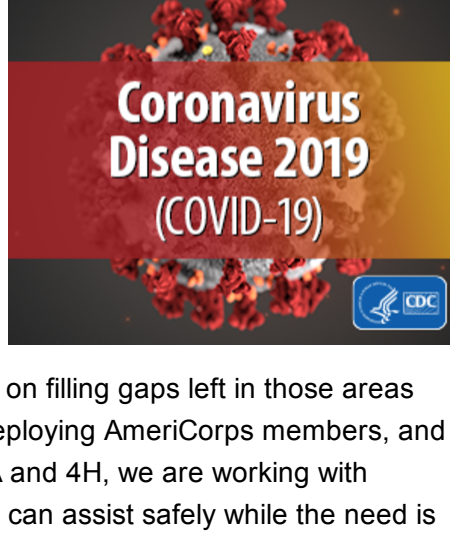


Volunteer Iowa's COVID-19 Response

Volunteer Iowa has been deeply engaged in the COVID-19 response effort since Iowa had its first positive cases in March. With over 38% of Iowa volunteers being 55+ and the most common volunteer area for older volunteers being food collection and distribution, we focused our response on filling gaps left in those areas experiencing increased need. By reassigning and deploying AmeriCorps members, and coordinating with younger volunteer groups like FFA and 4H, we are working with organizations statewide to innovate ways volunteers can assist safely while the need is greatest.



Between March 16 and May 31, Volunteer Iowa has provided assistance by:

- Reassigning 353 AmeriCorps members
- 12,634 hours served
- 13 AmeriCorps Iowa programs reporting response activities
- 36 different service locations
- Main area of support has been food response (food banks, food pantries, local school food grab & go locations)
- Other areas of support are:
 - Making facemasks to donate to health care facilities
 - Legal Advice Hotline Support
 - Blood Donation
 - Volunteer Management support
- Foodbank Deployment
 - 19 AmeriCorps members deployed to River Bend Foodbank and Northeast Iowa Foodbank
 - 2,071 hours served
 - 272,149 pounds of food collected or distributed
 - Main activity has been sorting and boxing food for distribution for backpack programs, mobile food pantries, etc.

Volunteer Iowa is also working with an additional 68 community organizations across the state to place VISTA and AmeriCorps state members in over 90 NEW full-time COVID-19 recovery related positions this summer and beyond, to support ongoing needs as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

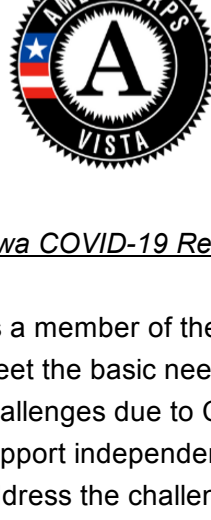
RSVP volunteers, who are 55+, have stepped up and focused efforts on safe ways to contribute to the COVID-19 response.

RSVP COVID-19 response related activities:

- Community gardening and produce gleaning from farmers market producers, which provides free produce to area food pantries
- Writing pen pal letters to nursing home residents instead of students
- Delivering mobile meals with no contact delivery/drop off at door for Meals on Wheels across the state
- Sewing masks and gowns for organizations and hospitals across the state
- County Emergency Management Call Center coverage or remote hotline work

Additionally, over 144 COVID-19 specific volunteer needs across Iowa were posted and promoted via our Get Connected portal. We have actively recruited to fill those needs and provided information and guidance to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) to help organizations utilize volunteers safely. All activities have come through missions with the state emergency operations center and/or our work with the Governor's Feeding Iowans Task Force.

We're also working with nonprofit organizations across the state to encourage them to develop virtual volunteer opportunities and have hosted trainings on utilizing virtual volunteers. Finally, we want to acknowledge the work of the thousands of volunteers who continue to mentor virtually and are providing essential support to young people who have lost other supports when schools closed.



COVID-19 Recovery AmeriCorps Initiative

Volunteer Iowa is working with 63 community organizations across the state to leverage VISTA and AmeriCorps state members for intensive, full-time positions this summer and beyond, to support ongoing needs as a result of the impact of COVID-19. Approximately 90 positions need to be filled, with service beginning as soon as June 1.

Iowa COVID-19 Recovery AmeriCorps

As a member of the Iowa COVID-19 Recovery AmeriCorps, you will deliver support to meet the basic needs of Iowans, lending a hand to organizations that are experiencing challenges due to COVID-19. AmeriCorps members can help address food insecurity, support independent living needs, manage volunteers, or provide other supports that help address the challenges facing communities and citizens with the implication of COVID-19.

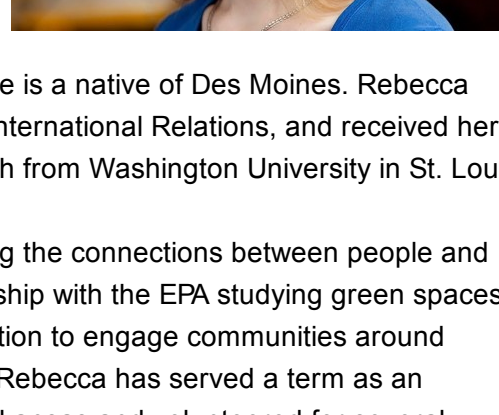
AmeriCorps members will serve 450 hours over the course of 12 weeks or more. (Part-time terms can be arranged if both the member and the host site agree.)

AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA is recruiting members to fill summer and year-long COVID-19 recovery related positions.

For more information and a complete list of host sites, click [HERE](#).

Meet Our New Volunteer Promotions Coordinator



Rebecca Gernes started as Volunteer Iowa's Volunteer Promotions Coordinator on May 4. She is a native of Des Moines. Rebecca attended Grinnell College, earning a degree in International Relations, and received her master's degree in Social Work and Public Health from Washington University in St. Louis.

Rebecca has spent her professional life exploring the connections between people and their environments. After a post-graduate fellowship with the EPA studying green spaces and health in Cincinnati, she worked with a coalition to engage communities around improving biking, walking and transit in Denver. Rebecca has served a term as an AmeriCorps VISTA with Heifer International in Arkansas and volunteered for several months in New Orleans at a home rebuilding nonprofit.

When Rebecca is not at work, she enjoys great food and conversations with friends, as well as biking, drawing, working outside and volunteering.

Welcome AmeriCorps VISTA Program Officer Jana Daisy



Jana Daisy joined Volunteer Iowa on May 11 as an AmeriCorps VISTA Program Officer. This is a newly created position that will support the AmeriCorps VISTA project across Iowa. A lifelong Iowan, she grew up in Chariton and earned her bachelor's degree in Sociology with a Social Work minor from Simpson College.

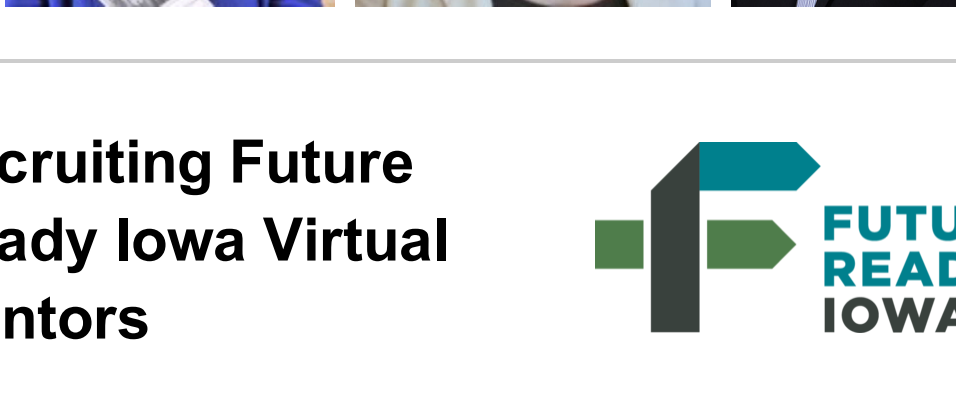
Before coming to Volunteer Iowa, Jana worked for over 17 years at Youth Emergency Services & Shelter (YESS). During that time, she served as a Resident Advisor, Crisis Intervention Counselor, and her longest position, the Community Activities Manager. In that role she managed the volunteer program, assisted with planning special events (internal activities for the youth living in the shelter as well as community-wide fundraising events), coordinated in-kind donations, and conducted community outreach.

Jana has enjoyed volunteering since she was a teen. It provided her the opportunity to serve in many capacities throughout her life. Jana is excited to be able to support others in their pursuit of national service. "I am honored to be joining the team at Volunteer Iowa," said Jana. "There is so much great work being done across our state. I'm grateful to be able to learn from this amazing group and to have a role in furthering those efforts."

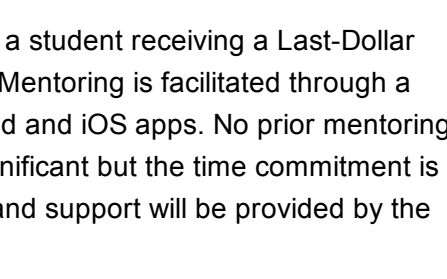
In her free time, Jana likes to spend time with her husband and twin 5-year-old daughters. She also enjoys reading and gardening.

Commission Meeting Update – Outgoing Commissioners

Volunteer Iowa held its commission meeting virtually on Tuesday, May 19. During the meeting, Mayra Lopez provided an overview of her Social Work practicum with Volunteer Iowa. Volunteer Iowa staff updated the commissioners on the extensive COVID-19 related work we have been involved with over the last two months, as well as a preview of recovery efforts that will begin during the summer months. In addition to other official business, the commission bid farewell to three Commissioners whose terms have expired. Cheri Doane, Traci Kirtley and Charlie Minnick have all made tremendous contributions to the commission during their terms of service, and they will be greatly missed.



Recruiting Future Ready Iowa Virtual Mentors



During the COVID-19 pandemic, many individuals have been searching for safe volunteer opportunities that will allow them to make a difference in their community. Look no further – become a Future Ready Iowa virtual mentor and make an impact on a student's life.

Future Ready Iowa virtual mentors are matched with a student receiving a Last-Dollar Scholarship with plans to enter a high-demand field. Mentoring is facilitated through a web-based platform that is supported through Android and iOS apps. No prior mentoring experience is necessary. The need for mentors is significant but the time commitment is flexible (1-2 hours per month on average). Training and support will be provided by the Future Ready Iowa virtual mentoring team.

The need for career mentors continues to grow as students enroll in summer and fall classes, particularly in the fields of healthcare, information technology and skilled trades. Learn more about the program and sign up today at <https://futurereadyiowamentoring.chronus.com/>.

The Sixth Annual Give Back Iowa Challenge has been EXTENDED



Due to the COVID-19 crisis and the impact social distancing has had on in person volunteering, the Give Back Iowa

Challenge has been extended through June 30. We want to allow additional time for businesses to accrue volunteer hours towards the challenge, as we know it has been more difficult to encourage individuals to serve while also maintaining safe social distancing practices. "Volunteer needs are increasing statewide, at the same time our largest pool of volunteers – those 55+ - are needing to stay home to stay safe," stated Adam Lounsberry, Executive Director of Eastern Iowa Volunteer Iowa. "This 30-day extension will allow employers to engage their employees in volunteer service at a time they are needed most."

Volunteer Iowa and the Give Back Iowa Challenge sponsors want to encourage all participating employers and employees to continue to be creative in the ways they are logging volunteer hours. For example, United Way of East Central Iowa created a [virtual volunteer engagement bingo card](#) that can be used for ideas on an internal volunteer competition. In addition, there are several resources and ideas for virtual, at home, and low risk opportunities that can be found [HERE](#).

Now Accepting Applications: Iowa Service Learning Coordinator AmeriCorps VISTA

Make a lasting impact on youth service throughout the state of Iowa! The Coordinator will:

- Assess current high school service learning programming in Iowa, identify partners engaged in service learning, and conduct a needs assessment to identify resource gaps.
- Convene and lead a statewide service learning advisory taskforce, and develop an action plan which includes youth voice.
- Coordinate service learning trainings for partner organizations, including after school programs, mentoring programs, and nonprofits on engaging youth in service.
- Gain experience as part of a fun and dynamic team of community-focused civil servants, committed to improving lives, strengthening communities, and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering.

Candidates with experience volunteering are preferred. Apply [HERE](#) for this year long opportunity.

Service in the News

- [Help Wanted! Iowa's usual volunteer force is now the most at risk](#)
- [Loebsack applauds AmeriCorps investment in city of Davenport](#)
- [Cedar Rapids project feeds people falling through the cracks during pandemic](#)
- [Eastern Iowa Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer announces that Luther College will receive a federal grant for some AmeriCorps workers](#)
- [Buena Vista University student finds ways to continue community service amid pandemic](#)
- [Mail Cheer program launches in Winneshiek County](#)
- [Northwest Iowa RSVP members making and distributing thousands of masks](#)
- [Iowa funnels more money to help with food insecurity concerns](#)

Important Dates

- June 14: Flag Day
- June 19: [Juneteenth](#)
- June 21: Father's Day

Looking for a way to give back? Visit [Get Connected](#) today to find volunteer opportunities. Organizations can [post volunteer opportunities](#) on Get Connected as well at no cost.

[Get Connected!](#)

