

## January is National Mentoring Month

Welcome to National Mentoring Month! Iowa MENTOR is celebrating this annual campaign aimed at expanding quality mentoring opportunities to connect more of our community's young people with caring adults.



Research shows that mentors play a powerful role in providing young people with the tools to make positive choices, attend and engage in school, and reduce or avoid negative behaviors. In turn, these young people are:

- 55% more likely to be enrolled in college.
- 81% more likely to report participating regularly in sports or extracurricular activities.
- 78% more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.
- More than twice as likely to say they held a leadership position in a club or sports team.

Yet, the same research shows that one in three young people in our country will grow up without a mentor.

National Mentoring Month is the time of year where engagement from community members interested in becoming a mentor is highest. This year, with the support of the mentoring community, we are encouraging the public to go beyond just digital engagement and become involved in real life. Mentoring relationships are at their best when connections are made between a caring adult and a young person who knows that someone is there to help guide them through life choices.

To become a mentor, go to [mentoring.org](https://mentoring.org) and take the first step via the Mentoring Connector. To learn more about the role mentoring plays in our community, visit the [Iowa MENTOR](https://www.mentor.org) website.



## Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame Nominations Open

Nominations for the 2024 Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame Awards are now being accepted! Nominations must be submitted online or postmarked by January 20, 2024;

honorees will be recognized during a special ceremony at the Capitol in April. Details and nomination materials can be found on the [Volunteer Iowa website](#).

Induction into the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame is the highest state-level honor volunteers can receive; the people selected have changed the community, the state, the nation, or the world through the gifts of their time and talent. Inductees are recognized both during a special ceremony held in the State Capitol Building and by having their names engraved on the Volunteer Hall of Fame plaque on permanent display in the State Historical Museum. Since the award's inception in 1989, over 175 Iowans have been honored.

Any Iowa individual, national service member (current or alum), family, group, organization, nonprofit, business, or corporation, who has made a long-lasting positive and meaningful difference in the lives of people through their volunteer service activities, may be nominated for the [Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame](#).

Anyone with questions or needing assistance with the nomination form can contact [Rebecca Gernes](#).

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## Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol

Volunteer Iowa and Iowa MENTOR host Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol each year to share with legislators the latest information on the tremendous contributions volunteers and mentors make and their impact in Iowa's communities. It is also an opportunity to educate

lawmakers about the impacts their policy decisions have on Volunteer Iowa programs and services. This year, Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol will be on Thursday, February 1.

Staff members and participants from Volunteer Iowa programs including AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, RSVP, Volunteer Centers and Mentoring Programs, will share with lawmakers the impact their programs have across the state and will inform them about the tremendous program support and resources provided to them by Volunteer Iowa and Iowa MENTOR. Commissioners and programs of Volunteer Iowa are invited to take part in this annual event to help us:

- Highlight the importance of service and volunteering in Iowa
- Build legislators' awareness of policy issues important for expanding our sector
- Provide a venue for volunteer and national service programs to connect with their local legislators

**TRAINING WEBINAR:** The training webinar will prepare attendees with information about the day and Volunteer Iowa's current policy priorities. [Join the training webinar](#) at 11:00am on January 17. A recording will be made available after the webinar.

The Volunteer Iowa staff create a handbook each year that can help attendees navigate through the process to prep for the day, reach out to legislators, and help with social media the day of the event. For more information, contact [info@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:info@volunteeriowa.org) or 800.308.5987. [Register today to join us](#) for Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol!





# Volunteer Engagement Training Program

In partnership with the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, join Volunteer Iowa for this 6 series virtual program training kicking off January 30. This engaging and interactive virtual training series, created by Points of Light, will provide a comprehensive understanding of the major components of nonprofit volunteer engagement and provide the opportunity to develop volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition strategies and methods of offering projects for diverse audiences.

Through the training program you will learn about:

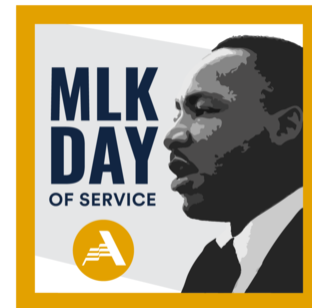
- Establishing the Framework
- Planning for Volunteer Engagement
- Opportunities and Outreach
- Intake and Onboarding
- Supervision and Support
- Evaluation

Dates: January 30, February 6, February 13, February 20, February 27, and March 5. All sessions run 10 a.m. – noon. Cost to participate is \$125. To register, [follow this link](#).

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## MLK Day of Service

The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service is a defining moment each year when Americans across the country step up to make communities more equitable and take action to create the Beloved Community of Dr. King's dream. MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities.



Together, we can strengthen ties to our communities and one other while we address critical issues that divide us. Visit the [AmeriCorps MLK Day website](#) for more information.

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## Iowa MENTOR's Director Mary Sheka Retires

Volunteer Iowa and Iowa MENTOR would like to celebrate Mary Sheka as she retired from her role as Director of Iowa MENTOR (formerly known as



the Iowa Mentoring Partnership) on January 4. Mary served in this role with Volunteer Iowa for ten years. With Mary at the helm, Iowa MENTOR expanded the number of mentoring programs in the state to 42 today, serving 65 counties across Iowa.

Throughout her career, Mary has worked with and advocated for young people. She's served in the fields of K-12 education, mentoring and counseling. Mary's vivacious personality, bright smile, and leadership skills will be missed by all of the Volunteer Iowa staff and commissioners. We wish her the best as she plans to spend her retirement traveling across the country (and volunteering, of

course).

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## Funding Opportunity for Cities

Applications are now open for three "Training + Implementation Funding" programs to empower change through volunteer engagement, culminating in a 9/11 Day of Service. Ten cities or municipalities will be selected for this opportunity. At the heart of this initiative lies the belief that volunteering is a cornerstone of strong, vibrant communities. When cities harness the power of volunteers effectively, they can achieve extraordinary results.



- [City Volunteer Engagement Initiative](#): Specially tailored for cities and municipalities, this cohort-based program provides training and \$4,000 to support city staff to develop, implement, and enhance volunteer engagement strategies that align with their unique needs and objectives. **Application deadline extended to January 22, 2024.**

Each program includes comprehensive training and capacity building, implementation funding, and individualized coaching. Participants will implement what they learn and host a 9/11 Day of Service in their community. Applications are now open. Contact [info@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:info@volunteeriowa.org) with any questions.

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## New RSVP Team Member Kim DeWitt

Kim Dewitt joined the Volunteer Iowa team on Monday, December 11 as an RSVP Volunteer Coordinator for Woodbury



and Monona counties. Kim grew up in Salix, Iowa and attended Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska. She comes to us with over 20 years of experience in the non-profit and private sectors. Her past experience includes the areas of human resources management, volunteer management, public relations, fundraising, property management and sales. She has managed a Volunteer Center in the past, which included the RSVP program. In her free time, Kim enjoys riding bikes, reading, spending time with her grandchildren and learning to golf. She's excited to be working with volunteers again!

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## EMAIL ADDRESS UPDATE!

Please check your address books for Volunteer Iowa staff member email addresses. We are now using email addresses that end in [@volunteerioda.org](mailto:@volunteerioda.org). If you still have [@iowaeda.com](mailto:@iowaeda.com) as an email address, it will no longer work. Contact [info@volunteerioda.org](mailto:info@volunteerioda.org) with questions.



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## 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](#).

[Iowa AmeriCorps programs](#) supported by Volunteer Iowa are also recruiting now.

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## Volunteerism in the News

- [RSVP of North Iowa provides Hancock County update on volunteer services](#)
  - [Iowa United First Aid program helps improve rural emergency response](#)
  - [Volunteer efforts of 95-year-old woman for nearly two dozen years through Northeast Iowa RSVP benefit butterfly garden in Decorah](#)
  - [Iowa United First Aid program helps improve rural emergency response](#)
  - [AmeriCorps alumni give Virtual Service a try](#)
  - [Volunteer Hall of Fame Award Nominations Open](#)
  - [Volunteers and Organizations Nationwide Honored by AmeriCorps](#)
  - [2019 MHS grad travels the country with Conservation Corps](#)
  - [TeamMates program marking 25th anniversary with mentor drive](#)
  - [Dubuque AmeriCorps program holding youth clothing drive](#)
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# Important Dates

- January: [National Mentoring Month](#)
- January 1: New Years Day (Volunteer Iowa office closed)
- January 8: [War on Poverty Day](#)
- January 9: [I Am A Mentor Day](#)
- January 15: MLK Day of Service (Volunteer Iowa office closed)
- January 17: [International Mentoring Day](#)
- January 20: [Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame](#) nominations due
- January 22: [9/11 Day of Service City Volunteer Initiative](#) applications due
- January 25: [Thank Your Mentor Day](#)
- February: [Black History Month](#)
- February 1: [Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol](#)
- February 17: [Random Acts of Kindness Day](#)

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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, administratively housed at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services  
1.800.308.5987 | [info@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:info@volunteeriowa.org) | [www.volunteeriowa.org](http://www.volunteeriowa.org)

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