

# 2023 Annual Report



SUSTAINING IMPACT.  
BUILDING MOMENTUM.



[SERVEVIRGINIA.ORG](http://SERVEVIRGINIA.ORG)

## ABOUT SERVE VIRGINIA

Serve Virginia aspires to build a culture of service and volunteerism in all corners of the Commonwealth by inspiring individuals and organizations to engage, connecting them with the resources they need to make a difference, and celebrating the tremendous impacts we make together.

We believe in the power of service and volunteerism to spark change, strengthen lives and produce lasting impacts for communities throughout Virginia. We act on this belief by collaboratively setting statewide priorities, serving as a catalyst for our network of partners, cultivating a sustainable infrastructure for all to engage in service and volunteerism, and developing resources for the Commonwealth.

Serve Virginia represents a more intentional partnership between the Virginia Service Commission, which operates within the Virginia Department of Social Services as the lead agency for volunteerism and service for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Virginia Service Foundation, an independent 501(c)3 organization.

## SUPPORTING THE VIRGINIA SERVICE FOUNDATION

Your tax-deductible investment in our work supports individuals and organizations committed to improving lives and strengthening communities every day. Thanks to contributions from supporters like you, the service and volunteerism sector in Virginia is stronger than ever and poised for greater impact. And we have much more in store for 2024!

### Special thanks to our 2023 Donors (listed alphabetically):

AARP of Virginia

CarMax

Community Foundation for a greater Richmond

Dairy Queen of Virginia

Julie Strandlie

Leonsis Foundation

Northern Virginia Family Services

Peppy Linden

Richmond Association of Realtors

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## CONTACT US

Learn more about supporting and engaging in our work.

[VirginiaServiceInfo@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:VirginiaServiceInfo@dss.virginia.gov)

[ServeVirginia.org](http://ServeVirginia.org)



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

# CELEBRATING Shared Success

At Serve Virginia, we are grateful for all that your support has made possible in the past year. Together, we have undertaken many significant initiatives to inspire Virginians to serve their communities passionately and to unite them in addressing critical needs across the Commonwealth.

The stories of success and impact we invite you to explore in the coming pages are a testament to the power of individuals and organizations united in making a difference throughout the state. Moreover, they are a testament to what an investment in our work, and Virginia's service and volunteerism sector, can achieve: Lives improved, partnerships forged, and communities strengthened.

As we aspire to build a culture of service and volunteerism in all corners of the Commonwealth, we want to take a moment to recognize and thank everyone engaged in building that culture with us. Whether you're a volunteer leader, a Serve Virginia staff member, a partner, a donor, a contractor, a member of our Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism, or an attendee at our annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit, your personal commitment and contributions are what galvanizes our sector.

Together, we can maximize the impact of service and volunteerism to tackle our most critical needs, and we invite you to join us by aligning, amplifying, and catalyzing our shared efforts to continue to inspire and celebrate volunteerism and service in Virginia – in 2024 and beyond.

Warm regards,



**Kathy J. Spangler, Director**  
Serve Virginia



# Leadership

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## SERVE VIRGINIA STAFF

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Jae-Young Choe, Executive Assistant  
Analise Gammel, Statewide Engagement Officer  
Alex Vanik, State Service Plan Coordinator  
Sarah Lawson, Communications Coordinator  
Samantha Lukasiewicz, AmeriCorps Program Manager  
Christina Dumas, Fiscal Officer  
Kimberly Brown, AmeriCorps Program Officer  
Sasha Bronder, AmeriCorps Program Officer  
Alyssa De Las Salas, AmeriCorps VISTA Leader  
Lindsay Sundberg, AmeriCorps VISTA  
MacKenzie Vuotto, AmeriCorps VISTA  
Maurice Huff, AmeriCorps VISTA

# Table of Contents

---

**Advancing Awareness and Recruitment** **PG 6**

---

**Building a Collective State of Knowledge** **PG 7**

---

**Addressing Needs Across the Commonwealth** **PG 8**

---

**AmeriCorps by the Numbers** **PG 10**

---

**Convening and Catalyzing Our Sector** **PG 12**

---

**Recognizing Outstanding Contributions** **PG 14**

---

**Finishing What We Started** **PG 15**

# Advancing Awareness and Recruitment

As Virginia's state service commission, Serve Virginia commits itself every year to developing and supporting sustained approaches to inspire, empower, and equip more Virginians to contribute to their communities. Specifically, we aim to:



Expand public awareness and knowledge of opportunities to engage in service and volunteerism.



Amplify the benefits and impact service and volunteerism has on communities and individuals.



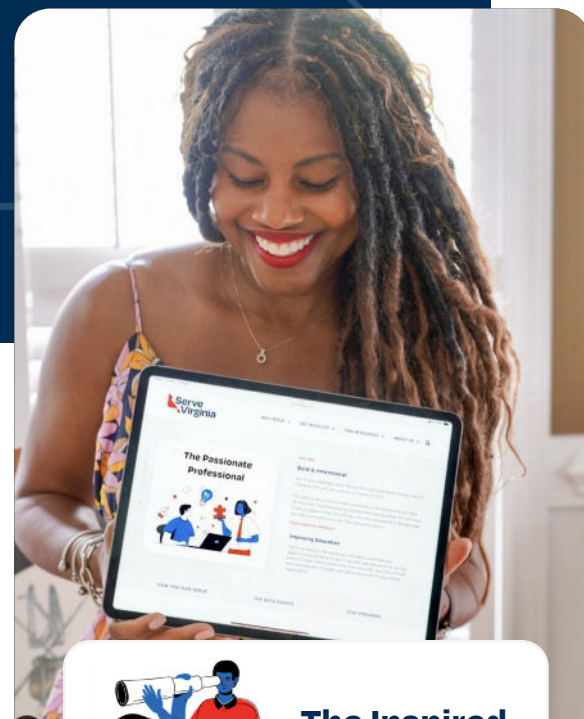
Enhance the capacity of our network of partners to strengthen the culture of community engagement and civic action across the Commonwealth.

To help advance these goals, Serve Virginia unveiled a new brand identity and communications platform at the annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit in May 2023.

At the heart of this initiative was a digital advertising campaign that urged Virginians from all walks of life to pair their passion with purpose. To support that campaign, we also developed a revamped website where community members could find opportunities more easily and our partner organizations could access resources they needed more seamlessly.

Since launching the Serve Virginia brand identity and multi-channel communications platform in May of 2023, we have:

- Generated more than **800,000 impressions** through digital advertising,
- Connected with **900 new followers** on social media channels,
- Connected **80 organizations** with downloadable and shareable resources through our partner toolkits,
- Engaged **2,805 individuals** in completing our Volunteer Personality and Pathways Quiz, and
- Directed more than **5,000 people** interested in learning more about opportunities to serve to Volunteer Centers throughout Virginia.



**The Inspired Explorer**



**The Active Idealist**



**The Passionate Professional**



**The Organized Go-Getter**

Take the Volunteer Personality Quiz at [servevirginia.org/volunteer-quiz](https://servevirginia.org/volunteer-quiz)

Explore the Partner Toolkits at [servevirginia.org/find-resources/partners/toolkit/](https://servevirginia.org/find-resources/partners/toolkit/)



# Building a Collective State of Knowledge

On September 26, Serve Virginia officially released the findings and strategic implications from a unique study called the Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI).

The product of more than 8 months of collaboration with leaders from AmeriCorps, Points of Light, 39 organizations across the Commonwealth, and our strategic contract partners at SIR, the VCEI showcases a variety of groundbreaking research findings that will benefit Virginia for years to come.

In addition to gauging perceived needs and priorities for communities across Virginia, the VCEI was designed to capture what inspires and motivates Virginians to engage in their communities, what barriers they face, and what actions they want to see taken to affect meaningful change in their communities.

Read the VCEI report at [servevirginia.org/why-serve](https://servevirginia.org/why-serve)

## THE VCEI IN ACTION

At Serve Virginia, we have already put many of these findings to use to develop awareness and recruitment strategies. In addition, we are currently supporting a variety of efforts to leverage these findings to inform AmeriCorps program design and regional collective impact planning efforts to develop community solutions.

- In partnership with the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond, with support from the Bob and Ana Lou Schaberg Foundation, we continue to help facilitate a collaborative effort across Virginia's Central Region to build stronger avenues of service, volunteerism, and civic action to meet critical community needs.
- Three AmeriCorps planning grant recipients — the College of William & Mary, Norfolk State University, and the United Way of Henry County and Martinsville — have committed to using VCEI findings to inform their planning and design of future AmeriCorps State programs. Norfolk State University in particular is partnering with the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics and others to design a program to help meet local public health needs.
- In addition, employers in the Central region and statewide are rallying their peers around VCEI data as a way to strengthen employee engagement initiatives that resonate with their workforce.



**“How do we bring others along in our work? Service that is equitable and accessible can also be the most impactful for the communities that we serve.”**

**SONALI NIJHAWAN, DIRECTOR OF AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL**  
*In remarks given at the VCEI public unveiling in September*



# Addressing Needs Across the Commonwealth Through AmeriCorps



## BUILDING THE WORKFORCE TALENT VIRGINIA NEEDS

Service-to-career pathways within AmeriCorps programs create diverse talent pipelines, increase the capacity of nonprofit and public agencies, address pressing community and state challenges, and have positive impacts on the AmeriCorps members themselves.

For example, those who serve through the Richmond Healthy Futures Opioid Prevention and Economic Opportunities Program (RHOPE) can earn credentials necessary to be Certified Peer Recovery Specialists. This on-the-ground training and experience helps agencies and nonprofits better provide services to those affected by substance use disorder as part of a holistic, recovery-oriented system of care in the fight against the ongoing opioid epidemic.

Other workforce development training and activities in which AmeriCorps members participated include:

### 375 HOURS

Spent in organizational development training courses

### 309 HOURS

Spent in grant writing training courses

### 181 HOURS

Spent developing on-site orientations and training plans



## RESPONDING IN CRITICAL TIMES OF NEED

Each year, thousands of young Americans choose to serve in AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), gaining skills while supporting efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, build affordable housing, provide critical disaster response, and more.

In Virginia, AmeriCorps NCCC members serve across the Commonwealth fighting wildfires, rehabilitating local housing, and supporting environmental conservation efforts. The NCCC Team Delta 3 responded to address two wildfires in Virginia – the Red Swamp fire (2.5 acres) and the Patch Fire (4.7 acres) – containing the blazes quickly and with minimal harm to the surrounding ecosystem. As wildfires become more and more common nationwide, such skills will be in higher demand, and team members reported that responding to these incidents was “a great way to serve the community as well as gain wildfire fighting experience for the team.”



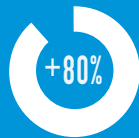
Through its unique public-private partnership model, AmeriCorps continues to expand opportunities for Virginians to gain valuable life and career skills while strengthening communities and building the capacity of organizations to meet critical challenges.

In the past year alone, the various streams of AmeriCorps service and partnerships have made lasting impacts on countless lives and communities.



### SERVING AT ANY AGE

For Virginians ages 55 or older, AmeriCorps Seniors offers a wide range of opportunities to support community organizations and programming. In Tazewell, Va., for example, those serving through the RSVP and Senior Companions programs at Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. (CVCA) sew quilts to distribute to areas nursing homes, make dresses and dolls to send as part of aid efforts to Rwanda, build handicap access ramps, and deliver Meals on Wheels.



More than 80% of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers report decreased anxiety, depression, and loneliness

As Rick Mallory, Director of Senior Volunteer Services at CVCA suggests, “They are very active in our community every day. They go above and beyond.” And their efforts don’t just improve the lives of those they serve. More than 80 percent of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers report decreased anxiety, depression, and loneliness thanks in part to their service.



### BUILDING NEW APPROACHES TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Founded in 1965, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is designed to provide needed resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to increase their capacity to lift communities out of poverty.

In 2023, Elle Poe served as the Training, Data, and Research Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Substance Use Initiative as an AmeriCorps VISTA member, working to help design wraparound services to support children whose parents have died from an overdose.

Her team has submitted a statewide action plan to the Governor and is currently working toward implementing the plan in 2024. Through Elle’s efforts and the service of other VISTAs like her, VDSS will be better able to support these at-risk children.

# AMERICORPS: Expanding Opportunities, Demonstrating Impact

In 2023, AmeriCorps invested more than \$10.8 million in federal funding to develop cost-effective community solutions and support the work of nearly 3,000 Americans of all ages and backgrounds who served through AmeriCorps programs in communities across Virginia.

AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers served at more than 400 locations across Virginia, including schools, food banks, shelters, health clinics, youth centers, veterans facilities, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

Through its unique public-private partnership model, AmeriCorps and its partners generated more than \$5.2 million in outside resources from businesses, foundations, public agencies, and other sources in Virginia last year. This local support strengthened community impact and increased the return on taxpayer dollars.



## How Serve Virginia Supports AmeriCorps

### SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

Serve Virginia oversees the AmeriCorps State program that exists alongside AmeriCorps VISTA, NCCC, and Seniors programs. Managing a grant portfolio of over \$4 million annually, Serve Virginia helps grantees prepare their applications and budgets, support their members, measure their impact, and much more.

### SHOWCASING PARTNERS

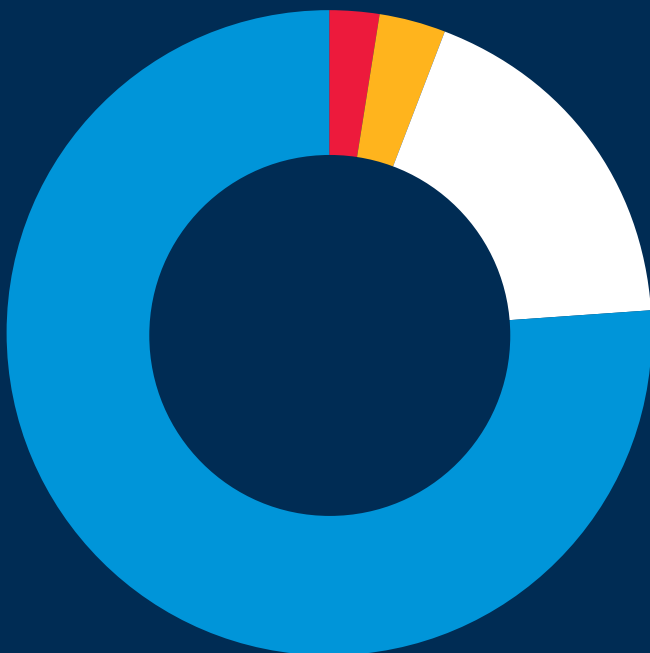
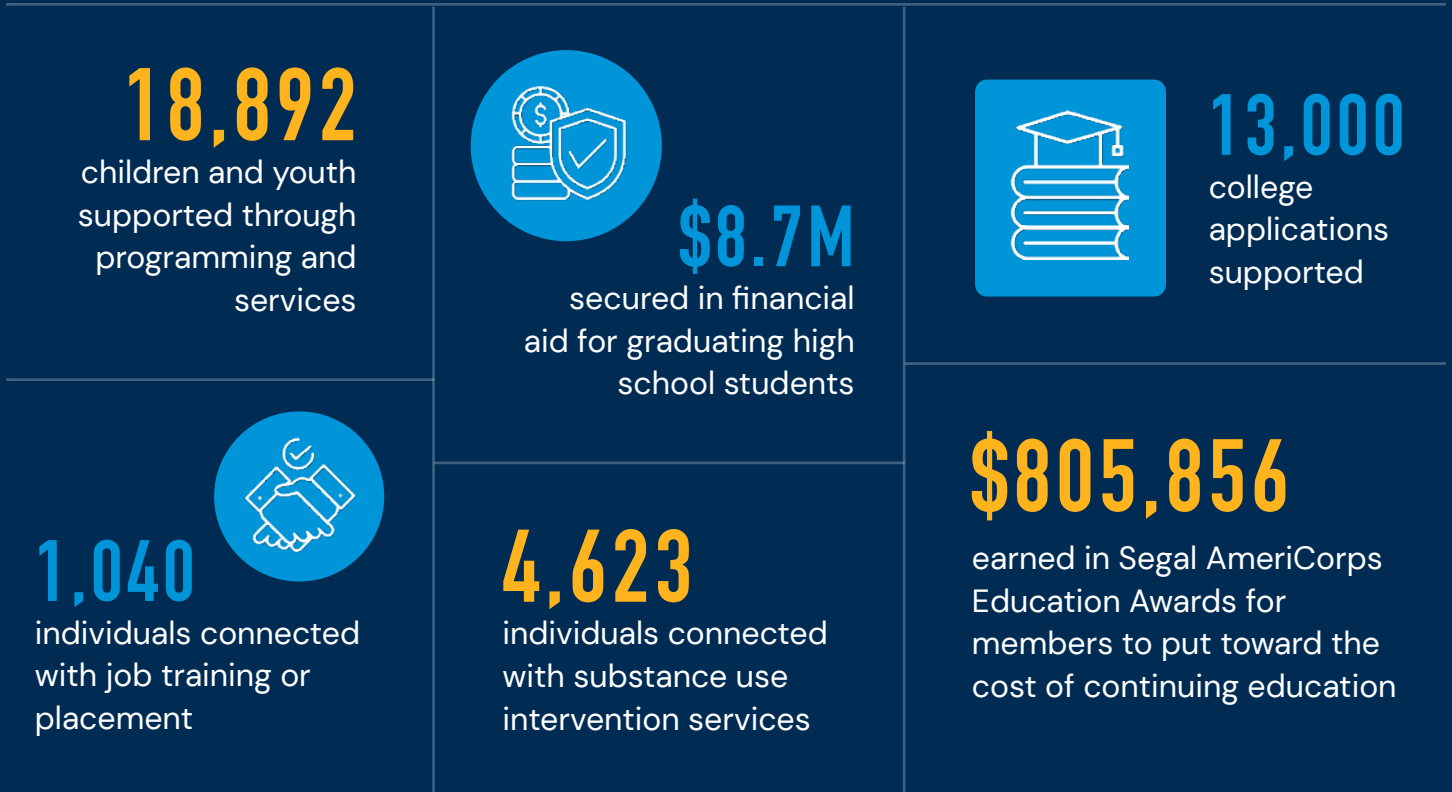
Serve Virginia was honored to host visits by elected officials to AmeriCorps service sites this past year, including:

- Delegate Amanda Batten at York River State Park
- Representative Morgan Griffith's representative at Central High School
- Delegate Luke Torian at CASA
- Delegate Alfonso Lopez and Senator Barbara Favola at Aspire! Afterschool Learning
- Representative Rob Wittman at Essex High School
- Representative Don Beyer at the Arlington Food Assistance Center

# AmeriCorps State & National: Lives Touched

Working hand-in-hand with local partners, AmeriCorps members helped tutor and support children and youth across Virginia, connected community members to essential public services, helped residents access higher education, and enhanced 1,174 acres of public land.

Here's a look at their impact by the numbers:



## National Service Membership in Virginia

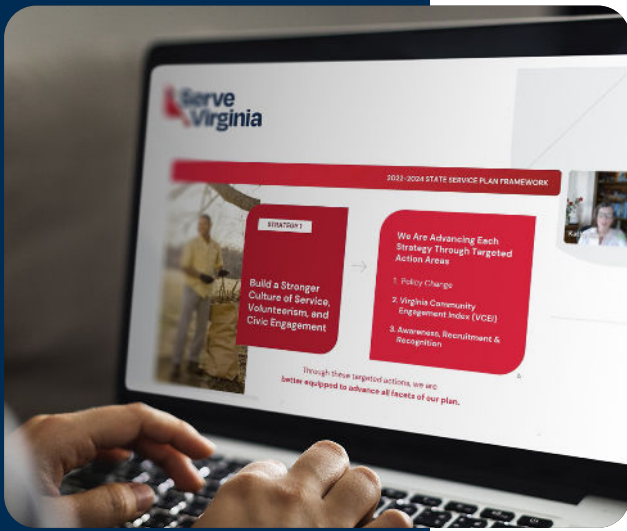
Of the 2,834 AmeriCorps members who served in Virginia in 2022-2023:

**64**  
were VISTA members  
in 41 service locations

**94**  
were NCCC members  
in 13 service locations

**514**  
served across 36  
AmeriCorps State &  
National programs at  
191 service sites

**2,162**  
were AmeriCorps  
Seniors members in  
166 service locations



# Convening and Catalyzing Our Sector

Each year, Serve Virginia hosts the Virginia Volunteerism Summit, convenes the Virginia Volunteer Center Network, and facilitates the National Days of Service mini-grant program (funded by the Virginia Service Foundation) for organizations planning community service projects in honor of MLK Day and 9/11.

## 2023 VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

Serve Virginia and the Virginia Service Foundation again hosted the annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit, featuring a diverse array of workshops, networking events, and inspiring keynote speakers. In 2023, we convened 323 registered attendees representing hundreds of nonprofit, faith-based, and governmental organizations from 116 Virginia cities and counties — and nearly all (95 percent) said the event helped them connect and learn new strategies for their work.

Learn more about the Summit and see what's on tap for the 2024 event at [servevirginia.org/summit](https://servevirginia.org/summit)

## VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER CENTER NETWORK

Each month, Serve Virginia convenes the 15-member Virginia Volunteer Center Network to share resources, discuss best practices, and collaborate on initiatives to build volunteer capacity in nonprofits and help individuals and groups find service opportunities.

Volunteer Centers offer resources to both individuals and nonprofit organizations, offering connections and building capacity throughout the community to promote service and volunteerism. In addition to promoting hundreds of opportunities for individuals and families to serve through community platforms, volunteer centers offer capacity building resources for nonprofit organizations and strengthen community partnerships.

Explore the Volunteer Center Network at [servevirginia.org/get-involved/volunteer-center-network](https://servevirginia.org/get-involved/volunteer-center-network)

**"The Virginia Volunteerism Summit was an incredibly inspiring event, fostering a vibrant community committed to making a difference in Virginia. The diverse speakers and passionate discussions empowered participants to amplify their impact through volunteerism in Virginia."**

—  
**JOSH ROCKETT, SENIOR COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT MANAGER AT CARITAS (RICHMOND)**





**National Days of Service mini-grant highlights:** Combined, the 2023 mini-grants engaged more than 500 volunteers in various projects that directly impacted more than 78,500 community members across Virginia.

### 2023 MLK DAY OF SERVICE MINI-GRANTS

18 applicants, 11 funded:

- Aspire! Afterschool Learning (Arlington)
- Chesterfield Food Bank Outreach Center (Chester)
- CRi (Arlington)
- Dan River Year AmeriCorps (Danville)
- Emory & Henry College, Health Sciences Campus (Emory)
- Elkton Area United Services Food Pantry (Elkton)
- Virginia Peninsula Food Bank (Hampton)
- King of Kings Lutheran Church (Fairfax)
- Kids Give Back (Fairfax)
- Volunteer Fairfax (Fairfax)
- Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore (Norfolk)

### 2023 9/11 DAY OF SERVICE MINI-GRANTS

22 applicants, 10 funded:

- Hanover Youth Service Council (Ashland)
- Dan River Year AmeriCorps (Danville)
- Volunteer Alexandria (Alexandria)
- Start 1 Spark (Henrico)
- Kids Give Back (Annandale)
- Veterans and Athletes United (Chesterfield)
- King of Kings Lutheran Church and Preschool (Fairfax)
- Village to Village, Inc. (Harrisonburg)
- New Song United Methodist Church (Mechanicsville)
- **NEST4US (Ashburn)**



#### NEST4US (Ashburn)

NEST4US hosted a Hope in a Bag event that engaged more than 75 volunteers in assembling 5,000+ food bags filled with applesauce, granola bars, pretzels, fruit snacks, peanut butter crackers, and notes of kindness to share through 42 homeless shelters and food banks in the Washington Metro area.



# Recognizing Outstanding Contributions

In Virginia, volunteers create more than \$5.5 billion in estimated economic impact each year and Serve Virginia offers several ways for volunteers to be celebrated by their communities and peers. In 2023, we continued our longstanding recognition of winners of the **Governor’s Volunteerism & Community Service Awards** and **National Service Awards**.

## GOVERNOR’S VOLUNTEERISM & COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

The annual Governor’s Volunteerism & Community Service Awards recognize the significant contributions of Virginia residents. In a November 2023 ceremony, Serve Virginia celebrated 11 selected honorees at the Governor’s Mansion:

- **Outstanding Youth Volunteer:** Evan Nied (Virginia Beach)
- **Outstanding Young Adult Volunteer:** Meghan McLees (Fredericksburg)
- **Outstanding Adult Volunteer:** Nancy Feldner (Bailey’s Crossroads)
- **Outstanding Senior Volunteer:** Robert Schnapp (Reston)
- **Outstanding Family Volunteers:** Frank and Mae Antkiewicz (Hanover)
- **Outstanding Family Volunteers:** The Berry Family (Harrisonburg)
- **Outstanding Community Organization:** Virginia Beach Medical Reserve Corps (Virginia Beach)
- **Outstanding Educational Organization:** Louisa County Public Schools (Louisa)
- **Outstanding Faith-Based Organization:** Salem Area Ecumenical Ministries (Salem & Roanoke)
- **Outstanding Small Business:** Blazer Heating, Air, & Plumbing (Hanover & King William)
- **Outstanding Corporation:** McKesson Medical-Surgical (Richmond)

## SERVE VIRGINIA HONOR ROLL

Implemented for the first time in 2023, the Serve Virginia Honor Roll engaged 6 partner organizations, 3 volunteer centers, and 3 Virginia colleges and universities in the nomination process to spotlight some of the more than 2.2 million volunteers in Virginia who serve their communities in a variety of ways, promoting quality of life and creating a lasting impact for others. The total list of honorees for the inaugural May 2023 Honor Roll included 447 individuals.

## NATIONAL SERVICE AWARDS

In 2023, the 19 nominees from Virginia for the annual National Service Awards included AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors members serving in Virginia who performed outstanding service to their communities.



**“Volunteers are not only a critical part of meeting needs across the state, but they make our Virginia communities stronger.”**

—  
**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
 COMMISSIONER DANNY AVULA**

# Finishing What We Started

Thanks to VCEI data, we know that the biggest barriers to service include not knowing where to start or not having been invited to take part. In addition, Serve Virginia operates at the heart of a vast network of players — all with similar goals and passions — who are too often isolated in their work and left unaware of how they can partner with others and access resources to help them amplify their impact.

Stakeholders are keenly aware that service and volunteerism doesn't reach as many lives as it can — both in terms of who engages service and volunteer opportunities, as well as the communities that benefit from the work of service members and volunteers. By adopting this knowledge as drivers for our work going forward, we will be better able to engage diverse Virginians in service that is meaningful and impactful, and we invite you to join us.

As the state service commission, Serve Virginia supports the implementation of Virginia's State Service Plan, which is updated every three years. The 2022–2024 State Service Plan highlights a need to bring together stakeholders to increase awareness of existing resources and leverage these tools to enhance energies and efforts to engage Virginians as volunteers.

Explore the State Service Plan at [servevirginia.org/about-us/state-service-plan](https://servevirginia.org/about-us/state-service-plan)

Through the work described in this progress report, we are well on our way to fulfilling the strategies outlined in the existing plan related to the goals of:

- Building a **stronger** culture of service, volunteerism, and civic engagement;
- Building a **more representative**, integrated, and aligned network of partners; and
- Building a **more robust** resource and support infrastructure.

During 2024, we are boldly focused on finishing what we started through our State Service Plan, and we invite you to join us in our efforts to:

## ENGAGE

Engage more Virginians to strengthen communities through AmeriCorps service statewide.

## INSPIRE

Inspire more Virginians to volunteer and become actively engaged in their community.

## SUPPORT

Support the national service and volunteer ecosystem statewide.

## RECOGNIZE

Recognize the selfless efforts of Virginians in service to others.



## CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEER CENTER NETWORK

Across Virginia, our Volunteer Centers are the heart of community service, supporting nonprofits and connecting individuals with meaningful opportunities. We celebrate the Virginia Volunteer Center Network for strengthening volunteerism and service across the state. Together, we're building a stronger, more united Virginia.

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CF Engage	United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County
Dan River Nonprofit Network	United Way of Southwest Virginia
Farmville Cares	United Way of Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro
Hanover Department of Community Resources	United Way of the Virginia Peninsula
HandsOn Blue Ridge	Volunteer Alexandria
Loudoun Cares	Volunteer Arlington
PATH Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Fairfax
Rappahannock United Way	Volunteer Hampton Roads
Relmagine CVA	Volunteer Prince William
United Way of Central Virginia	
United Way of Greater Charlottesville	

Get in touch with your local volunteer center for opportunities to serve.

[servevirginia.org/volunteer-center-networks](https://servevirginia.org/volunteer-center-networks)

## ENGAGE FURTHER: THE VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERISM SUMMIT

Join us for our Annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit, the Commonwealth's leading event for organizations and individuals making a difference in their communities.

This virtual event features a diverse array of workshops, networking events and inspiring keynote speakers to promote innovation across the sector.

[servevirginia.org/virginia-volunteerism-summit](https://servevirginia.org/virginia-volunteerism-summit)

