

# RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES AND NONPROFITS



Our mission: to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

Volunteer Iowa (The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service) uses resources and partnerships to fulfill strategies outlined in the State Service Plan, which is updated and approved by the Governor every three years.

## OUR PROGRAMS

**AmeriCorps:** A national service program that enables individuals to commit a specific amount of time to service designed to meet community needs. Each year, Volunteer Iowa grants and administers a multi-million dollar funding pool for AmeriCorps State programs through a competitive process.

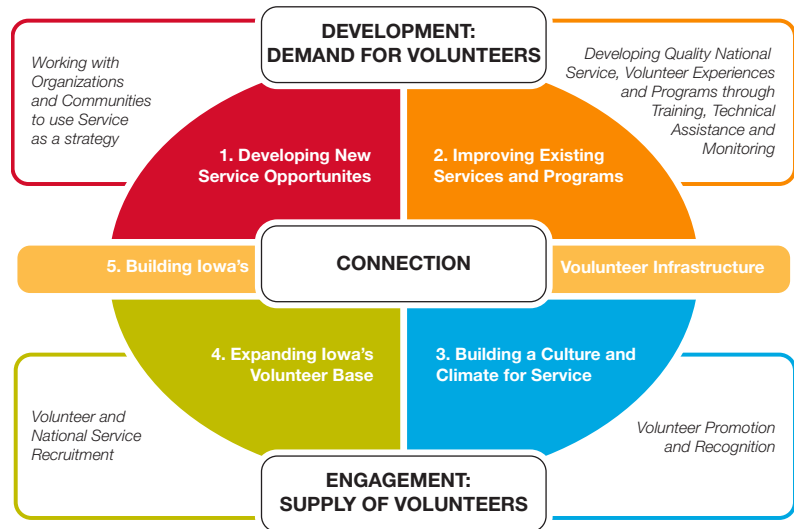


**AmeriCorps VISTA:** A national service program (Volunteers in Service to America) whose members bring their passion and perseverance where the need is greatest; to organizations that help eradicate poverty. Members serve as catalysts for change, living and working alongside community members to advance local solutions.



The Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA project places members throughout Iowa by partnering with local nonprofit organizations, local governments, state agencies, schools, and faith-based organizations to act as “host sites” for our members.

**Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF):** Volunteer Iowa provides VGF grants to organizations in Iowa to develop or expand the state’s volunteer infrastructure to mobilize volunteers consistent with our State Service Plan. This includes partnering with the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, which helps connect Iowans with opportunities to serve, build the capacity of organizations to engage volunteers, promote volunteerism, and mobilize volunteers to meet community needs.



### RSVP (formerly Retired and Senior Volunteer Program):

Identifies and addresses priority community needs through the mobilization of adult volunteers aged 55 and over. Volunteer Iowa coordinates state funded grants that support each RSVP project serving Iowa.

**Iowa Mentoring Partnership (IMP):** The IMP certifies local youth mentoring programs and provides high-quality programs with training, recognition awards, advocacy initiatives, and statewide marketing and media campaigns.



**Volunteer Recognition Programs:** Volunteer Iowa coordinates Iowa’s three state-level volunteer recognition programs: 1) Governor’s Volunteer Awards, an easy and cost-effective way for organizations to honor their volunteers; 2) the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame, the highest state-level honor volunteers can receive; and, 3) Excellence in Mentoring Awards, giving IMP certified programs an opportunity to recognize outstanding long-time youth mentors.



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## OUR SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

**Give Back Iowa Challenge:** This initiative works to increase knowledge about the benefits of employer-supported volunteer programs; and provides resources and training for starting, improving, and promoting programs. The Challenge runs each spring from April 1st to May 31st, to encourage employees to volunteer.



**Service Enterprise Initiative:** Volunteer Iowa was the first government agency in the U.S. to receive the Points of Light Service Enterprise Certification. Volunteer Iowa now serves as a training hub, facilitating the process for organizations to become certified and leading the development of other hubs in Iowa. Service Enterprise organizations are uniquely positioned to leverage the time and skills of volunteers, which leads to greater programmatic impact and organizational effectiveness.



**Get Connected Online Portal:** Volunteer Iowa offers a statewide system for volunteers and organizations to use to connect. Volunteers can look for opportunities to give their time, and organizations can post volunteer opportunities to serve.

**Disaster Volunteer Planning:** Volunteer Iowa provides resources to help emergency managers develop plans to mobilize and manage spontaneous volunteers after a disaster occurs, and hosts an online database of individuals willing to volunteer during times of disaster.

**What's Your 50? Recognition:** Volunteer Iowa encourages Iowans to volunteer at least 50 hours each year and features individuals or groups who achieve that goal through our blog and social media. Nominations can be submitted online at any time during the year.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

We invite you to contact us to learn more about what we do and how to access our programs and services or learn how you can improve your community through service.

Our staff can provide technical assistance, support services, and capacity-building resources to help organizations effectively utilize the time and talent of volunteers and national service members.



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