Governor's Volunteer Awards Ceremonies

The 2023 Governor's Volunteer Awards southeastern regional ceremony was held on Friday, July 21 in Ottumwa. The ceremony featured remarks from Governor Kim Reynolds. Three regional ceremonies were previously held in Cedar Falls, Vinton, and Ankeny. The Storm Lake ceremony will take place at a later date.

More than 600 awards are being presented this year. It is estimated that more than 150 communities in Iowa were served by this year’s honorees.

Coordinated by Volunteer Iowa, the Governor's Volunteer Award program—now in its 39th year—provides a meaningful way for Iowa nonprofits, charitable organizations, and government entities to honor their volunteers with a prestigious, state-level award.

There is one remaining ceremony to be held yet this year:

- Date TBD, Buena Vista University, Schaller Memorial Chapel, Storm Lake

More information, as well as a complete list of award recipients and photos from each event, is available at volunteeriowa.org.

 Volunteer Iowa celebrates VISTA Leader, Caleb Rigdon, for his year-long term of service
The Volunteer Iowa team wants to share our heartfelt “thank you” to Caleb Rigdon who has served with us this past year as a VISTA Leader with the Volunteer Iowa VISTA program. Caleb has been instrumental in supporting VISTA members across the state helping them learn new skills, gain a deeper understanding of service and connection to community, and supporting Volunteer Iowa with our recruitment and outreach efforts. He has steadily provided a listening ear, a solution to a problem, and a witty response. Caleb never backs down from a challenge and is always up for a healthy debate, to join in on a fun project, or help cheer on others who are “getting things done” for Iowa. We have been continually impressed by his commitment to service and the work he produces. His passion for service is clear. We have enjoyed having him on the team and are excited to announce that he has chosen to stay with us a while longer. After his year of service ended on July 17, he agreed to stay with us on a temporary basis to support our overall recruitment strategy. We are fortunate to have Caleb continue his passion for service and engagement and help us serve our mission. Thank you, Caleb, for your service! Please help us congratulate Caleb on his successful year of service. And if you are interested in supporting our recruitment and outreach efforts, please contact Caleb.Rigdon@volunteeriowa.org.

Iowa MENTOR Annual Survey

Thank you for all you do to support young people in Iowa. Iowa MENTOR is seeking data on mentoring programs across the state. Your program information provides important insights and data to assist us in our mission to promote, support and build quality mentoring relationships by elevating the capacity of program, systems and policies. It is essential for accurate data on the state of mentoring in Iowa that all mentoring programs complete the survey.

The Iowa MENTOR annual survey is available here for submission. If you are not an Iowa MENTOR program partner, you will be exited from the survey after question #14.

We appreciate your participation!
Skills-Based Volunteerism Bootcamp

Are you ready for the next steps of engaging skilled volunteers into your organization? Be one of 25 participants to join a cohort from across Iowa to build a greater understanding the impact of skilled volunteers can have at your organization in the 5-session series offered weekly on Thursdays from September 21 through October 19 from 10 a.m.-noon. Together we'll focus on project readiness and scoping while providing useful tools, activities, and resources to create a robust skill-based volunteer program.

Cost to participate: $125 for the five in-depth sessions.

Presented in partnership with Volunteer Iowa and the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, with support from the Volunteer Generation Fund.

Register today!

Apply now to participate in Service Enterprise

Service Enterprise is the national volunteer engagement accreditation for organizations. Selected applicants participate in a diagnostic, cohort-based training, individualized coaching, and certification to create and implement an organizational strategy to effectively engage volunteers throughout the organization.

Applications to participate in the Central Iowa fall cohort will be open until the cohort is full, or August 21st, whichever comes first. Similar timelines are in place for cohorts across the state. Now is a great time to start planning and get your applications in. Applications can be requested be emailing michelle.raymer@volunteeriowa.org. Orientation and diagnostics will be conducted in September, and trainings in October and November.

What is strategic volunteer engagement, and why does it matter?

Driven by the power of volunteer energy and grounded in comprehensive research, the Initiative for Strategic Volunteer Engagement launched to answer this exact question. By providing practical recommendations for funders and nonprofit leaders, their goal is to transform the future of volunteerism with greater investment in strategic volunteer engagement. The initiative recently released Activating the Power of Strategic Volunteer Engagement for a Better World: A Conversation Starter for Funders and Nonprofit Leaders. Within these pages, you will find resources and practical steps to bolster your collective efforts in cultivating stronger communities. Ready to take the next step? Service Enterprise is a research-based process proven to result in strategic volunteer engagement for organizations.
Volunteer Iowa is currently accepting applications for new host sites for the upcoming VISTA year (October 2023-August 2024)

What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

AmeriCorps VISTA is a national service program that involves individuals (“members”) providing service to address critical poverty-based needs in their communities through mobilizing community volunteers and strengthening the capacity of the organizations they serve. In exchange for a term of service, members receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn an education award to help pay for education costs at qualified institutions of higher education, to pay for educational training, or to repay qualified student loans; or a cash stipend. Individuals may serve in AmeriCorps from age 18 and up.

About the AmeriCorps VISTA Project

The VISTA project, through service and volunteering, will seek to create a climate where economically disadvantaged individuals and youth are provided the tools needed for financial well-being and academic success, and communities have the resources needed to address critical needs related to poverty. By completing the host site application, you can request one or more full-time VISTA members to complete a year of service meeting a specific need in your community.

You can find more information on the benefits of AmeriCorps VISTA and how to apply at Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program. If you have any questions or would like to set up a call to discuss your VISTA project idea, please contact Julie.Struck@volunteeriowa.org.

Join Volunteer Iowa’s Service-Learning Training Series

Volunteer Iowa will be offering ongoing trainings on various components of service-learning as part of the Volunteer Generation Fund American Rescue Plan Youth Service-Learning Grant. In addition to providing these trainings to the five selected grantees, Volunteer Iowa is pleased to open this program up to all schools and organizations across Iowa interested in service-learning. By the end of the series, organizations will feel confident in their ability to implement high quality service-learning experiences for their students and young people. Register for this training series. The next training will be mid-August. Reach out to Kamryn Ryan at kamryn.ryan@volunteeriowa.org with any questions.
Are you interested or engaged in volunteerism?

If so, the Greater Des Moines Partnership invites you to participate in a survey that will help us understand the drivers of volunteerism, the challenges faced by volunteers and how they can better support Chamber of Commerce engagement.

The survey will take about 10 minutes of your time, and your honest feedback will provide valuable insights into what motivates individuals to volunteer and how to enhance volunteer experiences.

[Click here to take the survey.]

As a token of appreciation, participants who complete the entire survey will have the opportunity to enter a prize drawing. There will be a drawing for 30 $20 VISA gift cards to show our gratitude for your time and participation.

This survey is sponsored by the Greater Des Moines Partnership and the 24 Affiliate Chambers of Commerce in the Greater Des Moines region.

---

Iowa History Trivia Champs!

On Tuesday, July 12, four Volunteer Iowa staff competed in the Iowa PBS sponsored Iconic America: Iowa Edition Trivia Night at Big Grove Brewery in Des Moines. The team, known as "The Iowa Volunteers" and consisting of Iowa MENTOR Director Mary Sheka, AmeriCorps Seniors Recruitment Specialist Bob Mulqueen, RSVP Volunteer Coordinator Christina Bettini, and Recruitment Specialist Caleb Rigdon took first place! We are so proud of them. Congrats team!
Volunteerism in the News

- Dubuque awarded $400,000+ AmeriCorps grant
- Church members receive volunteer award
- Tribute to Heroes: Barb Westercamp
- Governor Reynolds recognizes Fremont County residents as Iowa volunteers
- City of Dubuque, AmeriCorps programming to focus on social and emotional learning
- Volunteers cleaning up the Iowa River one piece of trash at a time
- Governor hands out volunteer awards
- Local SHIIP-SMP counselors receive state volunteer award
- Allamakee County Food Shelf Volunteers receive Governor's Volunteer Award
- Governor hands out volunteer awards
- Gov. Reynolds awards southeast Iowans for their volunteer service

Current Volunteer Iowa Opportunities

Volunteer with us! Volunteer Iowa is always on the lookout for individuals who want to give back and help support our work. Find general volunteer opportunities with Volunteer Iowa.

Join the ranks of other AmeriCorps VISTA members serving in organizations across the state helping to alleviate poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA provides opportunities for Americans eighteen years of age and older from diverse backgrounds to dedicate a year of service with non-profit organizations or public entities (as a host organization) to create or to expand efforts designed to empower low-income individuals and communities. VISTA members serve for one year in full time position with a host organization. More information about joining VISTA and a current list of AmeriCorps VISTA opening in Iowa can be found on our AmeriCorps VISTA page.
Important Dates

- August: Back to School Month
- August: National Immunization Awareness Month
- August 12: International Youth Day
- August 15: National Relaxation Day
- August 21: Senior Citizens Day
- September: National Preparedness Month
- September: Hunger Action Month
- September 4: Labor Day (Volunteer Iowa office closed)
- September 6: National Read a Book Day
- September 11: 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance
- September 19: National Voter Registration Day

Looking for a way to give back? Visit Get Connected today to find volunteer opportunities. Organizations can post volunteer opportunities on Get Connected as well at no cost.

Get Connected!

Volunteer Iowa
1.800.308.5987 | icvs@iowaeda.com | www.volunteeriowa.org

1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200 | Des Moines, IA 50315 US

Subscribe to our email list.