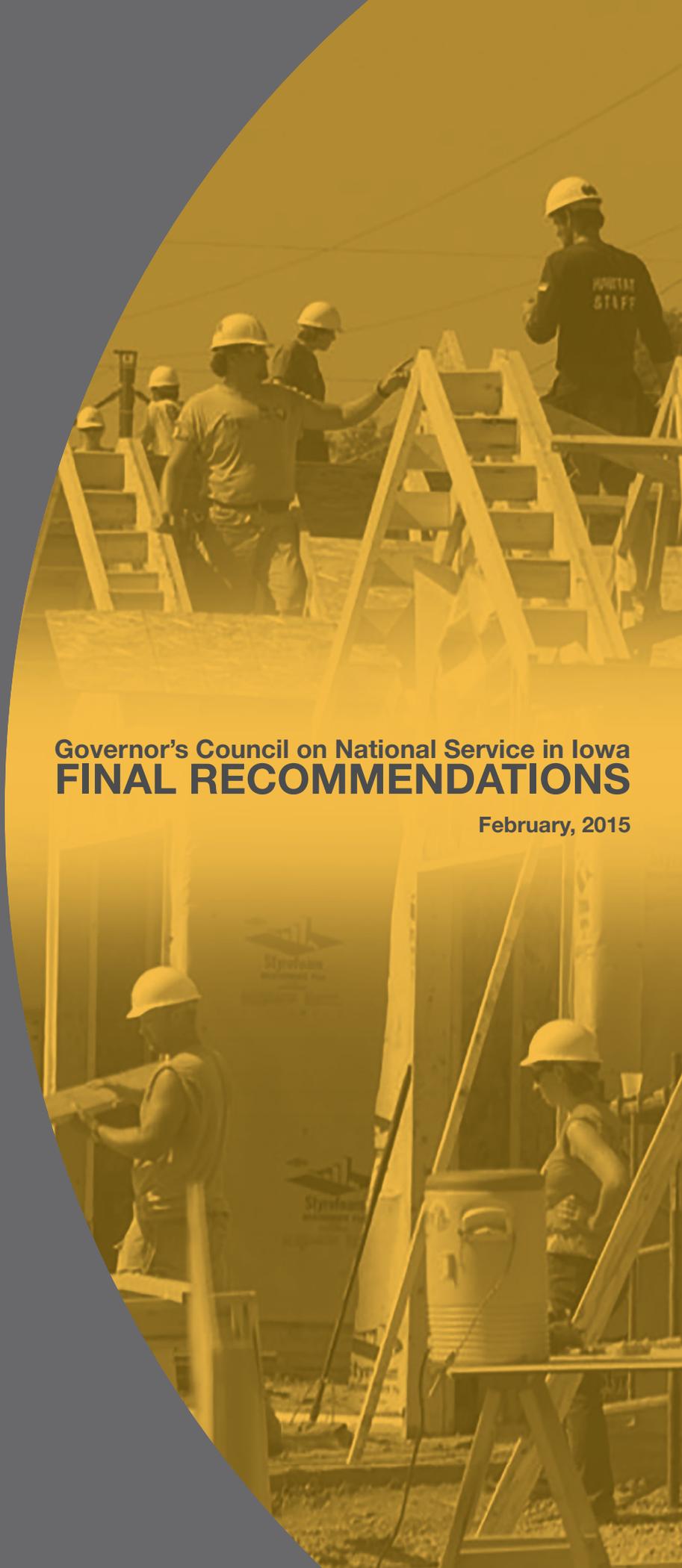




**Governor's Council on National Service in Iowa  
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

February, 2015



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**State of Iowa**  
**Executive Department**  
IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF IOWA

**EXECUTIVE ORDER EIGHTY-FOUR**

All agencies, departments and boards of the State of Iowa shall cooperate fully with the Council. The Council may seek the expertise and services of individuals and entities outside its membership for research, advice and other needs, as required to accomplish its mission.

The Council shall report its preliminary findings and make them available to the public no later than July 1, 2014. The Council shall report its final recommendations and findings no later than February 1, 2015 and dissolve on February 1, 2015 or upon the date of completion of the work described herein, whichever is sooner.

**Purpose:** The Council shall make recommendations on how to expand volunteer opportunities and national service for Iowans both here in Iowa and across the country.

Executive Order Eighty-Four was signed by Governor Terry E. Branstad on February 17, 2014, creating the Governor's Council on National Service in Iowa, led by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service.

## GOALS

**The Council's objectives:**

1. Identify existing and new policies or practices that support the expansion of national service opportunities in Iowa; and
2. Facilitate and identify opportunities for interagency agreements between the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and other State departments, local governments, school districts or other subdivisions of the State to support the expansion of national service in Iowa and help agencies meet their mission; and
3. Develop new public/private partnerships to support the expansion of national service in Iowa and help agencies meet their mission; and
4. Use technology to facilitate the certification of qualified nonprofits, public agencies, and social enterprises to create national service opportunities, recruit and retain service members; and
5. Reach other goals and objectives as requested by the Office of the Governor

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Donna Harvey, Chair**

Iowa Department on Aging

**David Maxwell, Vice Chair**

Drake University

**Michelle Balek**

Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family

**Douglas Elam**

Keep Iowa Beautiful

**Robin Habeger**

DuPont Pioneer

**Vicki Hover-Williamson**

Corporation for National and Community Service

**Jon Kruse**

City of Storm Lake

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Polk County Conservation

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First United Methodist Church, Nevada

**Leah Rodenberg**

Alliant Energy Foundation

**Emily Shields**

Iowa Campus Compact

**Lori Smith**

Principal Financial Group

**Tiffany Tauscheck**

Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Ali Wilson**

United Way of Wapello County

**Ryan Wise**

Iowa Department of Education

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Facility	City	Time
May 19, 2014	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.
June 9, 2014	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.
July 8, 2014	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.
August 26, 2014	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.
October 29, 2014	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.
December 10, 2014	Conference Call/Iowa Econ. Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.
January 7, 2015	Conference Call/Iowa Econ. Development Authority	Des Moines	1-4 p.m.

## INTRODUCTION

Iowans stand ready to serve, but many nonprofits and community organizations are not offering the robust and meaningful roles baby boomer and millennial volunteers are seeking. In addition, many small-to-midsize nonprofits do not have the infrastructure to manage complex federal grants, such as AmeriCorps, to engage national service members in their work to further their mission and capacity.

While federal resources to support national service and volunteering through the Corporation for National and Community Service have remained flat, the supply of interested Americans wanting to serve has skyrocketed with an average of seven applicants for every one open national service position.<sup>i</sup> At the same time, 77% of nonprofits say that skilled volunteers could significantly benefit their organization, yet only 12% are actually utilizing them.<sup>ii</sup>

To capitalize on the interest of those who want to serve and the need for that service, Iowa needs to identify new resources to support the growth of national service, including state and private resources, while continuing the incentives and benefits comparable to traditional AmeriCorps positions.

The Governor's Council on National Service recommends reaching a total of 5,000 national service positions within Iowa in the next five years to meet this interest to serve and the needs of Iowa communities. This report will provide an overview of the case for national service and volunteering as a strategy to meet Iowa's pressing needs; baseline data on where we are today in number and demographics of volunteers and national service participants; outline the scope of the Council's work; and provide recommendations and opportunities for expanding existing programs and creating new programs.

Information about promising new program development through state agencies has been provided in the Appendices. These agencies that are developing or expanding national service and volunteering should be recognized. In addition to individual agency successes, the Council has identified opportunities to expand service and improve volunteer experiences overall. The recommendations and opportunities in this report build off the strong foundation of service that already exists in our state and take them to the next level to expand service opportunities for Iowans.

## THE CASE FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

### Service Helps the Server and Helps Iowa Meet its Goals

We know individuals who volunteer live significantly longer, healthier and better lives. States with higher volunteer rates are more likely to have lower mortality rates and have less incidence of heart disease; and state policies designed to increase volunteering may serve to enhance the mental and physical well-being of the state's residents.<sup>iii</sup> This aligns with Governor Branstad's mission to make Iowa the healthiest state in the nation.

According to the National Conference on Citizenship<sup>iv</sup>, states with more civic engagement have lower overall unemployment rates even when controlling for other demographic and economic factors. In addition, research from the Corporation for National and Community Service<sup>v</sup> provides evidence of a relationship between volunteering and finding employment.

- Volunteers have a 27% higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers
- Volunteers without a high school diploma have a 51% higher likelihood of finding employment
- Volunteers living in rural areas have a 55% higher likelihood of finding employment

### National Service to Address Iowa's Pressing Challenges

Iowa already has a number of promising program models meeting state and local needs that can be expanded. Iowa's AmeriCorps programs currently address a range of issues in the areas of veteran engagement, economic opportunity (housing, job training, poverty), education, environment, capacity building, and disaster response.

Examples of programs and their social and economic impact:

#### Disaster Response

- AmeriCorps NCCC (one of five national campuses is based in Vinton, IA) partnered with FEMA to create FEMA Corps, which uses AmeriCorps members to provide direct services following disasters.
- The initiative added 240 rapid response Corps Members that relieve FEMA of the need to deploy more costly reservists. FEMA Corps was initially projected to save taxpayers \$60 million annually. In its first year, \$70 million in savings has been realized, exceeding the projection.<sup>vi</sup>

#### Third Grade Reading

- In partnership with local United Ways and school districts across the state, the Iowa Reading Corps AmeriCorps program launched in the fall of 2013 with 10 AmeriCorps members serving in eight school districts. With an overarching goal of ensuring that more Iowa students are on track to read at grade level by the end of the 3rd grade, the Iowa program is a replication of the Minnesota Reading Corps, an evidence-based model first launched in 2003.
- An independent evaluation<sup>vii</sup> of Minnesota Reading Corps found that elementary students tutored by Minnesota Reading Corps members achieved significantly higher literacy levels than students without such tutors, and that the impacts were statistically significant even among students at higher risk of academic failure.
- A 2012 study<sup>viii</sup> found Minnesota Reading Corps participants three times less likely to be referred to special education services, a projected savings for the state of Minnesota of nearly \$9 million annually.

## Return on Investment

A recent study by Columbia University<sup>x</sup> commissioned by the Franklin Project<sup>x</sup> and Voices for National Service<sup>xi</sup> shows that national service programs generate a high return on investment that improves communities and develops the next generation of leaders.

The economic benefits of national service for youth are nearly four times greater than the costs of providing these programs. Programs for seniors also yield high returns that significantly exceed their costs.

The study calculates that, as national service programs increase in scale, their average cost falls while their average benefit rises. The result is that programs are likely to have even higher returns if they enroll more participants. With one million national service members, the benefits are 4.5 times greater than the costs.

## Voters Support National Service

A nationally representative survey of registered voters was conducted in March 2013 by Civic Enterprises<sup>xii</sup> to test certain ideas relating to voluntary national service and the results demonstrate that voters strongly support the concept of voluntary national service.

Four in five voters support voluntary national service in which people of all ages would be given opportunities to serve America in a military or in a civilian capacity for one year and receive a living allowance and education award. Support is high across all subgroups: 88% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and 74% of Republicans support voluntary national service.

When told that more than 600,000 Americans apply to programs such as AmeriCorps and Peace Corps, but more than half a million people are turned away because of a lack of positions, 76% of voters say increasing public funding to enable more Americans to serve would be worth it.

## Benefits to the Social Sector

Volunteers are still a relatively untapped human capital resource by community organizations throughout the country. Currently, fewer than 15% of nonprofits nationwide are considered "Service Enterprises," a term defining organizations that effectively leverage the skills of volunteers to meet their social mission. According to research conducted by TCC Group and Deloitte, these effective volunteer management practices correlate with overall organizational effectiveness.<sup>xiii</sup> Some of the research findings show:

- Nonprofits that engage volunteers well are significantly better led and managed
- Those that engage 50+ volunteers via a strong volunteer management model have increased organizational capacity
- Such organizations are more able to scale their operations
- Nonprofits that engage at least 10 volunteers are as effective as their peers without volunteers, but at almost half the median budget

The Service Enterprise Initiative is an expansion of a California initiative to help nonprofits transform through a change management model in order to better leverage the skills of volunteers. In 2014, as part of a national pilot, a cohort of nonprofits in Cedar Rapids participated in the model led by United Way of East Central Iowa and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. A 60% increase in the number of volunteers serving at participating nonprofits in California has been initially reported by Points of Light, the national organization managing the Service Enterprise Initiative.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### Iowa Baseline Data For Service And Volunteerism

In 2014 there were approximately 1,400 AmeriCorps members serving in Iowa in the programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service: AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps State/National, and AmeriCorps NCCC; and, approximately 5,400 Senior Corps volunteers serving Iowa in the programs of RSVP, Senior Companions, and Foster Grandparents.

In 2009, 2010, and 2011, Iowa ranked second in the nation for adult volunteer rates in traditional volunteer functions while Utah ranked first.<sup>xiv</sup> In 2012, Iowa's rank dropped to fifth.

### Volunteer Rates by Age in Iowa

Year/Age	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
2008-10	39.2%	27.5%	31.1%	45.7%	39.7%	39.8%	43.5%	32.9%
2010-12	32.3%	29.1%	31.0%	44.5%	37.2%	36.3%	39.7%	31.9%

### Percentage of individuals by age group serving in AmeriCorps

Age	<20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74
%	5.8%	51.1%	21.5%	7.1%	4.0%	2.7%	1.3%	1.5%	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%	0.4%

### Percentage of individuals by age group serving in Senior Corps

Age	55-67	68-74	75-84	85+
%	24%	31%	32%	13%

## SCOPE OF THE COUNCIL'S WORK

In July 2014, the Council released a Preliminary Report outlining its plan to meet the goals laid out in Executive Order Eighty-Four. The Preliminary Report can be found online at [www.volunteeriowa.org](http://www.volunteeriowa.org).

The Governor's Council on National Service used its meetings to invite key leaders to provide comments and information on the work of the Council in expanding national service and volunteer opportunities. Meetings had focused conversations on topics including Service Enterprise Initiative, faith-based groups, private sector partnership, and higher education. In addition to key leaders representing focused conversation topics, the Franklin Project, National Council on Citizenship and the Corporation for National and Community Service spoke at the meetings. The Chair and Vice Chair set the meeting agendas with support from the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. All meetings were open to the public and participation from attendees was encouraged. The Council relied on the expertise of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to provide additional data and insight as needed.

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service facilitated consultative meetings with state agencies and other partner organizations to discuss opportunities to expand national service. The meetings were overwhelmingly positive in both long-term interest and immediate action taken to expand service in Iowa. Whenever possible, Council representatives participated in the consultative meetings and a report was provided at the next Council meeting. Upon completion of these meetings, the Council finalized the recommendations as follows in this report.



COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS  
THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON NATIONAL SERVICE IN IOWA

## **Recommendations for Policies and Practices to Spur Development of Service Opportunities and Democratization of National Service**

1. Launch "Iowa Service Year" promotion asking every Iowan to serve a year either full-time in the military, a national service program or at least 50 hours a year over a lifetime with a nonprofit, school, faith community, or government agency. Upon completion of 1,700 hours of service through an approved organization individuals will be issued an "I-Served Award" and other relevant promotional materials in recognition of their year of service. In conjunction with this effort, develop a marketing campaign and identify corporate sponsors to promote the Iowa Service Year campaign.
2. Codify 15H.8 Iowa National Service Corps. (See Appendix for complete proposal.) This proposed new legislation: a) outlines the development of the Iowa National Service Corps to recognize all forms of national service; b) enables the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to certify national service organizations; c) provides clarity for state and local governments on working directly with national service programs; d) creates flexibility for state and local governments to provide hiring preferences to national service alumni; and e) defines national service member employment status and unemployment compensation benefits.
3. Amend 15H.5a regarding the Community Programs Account. (See Appendix for complete proposed amendment.) This amendment will allow the ability to hold funds for national service programs at both the state and local level with funding granted at the direction of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service.
4. Codify 15.H.7 Iowa Reading Corps (See Appendix for complete proposal.) This will establish the Iowa Reading Corps in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education as an evidence-based problem-solving model of literacy instruction using Iowa National Service Corps members.
5. Develop a college tuition tax credit to incent service and reduce college debt among Iowa college graduates or current students. This tax credit should be available to Iowans who serve in approved Iowa National Service Corps programs or through a set number of hours with approved volunteer opportunities as part of a long term "Iowa Service Year" attainment. This will further incent development and participation in national service and volunteer opportunities, as well as retain Iowans through reduced college debt and increased community investment.
6. Create Iowa Service Enterprise designation utilizing nationally developed standards of organizational effectiveness to recognize organizations that are effectively using service to operate at maximum efficiency. Provide a "seal of approval" to allow volunteers to identify Iowa Service Enterprise organizations that will provide a meaningful service experience.
7. Expand on the success of existing senior service programs like Senior Corps to explore the feasibility of tax or other incentives for engaging older Iowans in part or full time non-stipend national service opportunities that have been employed successfully in other states.
8. Explore development of legislation eliminating taxation on living stipends paid to Iowa National Service Corps participants up to the minimum AmeriCorps living allowance amount. In Iowa, the majority of national service participants receive living amounts that are just above the poverty level; reducing the tax burden would incentivize national service.

9. Support federal legislation and appropriations impacting national service and volunteering including, but not limited to:
  - a. Volunteer firefighters
  - b. Authorization or appropriations to the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs

### **Recommendations and Opportunities for Expansion within State & Local Government**

1. Explore development of a state employee volunteer program.
  - a. Encourage state employees and retirees to give back through volunteering and national service. The Employer Volunteer Initiative, a new initiative in development with input from the Governor's Council on National Service and led by Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds is working on a public-private partnership to engage employers throughout the state. As one of the largest employers, the State of Iowa can have a significant impact in increasing volunteer rates and in turn employee wellness by promoting volunteering and national service to both retirees and state employees.
  - b. The Council recommends that the state employee volunteer program collaborate with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, Department of Administrative Services (DAS), Iowa Public Employee Retirement System (IPERS), Workforce Development, Healthiest State Initiative, and other state agencies or relevant initiatives interested in improving employee well-being, retention, and skill-development.
2. Facilitate Volunteer Management training for state employees.
  - a. Provide a best practice professional development series on topics related to volunteer management for state employees through the Department of Administrative Services to encourage the skills necessary for staff that supervise or work with volunteers or national service participants.
  - b. Provide a forum for state agency volunteer managers to collaborate. There is opportunity for efficiencies across state agencies in the area of volunteer management. In addition, the role of volunteer manager within state government is unique; providing a state recognized forum for professional development and support would elevate the impact of the state agency volunteer managers.
3. Work with state agency directors to:
  - a. Encourage each state agency to create a goal related to volunteer and national service programming in their annual state agency plan.
  - b. Re-instate the goal of each state agency having a designated volunteer manager and/or comparable staff contact partnering with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service on items related to the Governor's Volunteer Awards, other volunteer award programs, promotion of volunteerism, and use of the state's volunteer recruitment website.
  - c. Participate in the Iowa Service Enterprise Initiative as an opportunity to undergo agency planning to improve volunteer engagement and increase efficiencies.
  - d. Encourage state agencies to develop service-learning opportunities in partnership with area college campuses.
4. Explore development of a national service recruitment infrastructure with Iowa's higher education institutions and high school guidance counselor infrastructure in partnership with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. Increasing the supply of quality national service applicants will drive demand as national service is a cost efficient way to expand charitable or government capacity.
  - a. Encourage higher education institution career services and financial aid departments to promote national service as options for student loan debt reduction, tuition assistance, and career opportunities.

- b. Encourage high school guidance counselors to promote national service as an option for graduating seniors seeking financial aid and/or experience prior to entering a post-secondary educational institution or the workforce.
  - c. Explore the development of national service programs at Iowa's higher education institutions building off the success of the Iowa College AmeriCorps Program managed by Iowa Campus Compact, the Green Iowa AmeriCorps program managed by the University of Northern Iowa, and a proposed program to be managed at Drake University. Higher education institutions should explore national service as an opportunity to meet critical priorities such as college access, college success, student veteran engagement, STEM, and others.
5. Charge the Department of Administrative Services to:
- a. Develop guidance regarding the use of volunteers or national service participants in the State's workforce and use of State resources in support of this program (e.g. use of state vehicles).
  - b. Assist Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service in exploring third party vendor options for centralized national service delivery for state agencies and/or local governments.
  - c. Support the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service in encouraging state agencies to hire national service alumni within state government especially those that served in programs supported by that agency.
  - d. Assist state agencies in developing policies that address the consideration of volunteer service in the employee screening process.
  - e. Explore a hiring preference for Iowa National Service Corps alumni.
6. Facilitate multi-agency planning to develop solutions in critical but difficult areas that will need more time and effort including, but not limited to:
- a. Rural fire and EMS
  - b. STEM education
  - c. Water quality/nutrient reduction
  - d. Conservation/environmental programming
  - e. Other critical issues as identified by the Governor
7. Charge the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to:
- a. Develop quarterly communications to support state agencies in the promotion/development of national service or volunteering.
  - b. Develop a train-the-trainer program with state agencies to provide volunteer management training/professional development to their community organization partners (i.e.: libraries, museums, historical societies, etc.) to improve volunteer management practices.
  - c. Conduct ongoing meetings with state agency directors on opportunities to expand and support national service.

### **Recommendations and Opportunities for Expansion through Public Private Partnerships**

1. Charge the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to:
- a. Collaborate with the Corporation for National and Community Service to develop a simplified AmeriCorps model for programs either predominantly or entirely funded by outside resources.
  - b. Develop a recognition for "Campuses of National Service", which would honor those Iowa higher education institutions excelling in promoting and supporting national service in areas such as hiring national service alumni; promoting national service to students; matching the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or

providing comparable incentives/scholarships to national service alumni; hosting an Iowa National Service Corps program; tracking the number of alumni serving or who have served in national service; and belonging to Iowa Campus Compact.

2. Expand the Iowa Reading Corps. Early literacy has been a priority of this administration because of its critical role in making Iowa a national leader in education. Through a partnership with United Ways of Iowa, the Department of Education, local schools, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and additional local funders the Iowa Reading Corps AmeriCorps program was launched. This program mirrors the successful Minnesota Reading Corps model that has undergone rigorous quality assessments and has demonstrated that participating at-risk students experience reading gains at nearly twice the expected rate. These results align with independent evaluations of the program conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago.
3. Explore development of a faith-based intermediary organization to administer programming for faith-based groups across the state. The faith-based community is poised to support the growth and expansion of service. A simple non-federally funded national service option would reduce barriers preventing participation from faith-based organizations in addressing needs in Iowa's communities.
4. Encourage Iowa's private utilities, Rural Electrical Cooperatives, and other energy providers to support and expand Green Corps. Recognize and support private investor owned utilities including Black Hills, MidAmerican and Alliant that have already piloted funding of expansion efforts of the Green Iowa AmeriCorps program.
5. Encourage foundations and corporate funders to recognize the Iowa Service Enterprise designation, Iowa National Service Corps and volunteer utilization as a demonstration of efficiency and effectiveness, and prioritize organizations employing these strategies in funding considerations.
6. Recognize and highlight those businesses and employers that:
  - a. Join the Iowa Employer Volunteer Initiative, and engage employees in skill-based volunteer opportunities.
  - b. Hire Iowa National Service Corps alumni.
  - c. Join the nationally supported Employers of National Service initiative.
  - d. Financially support service in their corporate/foundation giving.
7. Explore expanding pathway to employment opportunities. Work with private employers and higher education institutions to develop national service skill-based internships that are relevant to both the charitable and private sector.
8. Support the continued collaboration between the Governor's STEM Advisory Council and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service through the STEM Volunteer Working Group; explore opportunities to support and expand STEM through volunteering and national service.

### **Recommended Technology Platform for National Service Certification**

The Franklin Project is in the process of developing a national "Service Year Platform" with plans to launch in fall 2015. Based on the current pilot, we recommend that Iowa use the Service Year Platform with the understanding that the site will have the flexibility to allow state-specific requirements. We plan to continue working with the Franklin Project to ensure the site will meet the unique needs of the State of Iowa. The Iowa Commission on

Volunteer Service will continue to assess the site and will make a determination in fall 2015 as to whether we should use the national site or develop our own state-specific technology for national service certification.

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service participated in an “early-adopter” pilot in fall 2014 to test the Franklin Project’s process to certify national service programs. We also plan to participate in the next pilot phase in the spring of 2015 to test the actual online website. Staff of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service has served on a Program Advisory Council providing input on aspects of the Service Year Platform.

The Service Year Platform has a website available at [www.youserve.org](http://www.youserve.org). The site plans to offer a “one-stop” location for posting/searching national service positions, the ability for funders to seek out positions to fund, the capacity for individuals or organizations to crowd-fund, a forum for national service members to reflect on their experience, and a higher education e-learning portal. The site would include existing programs within the national service family (i.e.: AmeriCorps), as well as a process to certify new national service programs funded outside of the federal program.

## CONCLUSION

Implementation of these recommendations and opportunities will put Iowa on a path to meeting our goal of 5,000 national service positions by 2020. While significant work lies ahead, in the short-term the Council has seen significant interest from organizations in using service as a strategy, with the development of new programs already in the works.

The Council recommends the Governor charge the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to form an ad-hoc committee including representatives of the Governor’s Council on National Service willing to continue their service to oversee and further develop a plan to successfully implement the recommendations and opportunities outlined herein. The ad-hoc committee will track and report on progress towards the goals and recommendations within this report. In addition, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service should reflect updates to these recommendations as part of its State Service Plan process through 2020 and continue to consult with partners regularly to explore opportunities for growth and expansion.

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service has served as the state’s leader for more than 20 years in advancing service initiatives and has the key role in developing and communicating a statewide vision and ethic of service. The commission manages programs including AmeriCorps State, Volunteer Generation Fund, the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, and leads other initiatives that support the development of service opportunities and encourage Iowans to serve. The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service is comprised of 25 governor-appointed individuals who, in partnership with staff, carry out its mission to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

The Council would like to thank the Governor for his tremendous support of service and for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

## APPENDICES

### Policy/Legislation

#### 15H.7 IOWA READING CORPS

1. A Iowa reading corps program is established in collaboration from the Iowa Department of Education to provide Iowa AmeriCorps members with an evidence-based problem-solving model of literacy instruction to use in tutoring students, pre-kindergarten to third grade students who are not proficient in reading or at risk of becoming not proficient in reading. Such models shall be for the evaluation and teaching of early literacy skills, including comprehensive, research-based reading instruction which has been reviewed and approved by the Iowa reading research center as established by Iowa Code section 256.7, subsection 32, and Iowa Code section 256.9, subsection 53.
2. Models of literacy instruction utilized by Iowa AmeriCorps members shall comply with literacy program goals and strategies developed by the Iowa department of education and the Iowa reading research center. Rules established for this program by the Commission shall be done collaboratively with the Iowa Department of Education.
3. Financial resources may be appropriated from the general fund or received from other sources which may include but are not limited to private sector, and local, state, and federal government funding sources. The financial resources received shall be credited to the community programs account created pursuant to section 15H.5.
4. The commission must submit an annual report to the legislature and the Iowa Department of Education that records and evaluates program data to determine the efficacy of the program established.

#### 15H.8 IOWA NATIONAL SERVICE CORPS

1. An Iowa national service corps program is established to provide opportunities for state agencies, subdivisions of the state and private non-profit organizations to create national service programs outside of existing state and federal programs to meet state and local needs and to provide more opportunities for Iowans to serve their state and country and foster a cultural expectation of service in Iowa through a unified service corps.
2. The Iowa commission on volunteer service shall establish rules for approving Iowa national service corps programs and national service positions. Existing programs and service positions including those established through the Iowa AmeriCorps programs created pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 12501, Iowa Senior Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA created pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4950, Iowa summer youth corps created pursuant to section 15H.5, Iowa green corps created pursuant to Section 15H.6, Iowa reading corps created pursuant to 15H.7 and the Iowa conservation corps created pursuant to section 84A.7 shall be considered automatically part of the Iowa national service corps.
3. State agencies or subdivisions of the state may enter into direct agreement for services or projects with any approved Iowa national service corps program either directly or through an agreement with the Iowa commission on volunteer service. State agencies or subdivisions of the state may establish internal Iowa national service corps programs or contract with a third party vendor to assist them in doing so.
4. State agencies or subdivisions of the state may give priority to grants or projects that utilize Iowa national service corps programs.
5. State agencies or subdivisions of the state may establish hiring preferences for an Iowa national service corps or AmeriCorps participant that has successfully completed a year of full time service or equivalent 1700 hours over a period extending beyond a year.
6. A person participating in the Iowa national service corps program shall not be considered an employee of the organization in which the person is enrolled regardless of whether a living allowance or stipend is issued and shall not be eligible to receive unemployment compensation benefits upon completion of their service.

**AMEND 15H.5a regarding the Community Programs Account by striking and replacing with:**

15H.5 a. Funding for the Iowa summer youth corps program, the Iowa green corps program established pursuant to section 15H.6, Iowa reading corps program established pursuant to section 256.25 and the Iowa national service corps program established pursuant to section 15H.8 shall be obtained from private sector, and local, state, and federal government sources, or from other available funds credited to the community programs account, which shall be created within the economic development authority under the authority of the commission. The commission may establish an escrow account within the department and obligate moneys within that escrow account for tuition or program payments to be made beyond the term of any fiscal year. Interest earned on moneys in the community programs account shall be credited to the account.

**State Agency National Service Program Development**

The following are areas of opportunity to expand national service or volunteer programming in state government brought forth from meetings with state agencies and representatives of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and/or the Governor's Council on National Service in Iowa.

**The Iowa Department on Aging:**

- The Department of Aging AmeriCorps VISTA Program engages AmeriCorps VISTAs in the Expanding Senior Resources project supporting community outreach and education for the Lifelong Links Aging and Disability Resource Centers and supporting expansion/development of the Volunteer Ombudsman program. This program and others by the state could benefit from cross agency collaboration in program management and combined recruitment efforts.
- The volunteer ombudsman program is an excellent example of using service as a strategy to more effectively benefit the people of Iowa. This effort should be fully supported and documented to learn from as a model for other state agencies.
- Building off the success of Senior Corps programs explore development of an "EnCorps Service" program or "Experience Corps" program to engage more seniors in national service.

**Iowa Economic Development Authority**

- Expand the Iowa Green Corps with the new AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge using funding administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority with the hope of piloting for future investment by Iowa's private utility companies, Rural Electric Cooperatives and Municipal Utilities. The initial number of new positions that will be created is still being determined, but plans include targeting energy efficiency efforts of multi-family dwellings, public sector buildings and developing new partnerships with CAP agencies to fill gaps in current weatherization efforts.
- Support transformative community development effort proposals that could combine existing funding streams with national service solutions including community betterment strategies, storm water and nutrient reduction, community energy consumption or downtown revitalization.

**Iowa Department of Public Health**

- Developing a new "Prevention Through Mentoring Capacity Corps" with the Iowa Department of Public Health utilizing opportunities created by the new AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge. By summer 2015, Public Health hopes to be able to launch the new Corps, which could place dozens of new AmeriCorps members with youth mentoring programs certified by the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, to add capacity with targeted drug and alcohol prevention strategies.
- Exploring additional program areas including Radon/Lead based mitigation through the Green Corps, behavioral/domestic abuse prevention, rural public health professional corps and mental health redesign.

### **Iowa Department of Education**

- The Department is developing plans for expansion of the Iowa Reading Corps with a balance of state funding and significant private sector investment that could expand Iowa's national service early literacy efforts 1,000% and reach at least 7,000 children at risk of failing to meet 3rd grade reading proficiency by supporting between 250-500 Iowa Reading Corps AmeriCorps members in the future. The Council feels this work should continue and be supported as a priority in Iowa's national service expansion efforts.
- The Department has thoroughly explore the creation of both a Rural STEM Teaching Corps program using the AmeriCorps Professional Corps Model and the development of a Math Corps. Through this exploration it was determined both ideas lack existing proven cost effective models such as with the Reading Corps. While the department does not have the capacity to develop such programs, especially with current implementation of expanded Reading Corps efforts, both the Department and Council feel these ideas should be revisited in future years as other states undergo development of STEM and Math program models.

### **Iowa Department of Transportation**

- The Department of Transportation (DOT) has pledged to continue to explore ways to collaborate with ICVS to expand the existing Summer Urban Youth Corps program using Map 21 federal resources and incorporate the program into an Iowa National Service Corps program. This could include collaboration in outreach as well as partnering to utilize other funding sources to have expanded impact.
- Another potential area we recommend continuing to explore includes efforts at reducing overhead through increased interagency collaboration with partners at the city, county and other state agency level like the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture. This collaboration could look at the development of multi-agency program coordination or the development of a third party entity to help manage conservation and youth corps programming efforts more efficiently and effectively. The consultative sessions could identify real opportunities for other collaboration with a wide variety of youth serving state agencies that DOT would normally not be involved with. Hence we recommend further involvement of DOT with the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD) on cross agency efforts for youth corps to engage disconnected youth. With ICYD's efforts to better engage disconnected youth through state agency collaboration, partnering with ICYD in efforts like the Performance Partnership Pilots discussed in the Department of Human Rights section makes sense in providing at the minimum a coordinated effort.
- We recommend the DOT consider establishing priority funding for relevant grants to organizations that use national service or volunteer labor in recognition of their increased efficiency. This could include points for utilization of national service labor or other ways the department deems feasible.
- Continue to explore expansion of volunteer or national service transportation efforts specifically efforts regarding rural transit. This effort should include building on efforts and collaboration with United Ways of Iowa and other interested agencies. Innovative programs are happening in areas across the state that can spur economic development, reduce barriers to success and facilitate economic mobility.
- Partner with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service on efforts to develop a volunteer clearinghouse and clearance system to more efficiently screen volunteers and provide a process for volunteers to own their clearance rather than agencies duplicating efforts.

### **Iowa Department of Human Rights**

- Work with Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development and the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning to develop a program model to reengage disconnected youth utilizing multiple existing federal funding streams to provide expanded national service options either through existing AmeriCorps programs or developing new Youth Corps programming in Iowa to provide better means of reengagement. Specifically, the department should include a National Service component in its Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) application for new federal funds and increased flexibility in utilizing existing federal funding resources.
- Add DHR ex-officio position to the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service with the charge to collaborate with Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service in formulating targeted strategies to engage minority populations, disconnected youth and people with disabilities in volunteer and national service opportunities.
- Continue collaboration between Division on Community Action Agencies, Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and other state, federal and private partners to expand the Iowa Green Corps utilizing private, federal and state resources to reduce energy consumption including:
  - partnering with IEDA, the University of Northern Iowa, private utilities, Rural Electric Cooperatives, Office of Consumer Advocate and local municipalities in IEDA's pilot Green Corps expansion proposals
  - identifying specific strategies targeted at enhancing efforts by the Bureau of Energy Assistance including targeting those on waiting lists and expanding those served by the Energy Assistance Bureau programs
  - identify barriers of collaboration to our federal partners that can increase the number of Iowans served by facilitating more Green Corps service opportunities as well as community based volunteer energy efficiency efforts

### **Iowa College Student Aid Commission**

- Continue collaboration with the College Student Aid Commission and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to promote AmeriCorps and national service as a college access resource.
- Partner to explore the development of college student access and national service programs building off the success of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission's AmeriCorps VISTA program.

### **Iowa Workforce Development**

- Continue partnership with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to promote volunteering and national service as an opportunity to build skills for job seekers.

### **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

- Support creation of Disability Navigators national service program, which would support the work of Vocational Rehabilitation to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment, independence, and economic goals, and create a pipeline of qualified future employees.

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