

## Volunteer Iowa's Statement on Equity and Inclusion

Volunteer Iowa's mission is clear: to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. We strive to create an Iowa where all citizens are empowered through service to meet community challenges and make lives better.

We are committed to diversifying our partnerships and developing more inclusive strategies to engage new populations of volunteers and future national service members. We can do better. And we will do better.

We know the work we do builds bridges and brings communities together. But we want to expand our efforts to ensure all Iowans feel accepted and empowered to engage within their communities to aid in improving the lives of all. Volunteer Iowa has reviewed internal policies and procedures for the last several years and identified areas of opportunity for improvement. The following items are currently being incorporated into our work:

- Formalizing a committee around inclusion in order to diversify the partnerships Volunteer Iowa has across the state and to help get in front of people who aren't currently connected
- Developing programming and/or strategies to engage new populations of volunteers
- Exploring opportunities to recruit non-traditional volunteers and members, particularly within communities of color
- Promoting and training organizations and programs working to address disparity and inequity to better engage volunteers who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the communities they serve
- Reviewing Volunteer Iowa's processes for publicizing service programs and recruiting for volunteer positions, to make sure the outreach reflects the diversity of Iowa and utilizes platforms and approaches that reach a diverse audience
- Incentivizing and promoting programs to engage more disconnected youth in service and volunteerism
- Partnering with organizations serving targeted demographic groups to help engage those populations in volunteering and target or incentivize participation in Service Enterprise by such organization
- Building more diversity and equity into our Commission, staff and programs
- Lift up and recognize informal volunteering and "neighboring" that is already happening regularly within communities of color

As we move forward, we want to engage Iowans from across the state to review our processes and develop best practices for this work. In the months ahead, we will hold robust conversations with diverse audiences to collect feedback on areas of our work that need strengthened. If you are interested in participating in these conversations, please contact us at [icvs@iowaeda.com](mailto:icvs@iowaeda.com). We want our discussions to be open, honest and inclusive. We will gather information in the days and months to come, but most importantly, we will listen and learn.

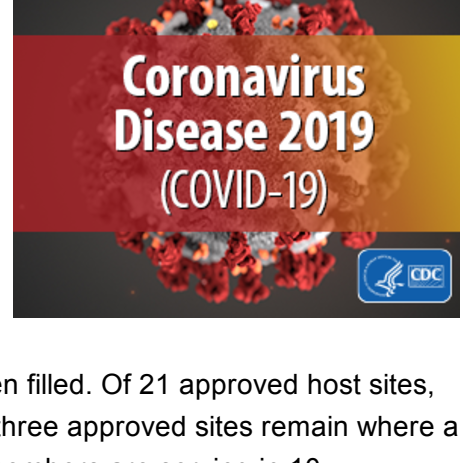
Sincerely,

Adam Lounsbury  
Executive Director

Leah Rodenberg  
Commission Chair

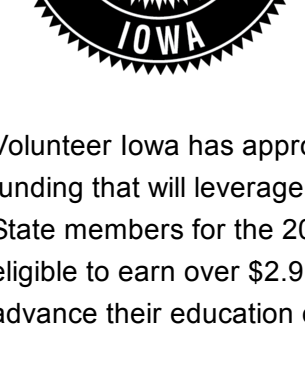
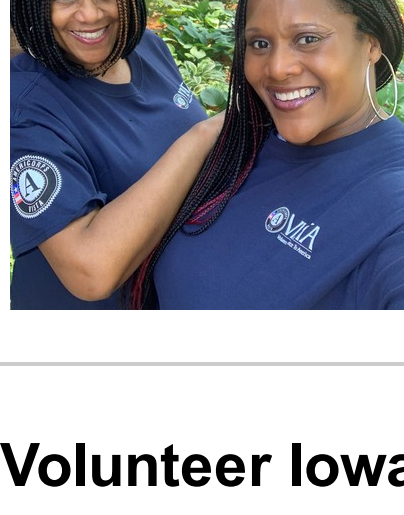
## Volunteer Iowa's Ongoing COVID-19 Response

Volunteer Iowa continues to respond during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Iowa COVID-19 Recovery AmeriCorps Program has been up and running since late May. The first member to begin service in the program started on May 29. Currently, 28 of 50 summer term positions have been filled. Of 21 approved host sites, members are currently serving at 18 of them. Only three approved sites remain where a member has not been placed. These AmeriCorps members are serving in 10 communities across the state, and nearly all projects are focused entirely or in part on food insecurity.



AmeriCorps VISTA is serving 15 host sites through their summer program. 32 VISTA Summer Associates have begun service over the last 4 weeks. Two new year-long VISTA members will begin service in July. Two of the first VISTA Summer Associates, Carolyn Johnson and Zakiya English with Project Jump Start are pictured below.

To learn more about the Iowa COVID-19 Recovery AmeriCorps Program and to view a list of current openings, click [HERE](#).



## Volunteer Iowa Announces \$12.5 Million in Funding for AmeriCorps National Service Programs in Iowa

Volunteer Iowa has approved a total of \$12.5 million in federal and state AmeriCorps funding that will leverage private and local match in support of nearly 900 AmeriCorps State members for the 2020-2021 program year. These AmeriCorps members will be eligible to earn over \$2.9 million worth of Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards to use to advance their education or pay back qualified student loans.

AmeriCorps State members have been involved in recent efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. These grants provide funding to local organizations for AmeriCorps members to address public health and other critical community needs in the areas of education, disaster services, health, environmental stewardship, and economic opportunity. For the complete list of grantees, click [HERE](#).

## Introducing Grace Johnson, Future Ready Iowa Virtual Mentoring Summer Intern

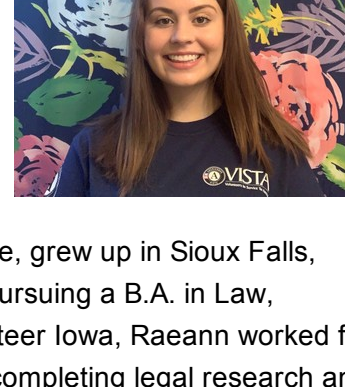


Grace Johnson (she/her/hers) joined Volunteer Iowa on May 18 as the Future Ready Iowa Virtual Mentoring Intern. She lives in Clive where she attended K-12 school in the Waukee Community School District, graduating in 2018. After a year at Creighton University studying business, Grace transferred to Iowa State University. Now, she is a junior at Iowa State University majoring in public relations with a minor in political science. She plans to continue her work on political campaigns and with activism organizations after graduating in the fall of 2021.

Grace worked as a field intern on former presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg's campaign in the summer of 2019. She continued volunteering with the campaign at Iowa State and helped Pete Buttigieg make history by becoming the first openly gay candidate to win the Iowa Caucus. In addition to volunteering with various campaigns, Grace founded the ISU chapter of Students Demand Action, an organization of Everytown for Gun Safety. Students Demand Action is a national initiative, created by and for teens and young adults, to channel the energy and passion of high school and college-aged students into the fight against gun violence.

Grace's mom is a part of the partner group Moms Demand Action, and the mother-daughter pair often team up to volunteer their time and energy to creating a safer space for families. In the little time she isn't doing activism work Grace likes to watch movies and TV shows with her family and spend time with her black lab (Hurley) and black cat (Sharpie).

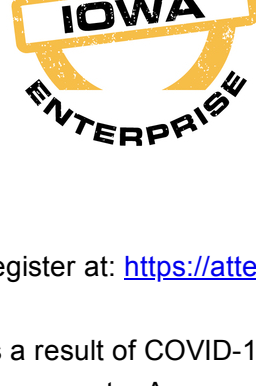
## Welcome Raeann VanDrongelen, AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate



Raeann VanDrongelen, AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate, grew up in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She is currently a senior at Drake University pursuing a B.A. in Law, Politics, & Society and History. Prior to her service with Volunteer Iowa, Raeann worked for the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, completing legal research and victim advocacy work. This spring, she spent afternoons at the Iowa State Capitol learning about public policy and lobbying.

Raeann has also served at a legal clinic in Des Moines, assisting refugees in filling out their citizenship paperwork. That position opened her eyes to experiences refugees face and the process of attaining citizenship. Raeann plans to pursue a career in lobbying and says her time with Volunteer Iowa is providing a great foundation for that work.

In her free time, Raeann enjoys hiking, camping or doing anything that gets her outside. She also enjoys exploring new coffee shops and restaurants in Des Moines as she continues to get to know the city.



## Explore Service Enterprise Practices to Meet COVID Crisis Changes

When: Wednesday, July 29th, 1:00-2:30pm

Register at: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/328226618977834753>

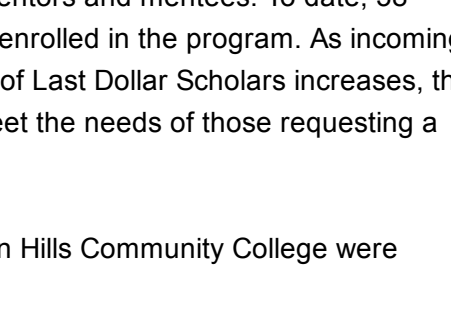
As a result of COVID-19, nonprofits across the state are being challenged to reinvent how they operate. As a senior leader or volunteer engagement professional, your organization likely has needed to change its approach to involving volunteers. However, that should not mean stopping altogether. Strategically engaging volunteers throughout your organization to effectively and efficiently deliver your mission will help respond to increased need while maintaining and growing your base of supporters. During this interactive session for senior leadership and volunteer engagement professionals, we'll leverage the research and proven practices of the Service Enterprise Initiative to help your organization be innovative and agile in your approach to engaging volunteers during a pandemic.

### About the Facilitator

Kayla Paulson came to Volunteer Engagement with a career background in marketing, community relations, and training; over the last eight years at United Way of Eastern Central Iowa she has leveraged that experience to help agencies build capacity with their volunteer engagement programs. She fights for more strategic and impactful volunteer engagement in her community, state, and nationally. During her tenure with United Way she has worked with over 75 local agencies, more than 450 senior volunteers, Volunteer Iowa, Points of Light, ALIVE, and United Way Worldwide to help improve volunteer engagement practices.

This webinar is provided at no cost thanks to the support of a Volunteer Generation Fund grant from CNCS.

## Future Ready Iowa Virtual Mentoring Program Update



As college campuses emptied in the spring and transitioned to online instruction, Future Ready Iowa Virtual Mentoring continued to attract mentors and mentees. To date, 38 mentors and 39 mentees throughout the state have enrolled in the program. As incoming students accept their fall admission and the number of Last Dollar Scholars increases, the virtual mentoring program will need to prepare to meet the needs of those requesting a career mentor in high-demand fields.

A mentor from Des Moines and a student from Indian Hills Community College were recently featured on WHO-13. View the story [HERE](#).

To learn more about the virtual mentoring program, watch this brief video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhCbJqQXVdQ>. If you or someone you know may be interested in mentoring a Last Dollar Scholar, you can [register TODAY](#).

## Volunteerism Research survey

Do you have volunteer experience or a desire to help others? If so, your participation is requested in a qualitative research study. This study focuses on informal volunteerism seen throughout generations and the ways past education, work, and mental health affects the volunteer positions people take. The participant survey can be accessed at <https://forms.gle/3R89QDgENVILRniDB>. Questions can be directed to Dr. Jesse O. Bolinger by phone 641.455.2896 or email [volunteerismsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerismsurvey@gmail.com).

## Service in the News

- [RSVP still meets community needs](#)
- [AmeriCorps recruiting for Wabash Trace Nature Trail](#)
- [Immigrants tend community garden in Waterloo](#)
- [AmeriCorps Iowa members respond during COVID-19 crisis](#)
- [AmeriCorps NCCC Helping with Food Insecurity in Iowa](#)

## Important Dates

- July: Anti-Boredom Month
- July 4: Independence 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!](#)

