more than 1.8 million hours of service. To this end, a revised certification process was launched by partner, Points of Light, which focuses on common standards for planning and development, leadership support, and effective training; and general standards for the remaining characteristics. CaliforniaVolunteers also completed the survey administration portion of a prison research project aimed at measuring volunteerism inside the state prison system. A total of 1,531 inmates, 500 staff members, and roughly 200 volunteers were surveyed.