



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner

S. Duke Storen
Commissioner

December 15, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor of Virginia

Members, Virginia General Assembly

FROM: S. Duke Storen *S. Duke Storen*

SUBJECT: Annual Report on the Governor's Advisory on Service and Volunteerism

The attached report is submitted pursuant to § 2.2-2491 (5) of the Code of Virginia, regarding the activities of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism. Please contact me if you have questions. Thank you.

SDS:kc
Attachment

**Report to the
Virginia General Assembly
on the Work of the Governor's
Advisory Board on Service and
Volunteerism
2019/2020**

**Report to the Virginia General
Assembly on the Work of the Governor's
Advisory Board on Service and
Volunteerism for 2019/20**

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Executive Summary

The Code of Virginia charges the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism (Board) with advising on matters related to promotion and development of national service in the Commonwealth and meeting the provisions of the federal National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Board was established in compliance with the provisions of the National and Communities Trust Act of 1993, under which Virginia receives AmeriCorps State grant funds. The chairman of the Board must submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual report on the interim activity and work of the Board.

The following report documents the efforts and results achieved through the collaborative efforts of the Virginia Department of Social Services and the Board for July 2019-June 2020, to meet the power and duties of the Board as established in § 2.2-2481:

- Advise the Governor, the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources, Education, and Natural Resources, the Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, the State Board of Social Services, and other appropriate officials on national and community service programs in Virginia in order to (i) fulfill the responsibilities and duties prescribed by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service and (ii) develop, implement, and evaluate the Virginia State Service Plan, which outlines strategies for supporting and expanding national and community service throughout the Commonwealth.
- Promote the use of AmeriCorps programs to meet Virginia's most pressing human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs.
- Collaborate with the Department of Social Services and other public and private entities to recognize and call attention to the significant community service contributions of Virginia citizens and organizations.
- Assist the Department of Social Services to promote the involvement of faith-based organizations in community and national service efforts.

Major activities and outcomes achieved during this report period include:

- More than 3,800 people of all ages and backgrounds helped to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement through national service in Virginia. Serving at more than 400 locations, these citizens tutored and mentored children, helped fight the opioid epidemic, improved state parks, helped seniors live independently, responded to disasters, increased economic opportunity, and recruited and managed volunteers.
- In 2018/19, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provided more than \$10.5 million in federal funding (including Segal AmeriCorps Educational awards) to support Virginia communities through national service initiatives. Through this public-private partnership, this federal investment leveraged an additional \$8.8 million in other resources to strengthen community impact. These initiatives were carried out by national service members and volunteers participating in AmeriCorps, VISTA, the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and Senior Companions.

- In recognition of the unique and transferable skills that participants develop during national service, Virginia became the first state in the nation to be recognized as an "Employer of National Service." This initiative builds a talent pipeline to connect AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with leading employers from private, public, and nonprofit sectors to create recruitment, hiring, and advancement opportunities as well as creating easier access by hiring managers to highly skilled and committed national service alumni.
- Throughout the year, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service and Virginia Service Commission on AmeriCorps hosted in-person events. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on large in-person gatherings, the Virginia Service Commission hosted the annual AmeriCorps Opening Day event virtually, which entailed a variety of topics based on statewide survey needs from AmeriCorps program directors and members. Trainings were conducted by industry experts on Working with Millennials, Planning a Budget, Unconscious Bias, and Taking Advantage of the Service Year Experience. Following COVID-19, new program directors/staff were trained virtually for four days of training on a variety of topics delivered by Office on Volunteerism Staff and industry experts. All program directors and staff were also trained virtually for three days on relevant program management topics, as well as a stand-alone virtual session on member recruitment.
- There was strong presence of the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) in Virginia. Teams of AmeriCorps members traveled to Virginia to serve by performing prescribed burns in Suffolk, assisting with shoreline cleanups in Chincoteague, home repairs in Abingdon, trail restoration in Lynchburg, and FEMA warehouse work in Northern Virginia. NCCC teams contributed more than 15,713 total hours from 61 members. This translates to an economic benefit in Virginia of more than \$450,000.
- Working with the faith initiative Day to Serve, more than 250 volunteer service events were completed and thousands of pounds of food were donated to foodbanks. Day to Serve is a joint project of the Governors of Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia which encourages volunteerism among people from different faith groups and community organizations to improve the communities in which they live.
- With the help of the Board, Governor Northam selected winners of the 2020 Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards. Winners, selected from more than 120 nominations, provided significant contributions in far reaching areas including providing hunger and financial relief, mentorship and assistance to at-risk students, creating resources for students with disabilities, and creating scholarships for young people through their passion for the arts. Winners will be recognized formally when COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.
- The annual survey research conducted by CNCS provides volunteer statistics for Virginia in 2018: 2.2 million Virginians volunteered; 34% of Virginians volunteered for 232+ million hours; \$5.5 billion in economic impact; and Virginia ranks in the top half of U.S. states for volunteerism.

The accomplishments and activities of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism helped the citizens of the Commonwealth improve the lives of their fellow Virginians through service. Working hand in hand with local partners, the Board tapped the ingenuity and can-do spirit of Virginians to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing the Commonwealth.

Annual Report on the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism 2019-20

Report Mandate

The Code of Virginia directs the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism (Board) to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Advise the Governor the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources Education and Natural Resources the Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness the State Board of Social Services and other appropriate officials on national and community service programs in Virginia in order to (i) fulfill the responsibilities and duties prescribed by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service and (ii) develop, implement, and evaluate the Virginia State Service Plan which outlines strategies for supporting and expanding national and community service throughout the Commonwealth.
2. Promote the use of AmeriCorps programs to meet Virginia's most pressing human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs.
3. Collaborate with the Department of Social Services and other public and private entities to recognize and call attention to the significant community service contributions of Virginia citizens and organizations.
4. Assist the Department of Social Services to promote the involvement of faith-based organizations in community and national service efforts.
5. Submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the interim activity and work of the Board no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly.

Background

Sections 2.2-2478 through 2.2-2482 charges the Board with advising on matters related to promotion and development of national service in the Commonwealth and meeting the provisions of the federal National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Board was established in compliance with the provisions of the National and Communities Trust Act of 1993 under which Virginia receives AmeriCorps State grant funds. The following report documents the efforts and results achieved through the collaborative efforts of the Department of Social Services and the Board for July 2019-June 2020.

The Board is strategically placed within the Department of Social Services' Division of Community and Volunteer Services, in the Office of Community and Volunteer Services. This organizational placement allows staff to integrate service and volunteerism priorities with ongoing statewide programs and projects.

Activities and Outcomes during 2019-20

The following section details the activities and outcomes for each of the mandates of the Board.

Mandate 1: Advise the Governor, the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources, Education, and Natural Resources, the Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, the State Board of Social Services, and other appropriate officials on national and community service programs in Virginia in order to (i) fulfill the

responsibilities and duties prescribed by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service and (ii) develop, implement, and evaluate the Virginia State Service Plan, which outlines strategies for supporting and expanding national and community service throughout the Commonwealth.

- Members of the Board play a significant role in assuring that the Department of Social Services meets the responsibilities and duties of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The twenty-member Board met four times during the fiscal year and received regular reports on subgrantee progress and new initiatives. Members of the Board participated on grant-review panels, which reviewed, scored, and recommended programs and funding levels for AmeriCorps Competitive Proposals and Formula Proposals. The full Board received and concurred with funding recommendations totaling approximately \$4,339,055.
- The Board's strategic direction, established in 2016, was implemented through public awareness and training and by incorporating the new strategies in the design of FY20 funding applications. The new strategies call for investing in larger, stronger programs, which can then move more successfully from the state competition to national funding competition. At the conclusion of the year's funding processes, the Virginia Commission funded fifteen AmeriCorps programs, which provide services across the Commonwealth. One new program was added: The Hampton Roads Community Action Agency AmeriCorps Opioid Outreach Project.
- Board members provided additional assistance in meeting CNCS requirements by participating in required AmeriCorps Days of Service in communities across the state. AmeriCorps programs recognized and supported 9/11, Veterans Day, MLK Day, and AmeriCorps Opening Day. Individual Board members participated in volunteer service projects, attended ceremonies, delivered speeches, and fostered media attention in support of these special days.
- As AmeriCorps members started their formal year of service, a statewide launch ceremony was held. Board members participated in the launch ceremony held in Richmond. The 2019 launch ceremony was attended by 250 AmeriCorps members and featured a full day of training from industry experts. Almost 400 full and part time AmeriCorps members served in Virginia last year.

Mandate 2: Promote the use of AmeriCorps programs to meet Virginia's most pressing human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs.

- The Board led efforts to increase the use of other CNCS national service programs including the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and FEMA Corps. NCCC projects are generally short term, high impact, and relatively low cost to the communities in which they occur. These programs resulted in additional 2019/20 CNCS engagement in Virginia and accomplished significant activities that otherwise would have not been completed. NCCC teams, including FEMA Corps teams, contributed 15,713 total hours from 61 members. This translates to an economic benefit in Virginia of nearly \$450,000.

- o In Harrisonburg, members were deployed to George Washington and Jefferson National Forests to be trained in Type 2 Wildland Firefighting, as well as S-212 chainsaw skills. Members were then certified to perform prescribed burns, wildfire responses, and use their chainsaw skills on projects related to forestry (including disaster response).
- o In Chincoteague, members performed shoreline preservation and cleanup activities.
- o In the Suffolk area, the team assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Region Fire Management (USFWS). The USFWS fire program manages fire to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats, while first ensuring human safety and then protecting facilities and neighboring communities. The NCCC team learned wildfire response and supported wildfire operations during the spring fire season in southeast Virginia.
- Congress appropriated additional funds for FY20 to CNCS to be allocated to AmeriCorps State Commissions to be used to provide additional training and technical assistance to AmeriCorps and other national service program grantees. In Virginia, these funds were invested in several important initiatives: (1) subgrantee and staffs increase of understanding and capacity in (a) choosing quantifiable activities for measurement, and then (b) ensuring that the measurement is carried out and reported appropriately; and (2) expansion of training opportunities for AmeriCorps members and subgrantee staff, particularly in ways that members can expand their personal resources for being more effective in their service assignments, and how they can leverage their service experience to expand post-service opportunities.
- AmeriCorps is a performance-based national program. Specific goals are required, and measurement standards are strict. Programs work toward pre-identified client outcomes. The following are just two examples of program results.
 - o CARITAS provides effective and permanent solutions to individuals affected by homelessness in the metro Richmond area. AmeriCorps members serve in vital roles, connecting clients to safe housing, recovery services, and workforce development programming. Twenty-eight members served over 21,000 hours over the past year at CARITAS, teaching classes as a part of the CARITAS Works program, serving as Peer Recovery Mentors, and counseling individuals on looking for stable and affordable housing. In ten months, AmeriCorps members served over 500 individuals through emergency shelter services, and assisted these clients and participants in the recovery programs in finding appropriate housing, employment, and mentorship.
 - o The Virginia Service and Conservation Corps, established by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, places AmeriCorps members across the state to improve and protect public lands and trails. During the 2019-2020 program year, 28 AmeriCorps members served 21,446 hours in more than 38 state parks. These AmeriCorps members participated in rigorous training that not only prepared them to continue in environmental careers, but also protected 929 acres of at-risk ecosystems. In the midst of the COVID19 pandemic, outdoor recreation has become more important than ever before. The 153 miles of trails created,

improved, and maintained by AmeriCorps members offers an essential resource to the over 6 million visitors that utilize state parks every year.

Mandate 3: Collaborate with the Department of Social Services and other public and private entities to recognize and call attention to the significant community service contributions of Virginia citizens and organizations.

- With the help of the Board, Governor Northam selected the recipients of the Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards. Winners, selected from more than 120 nominations, providing hunger and financial relief, mentorship and assistance to at-risk students, creating resources for students with disabilities, and creating scholarships for young people through their passion for the arts. Winners will be recognized formally when COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.
- The annual survey research conducted by the Corporation for National & Community Service provided volunteer statistics for Virginia in 2018: 2.2 million Virginians volunteered; 34% of Virginians volunteered for 232+ million hours; \$5.5 billion in economic impact; and Virginia ranks in the top half of U.S. states for volunteerism.
- The Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service hosted in-person events prior to the mandated COVID-19 restrictions. These events were presented on a variety of topics. At the annual AmeriCorps Opening Day event, which was based on statewide survey needs from AmeriCorps program directors and members, trainings were conducted by industry experts on Working with Millennials, Planning a Budget, Unconscious Bias, and Taking Advantage of the Service Year Experience. Following COVID-19, new program directors/staff were trained virtually for four days of training on a variety of topics delivered by Office on Volunteerism Staff and industry experts. All program directors and staff were also trained virtually for three days on relevant program management topics, as well as a stand-alone virtual session on Member Recruitment.
- In recognition of the unique and transferable skills that participants develop during national service, Virginia became the first state in the nation to be recognized as an "Employer of National Service." This initiative builds a talent pipeline to connect AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with leading employers from private, public, and nonprofit sectors to create opportunities in recruitment, hiring, and advancement. Virginia now seeks out job applicants who are alumni of national service programs and asks this question of job applicants.

Mandate 4: Assist the Department of Social Services to promote the involvement of faith-based organizations in community and national service efforts.

- The Board promotes the involvement of faith-based organizations in community and national service efforts through the Day to Serve project. Day to Serve is a joint project of the Governors of Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia, which encourages volunteerism among people from different faith groups and community organizations to improve communities. Advisory Council members led

the planning and implementation of the 2019 Day to Serve campaign in Virginia. Last year's results from Day to Serve projects in Virginia were outstanding, with more than 250 volunteer service events.

- The website, VirginiaService.virginia.gov, continues to be an effective way to provide citizens and organizations with information on volunteerism, national service, and other community service resources. The website features a mobile-friendly format that is organized into easy-to-find categories: AmeriCorps, Volunteerism, and Community Services. The website also serves as a hub for information sharing among Virginia's AmeriCorps State programs and Community Action Agencies. The website currently has nearly 60,000 individual users and nearly 200,000-page views since its launch in 2016.
- Another effort to broaden awareness of community and faith-based organizations across Virginia continued through the Volunteer Virginia monthly e-newsletter, which is sent to 5,000 faith-based and community partners. The newsletter features the latest resources, news and stories of service from around the state, public and private funding opportunities, and training sessions for faith-based, volunteer, and community organizations.

Conclusion

The accomplishments and activities of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism helped the citizens of the Commonwealth improve the lives of their fellow Virginians through service. The work of the Board goes well beyond the federally mandated role of overseeing the work of Virginia's AmeriCorps program. The Board promotes service among the citizens and works closely with the Governor and local mayors and county supervisors to recognize those volunteer efforts. The Board and its support staff at the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service work closely with the volunteer centers and faith-based groups of Virginia, offering information and training to those organizations. Working hand in hand with local partners, the Board tapped the can-do spirit of Virginians to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing the Commonwealth.

**Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism
2019/20**

- Lily Beres, Student, University of Virginia; Falls Church
- Jessica Bowser, Deputy Executive Director, Fairfax Education Association; Alexandria
- Elizabeth Childress Burneson, Attorney, Hirschler Fleischer; Richmond
- John Chapman, Member, Alexandria City Council; Alexandria
- Vanessa Diamond, Sr. Vice President, Civic Innovations, The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia; Richmond
- Omari Faulkner, Strategic Development Director, ManTech International; Bluemont
- Mark Fero, Grants Compliance Supervisor, Virginia Dept. of Criminal Justice Services; Ruther Glen
- Terry Frye, Policy Advisor, Virginia Dept. of Criminal Justice Services; Richmond
- Ashley Hall, Manager, Director, Chesterfield Communities in Schools; Richmond
- Zachary Leonsis, Senior Vice President, Monumental Sports and Entertainment; Washington, DC
- Gina Lovett Lewis, Director, Peninsula Foster Grandparent Program; Hampton Roads
- Tyee Davenport Mallory, Regional Director, Office of U.S. Senator Tim Kaine; Richmond
- Seema Sethi, President and CEO of the Society for Enrichment of Asians; Fairfax
- Julie Strandlie, Government Relations/Grassroots Consultant, Strandlie Advocacy, LLC; Alexandria
- James Underwood, Business Manager, IBEW Local Union 666; Midlothian
- Steven Valdez, Associate, Federal Reserve System; Richmond
- Leslie VanHorn, Community Representative; Norfolk
- Leah Dozier Walker, Community and Minority Affairs Liaison, Virginia Department of Education; Richmond
- Sheila Williamson-Branch, CAGS, MSA, MBA, Treasurer, City of Danville; Danville
- Tynetta Darden, Ex-officio member; State Program Director; CNCS Virginia State Office; Richmond

10/2020. rs