

Volunteer Iowa Update - December 2024

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Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame Nominations Now Open

Nominations for the 2025 Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame Awards are now being accepted! Nominations must be submitted online or postmarked by January 21, 2025; 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](#).

Volunteering and Civic Life in America Report

More Americans Volunteer to Empower Our State

Americans rallied and united during our nation's most challenging times to help our neighbors. We've seen this in action after the September 11 attacks, on every [Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service](#), after [devastating natural disasters](#) across the nation and territories, and so through countless community efforts every day.

After the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many Americans' lives and available time to volunteer, Americans are still finding meaningful ways to give back. The latest [Volunteering and Civic Life in America](#) research showcased the impact of volunteerism in our nation. According to the research, more than 54 percent of Americans, or 137.5 million people, informally helped friends, neighbors, or community members at least once a month – an increase of 3.4 percent from the last report that is both statistically significant and impactful in Americans' day-to-day lives. From watching kids to running errands or lending a helping hand, our community showed up for one another during a time of need.

In 2023, over 900,000 Iowa residents volunteered through an organization or by helping friends and neighbors in 2023, placing Iowa at #7 in nationwide rankings in informal volunteering. This contributed more than \$1.5 billion in economic value to communities and organizations across the state.



AmeriCorps

Interested in finding ways to give back in your community? Search our [volunteer portal](#) for opportunities in your area.

Funding Opportunities Available for Nonprofits and Cities

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

1. [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 is January 30, 2025.
2. [Youth Service Board Development](#): Each awarded organization will receive \$3,000 to develop a youth service board at their organization. This youth board will collaborate and plan a September 11th Day of Service for 9/11/2025 that inspires other youth in the community to volunteer and launch others into service beyond that day. Application deadline is December 13, 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. Contact info@volunteeriowa.org with questions.



2025-2026 AmeriCorps Program Funding

Volunteer Iowa (the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service) has an open Request for Application (RFA) for new Iowa AmeriCorps State programs for the program year 2025-2026. View more information about the funding opportunity and RFA on the [Volunteer Iowa website](#).

To apply for AmeriCorps State funding, interested applicants must first submit a pre-application for staff review. The pre-application is available [via SurveyMonkey](#). The due date for pre-applications is January 10, 2025, and final applications will be due March 7, 2025. If you have questions about AmeriCorps State grants in Iowa, please email AmeriCorps@volunteeriowa.org. Organizations interested in being updated regarding future Volunteer Iowa's AmeriCorps State grant competitions should complete this [contact form](#).

Volunteer Engagement Training Program

Join the Volunteer Centers of Iowa, in partnership with Volunteer Iowa, for an exciting six-session virtual training program beginning January 28! This dynamic series will provide you with an in-depth understanding of the core aspects of nonprofit volunteer engagement, equipping you with valuable strategies to recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers effectively.

This highly interactive training will offer practical tools and insights to create inclusive and impactful volunteer experiences, with each session designed to support your growth as a leader in volunteer engagement. Plus, upon completion, you'll earn a Certificate in Volunteer Engagement, boosting your credentials and enhancing your professional toolkit!

Throughout the program, you'll explore key topics such as:

- Establishing the Framework for Success
- Planning for Effective Volunteer Engagement
- Outreach Strategies and Creating Opportunities
- Streamlined Intake and Onboarding Processes
- Supportive Supervision Techniques
- Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Whether you are brand new to volunteer management or looking to deepen your expertise, this program will provide you with the skills and confidence to make a lasting impact. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your knowledge and earn a Certificate in Volunteer Engagement!

Dates: January 28, February 4, February 11, February 18, February 25, and March 4. All sessions run 10 a.m. – noon. Cost to participate is \$125. [Click here to register.](#)



Welcome Levi Wood

Levi Wood began his year of service as VISTA Leader with Volunteer Iowa in September. Levi is originally from Forest City and is quite the traveler. He lived and worked in four cities in a three-year period while working in the hospitality industry. Most notably, he lived and worked in Seward, AK, Old Faithful Village at Yellowstone National Park, and Summit County, CO. From there, Levi returned to Iowa, spending a year serving as an AmeriCorps member with Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity, serving as a volunteer coordinator.

In his role as VISTA Leader, Levi looks to grow personally and professionally through teaching and learning, sharing valuable skills, and enhancing his leadership skills while supporting the development of leadership in others. In his free time, Levi likes to travel, offer suggestions about destinations, or hear about others' travel plans. We are thrilled to have Levi on board with us for the year!

Volunteer Iowa Staff Retreat

On Thursday, November 7, the Volunteer Iowa staff gathered at Jester Park Nature Center in Granger for an all-day staff retreat. The theme of the day was teamwork and included a tailgate themed potluck. The retreat was packed with enriching sessions that promoted collaboration and growth. Team-building exercises helped strengthen bonds, while a powerful presentation and hands-on activities led by ACES 360 explored trauma-informed, healing-centered workplaces. The day also delved into living our core values and strategic goal setting as we gear up for the remainder of the fiscal year. To cap off a day full of inspiration and reflection, staff awards were handed out, celebrating the exceptional contributions of the team and fostering a sense of appreciation and camaraderie.



Volunteerism in the News

- [Northeast Iowa RSVP Welcomes New Volunteer Coordinator](#)
- [RSVP volunteers boost food pantry resources](#)
- [Erin Kim-Cho Appointed Commissioner](#)
- [Volunteers came back to nonprofits in 2023, after the pandemic tanked participation](#)
- [Iowa City schools embrace partnership with Iowa Reading Corps](#)

Current Volunteer Iowa Opportunities

Volunteer with us! Find volunteer opportunities with Volunteer Iowa here: [Volunteer Iowa | Volunteer Iowa \(galaxydigital.com\)](#)

Other Iowa AmeriCorps programs supported by Volunteer Iowa are also recruiting now. Find a listing of Iowa AmeriCorps programs at [Join AmeriCorps | Volunteer Iowa](#).

Important Dates

- December 3: [Giving Tuesday](#)
 - December 7: [National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day](#)
 - December 10: [Human Rights Day](#)
 - December 25: Christmas Day (Volunteer Iowa office closed)
 - December 25: Hanukkah begins
 - December 26: Volunteer Iowa office closed
 - January: [National Mentoring Month](#)
 - January 1: New Year's Day (Volunteer Iowa office closed)
 - January 7: [I Am A Mentor Day](#)
 - January 8: [War on Poverty Day](#)
 - January 14: [Thank Your Mentor Day](#)
 - January 20: [MLK Day of Service](#) (Volunteer Iowa office closed)
 - January 17: [International Mentoring Day](#)
 - January 21: [Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame nominations due](#)
 - January 23: [Youth Voice Day](#)
 - January 27: [Thank Your Mentee 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.

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