



**AmeriCorps**  
Georgia

**GEORGIA  
SERVES**  
**GEORGIA COMMISSION  
FOR SERVICE AND  
VOLUNTEERISM**

Annual Report

**2019-2020**

## **GEORGIA SERVES**

Our mission is to promote service and volunteerism in Georgia through AmeriCorps national service grants, community volunteer recognition, and support of local volunteer organizations and efforts.

# **CONTENTS**

<b>3</b>	<b>LETTER FROM THE DCA COMMISSIONER</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>GEORGIA SERVES LETTER</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>ABOUT US</b>
<b>6-7</b>	<b>COMMISSION SUPPORT GRANT</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>LEVERAGE</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>BY THE NUMBERS</b>
<b>9-12</b>	<b>AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>GEORGIA STUDENT SERVICE AWARD</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>GCSV BOARD AND STAFF</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>

## LETTER FROM THE DCA COMMISSIONER

Dear Friends in Service,

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the 2019-2020 Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism (GCSV/Commission) Annual Report.

Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism has helped meet Georgian's needs since 1994. Working within the Department of Community Affairs, it has provided more than \$80 million in AmeriCorps funds to public and non-profit agencies that assist Georgia's communities. Over this time, tens of thousands of Georgians have served in AmeriCorps both as AmeriCorps Members or as team members of sponsoring agencies.

The Commission has made tremendous strides during its nearly 30 years of operation, but there remains much more to be done! Beginning in the Spring of 2021, the Commission will undertake a rebranding campaign, using the operating name and working motto Georgia Serves. Its legal name will remain the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism, but the new moniker and identity will better represent what the Commission supports and what Georgians do best — serving others. Our team believes the shortened name will improve name recognition and the ability to build brand awareness, as the great work of the sponsored programs and service members will resonate with other civic-minded citizens throughout our great state.

The collective effort of Department of Community Affairs staff and the Board of Georgia Serves make it possible for local organizations to implement AmeriCorps programs in their communities and provide grassroots interventions that deploy human resources to address the most pressing concerns of those most in need of assistance.

In 2019-2020, Georgia Serves sponsored 485 AmeriCorps Members serving in various capacities in the areas of education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, veterans and military family support, disaster response/recovery, economic opportunity, and homelessness. AmeriCorps Members made lasting impacts in communities while gaining valuable skills and experience to advance their careers.

Throughout this report, you will find great examples of what makes this program so powerful: how using a small amount of local dollars can create big results in communities of need when people work collaboratively to deliver and invest the full resources of AmeriCorps in Georgia.

Sincerely,

Comissioner Christopher Nunn  
Georgia Department of Community Affairs



# LETTER FROM GEORGIA SERVES

Dear Friends,

The mission of Georgia Serves is to promote opportunities for citizens to serve, support organizations that use volunteer service to address community problems, and to make sure that investment in service is protected and managed well.

Georgia Serves staff and board members continue to spread the word about AmeriCorps opportunities, but one barrier all service organizations face is limited outreach and engagement resources. Thinking strategically, we formed a partnership this year with the Georgia Association of Broadcasters (GAB) to assist us in our outreach efforts. GAB was instrumental in assisting us by airing public service announcements, and by making it possible to participate in several virtual and on-air television interviews.

Just as everyone else, we faced unexpected and unprecedented public health challenges in 2020. COVID-19 affected our plans and for many, threatened their livelihood and way of life. When analyzing the typical benchmarks that programs set out to accomplish at the beginning of 2020 and comparing them to the end results, one might have thought failure was inevitable given the difficulties but look again! That was not the case. We Adapted - We Changed - We Persevered!

Many of the education programs were not able to conduct one-on-one tutoring sessions or face-to-face group sessions as planned because the virus caused schools to employ distance learning. Additionally, people lost jobs, restaurants closed, and businesses of all types were impacted. COVID-19 affected the entire Country, but AmeriCorps Members stepped up and found new ways to get up and give back. That is when AmeriCorps Programs and Members started to shift their focus to delivering food to students, and to utilizing new technologies so students would not fall behind in their studies. They also started to check in on the elderly and disabled and provide much needed services to those most at risk or vulnerable.

AmeriCorps Members persisted and as a result, here are more examples of what happened.

- Relay Graduate School of Education mentored 2,898 youth and 479 students improved in academic performance!
- Because of Communities in Schools, 454 students improved in academic performance!
- Thanks to Covenant House, 38 homeless students obtained employment!
- The Scholarship Academy made sure that 210 students received scholarships for college!
- Clayton State University made it possible for 60 Juniors and Seniors to be accepted into degree seeking programs!
- One World Link delivered 1,150 meals to those in need!
- Georgia State University mentored 1,294 students!
- In addition, with the support of One World Link, Covenant House, and Communities in Schools, 42 AmeriCorps Members received full-time employment!

There are no limits to what can be accomplished when we all work together and 2020 helped us illustrate that better than we could have ever imagined.

Yours in Service,



**MYRA TOLBERT, PhD**

CHAIR



**LINDA THOMPSON**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# ABOUT US



Georgia Serves is located within the Department of Community Affairs and operates as the administrative agency for funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that houses the AmeriCorps family of programs. Georgia Serves, as the state's oversight organization, is responsible for promoting and recognizing the importance of service, developing volunteers, and for supporting quality local service agencies and their projects.

The Georgia Legislature created the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism (GCSV/Commission) in 1994 in response to the National and Community Service Act passed by Congress in 1993. Beginning this year, the Commission will operate under the name Georgia Serves as part of a branding and promotional campaign for AmeriCorps and sponsored programs throughout the State of Georgia.

The Commission's board consists of 23 members appointed by the Governor. Commissioners serve three-year renewable terms and are responsible for helping to promote volunteerism, create impact awareness, assist in the decision-making process, and contribute to the overall success of AmeriCorps Georgia.

There are five Georgia Serves staff members located within the Community Development Division of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Their responsibilities are to provide oversight, compliance monitoring, technical assistance, and support to the portfolio of programs.

Georgia Serves grants funds to qualifying agencies for the purpose of implementing AmeriCorps programs in their communities. These organizations recruit AmeriCorps Members who provide direct, community-specific services to the targeted population. Through AmeriCorps, organizations are provided the opportunity to address areas of critical need in their communities, like Disaster Response and Recovery, Economic Opportunity and Homelessness Prevention, Educational Improvement, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures and Veterans and Military Family Support.

While creating awareness of AmeriCorps is important, ensuring that sound management decisions are made when investing state and federal funds is the top priority for Georgia Serves. All grant funds awarded by Georgia Serves must be administered in ways that meet all guidelines to ensure the best and highest return on investment. For these reasons, staff invests a great deal of thought and time in training and education to potential grantees and current grantees on the most up to date policies and procedures to guarantee that programs perform at their highest potential; resulting in positive impact for the communities in which they serve.



# COMMISSION SUPPORT GRANT

The “Commission Support Grant” covers the costs of staff salaries and all overhead costs and the “Technical Assistance Grant” was used to hire an outreach specialist. This individual was to conduct outreach in south and rural Georgia to generate more applications from under-represented areas. The efforts of the outreach specialist were hampered by COVID-19 but not stopped. The virus forced Georgia Serves to explore different methods of conducting campaign awareness outreach. We were successful in reaching even more organizations by utilizing technology which turned out to be less costly and very effective.

By turning to technology, we were able to reach multiple organizations in a single session. We conducted several sessions using technology and, as a result, we were not restricted to providing outreach only in southern Georgia but were able to reach all sectors across the state. The use of technology increased our coverage area and reduced our costs. “AmeriCorps Grants” are sub-granted to qualifying organizations for the purpose of implementing AmeriCorps programming in their geographical areas of the state.

## FEDERAL FUNDS

<b>Technical Assistance Grant</b>	<b>\$248,406</b>
<b>Commission Support Grant</b>	<b>\$380,450</b>
<b>AmeriCorps Grants 2018-19</b>	<b>\$3,329,964</b>
<b>TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$3,958,820</b>

All awardees, including the Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Serves, are charged with leveraging either cash match for federal funds, in-kind match, or a combination of both. It is important to note that the leverage for these AmeriCorps Grants was \$2,304,958.

## COMMISSION SUPPORT GRANT

The Governor and Georgia legislature generously contributed \$231,890 in state appropriations to match the Commission Support Grant, and by partnering with the Georgia Association of Broadcasters, Georgia Serves received \$256,467 in in-kind match from public service announcements across the state.

## LEVERAGE AND IMPACT

<b>State Funds</b>	<b>\$231,890</b>
<b>Public Service Announcements</b>	<b>\$256,467</b>
<b>Leverage resulting from AC grants</b>	<b>\$2,304,958</b>
<b>Dollar value of volunteer time</b>	<b>\$555,421</b>
<b>TOTAL LEVERAGE</b>	<b>\$3,348,736</b>

Eighteen programs were funded in 2019-2020, and they were successful in recruiting 485 AmeriCorps Members; compared to 439 last year. In 2019-2020, 2,343 people applied to be AmeriCorps Members; compared to 2,526 last year. This year, AmeriCorps Members served a total of 498,131 hours compared to last year's 572,926 hours. In 2019-2020, those 485 Members recruited 2,157 volunteers across the state compared to 2,661 last year. These volunteers served 21,478 hours compared to last year's 33,117 hours.

Some of these numbers are down from last year due to COVID-19, and understandably so, but these simple measurements do not reflect the full impact of service and volunteerism in our state. Despite the complication of doing so during a pandemic, people still wanted to get involved and be a part of the solution in their hometowns. It seems that doing the right thing is in great demand! People want to "Get Things Done" in Georgia.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**The number of people desiring to serve as AmeriCorps Members continue to outnumber the actual number of recruits.**

### 18 PROGRAMS

were funded in **2019-2020**  
and they were successful in recruiting  
**485 AMERICORPS MEMBERS**  
compared to **439** last year.

In **2019-2020,**

### 2,343 PEOPLE

applied to be AmeriCorps Members; compared to **2,526** last year.  
In both years, there is a significant difference in the number of AmeriCorps Members recruited versus the number of applicants. These numbers show us that people want to get involved and want to be a part of the solution.

**Georgia Serves** will continue to put forth efforts to grow our portfolio of programs to accommodate more people wanting to get involved in AmeriCorps. But for now, let us focus on what we did with what we had.



In **2019-2020,**

### 485 MEMBERS

recruited  
**2,157 VOLUNTEERS**  
compared to **2,661** last year.

### Volunteers served 21,478 HOURS

compared to last year's **33,117** hours.

AmeriCorps Members served a total of

### 498,131 HOURS

compared to last year's **572,926** hours.

*This number is down from last year due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns.*





# AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS: 2019-2020 PROGRAM YEAR

## **CITY OF ROSWELL**

AmeriCorps members provide academic curriculum through after-school programs. Members are responsible for providing literacy and other academic instruction through daily small groups that help K-5 underperforming students read on grade level.

## **CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

Clayton State University students serve as AmeriCorps members who provide mentoring and tutoring to local K-12 students in Clayton County. Additionally, AmeriCorps members conduct service projects to support the surrounding community.

## **COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOL (CIS)**

The CIS AmeriCorps reading tutorial program is designed to help students from kindergarten to 8th grade who are not reading at the appropriate grade level. Members serve metro Atlanta and surrounding rural counties, providing small group and individualized tutoring.

## **COVENANT HOUSE OF GEORGIA**

AmeriCorps members leverage volunteers to serve homeless youth in a mentoring capacity in Atlanta. AmeriCorps members develop mentoring relationships with the youth to move them toward their educational, vocational or employment goals.

## **EXTRA SPECIAL PEOPLE (ESP)**

ESP creates opportunities for individuals with disabilities and their families to engage, connect, provide family support, and development through year-round programming. Members work to empower adults with disabilities to gain confidence, learn job applicable skills, and advance their abilities.

# AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS: 2019-2020 PROGRAM YEAR

## **GEORGIA ALLIANCE OF BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**

The Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Club Inc. is a planning grant for 2019-20, but in the future, AmeriCorps members will serve as Enrichment Instructors for at-risk vulnerable youth. Services will include tutoring, after-school enrichment activities, summer day camps, conflict-resolution, bullying prevention, health education, STEM, and organized recreation.

## **GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH**

Georgia State University and the Alonzo A. Crim Center utilize AmeriCorps members to provide mentoring and tutoring in the areas of math and science to youth at-risk of academic failure through the TEEM (Technology, Engineering, Environment, Math & Science) program. AmeriCorps members are required to have a bachelor's degree or two years of college and mentoring/tutoring experience.

## **HANDS ON ATLANTA**

Hands On Atlanta's school-based AmeriCorps members serve full time to support students, teachers, administrators, parents and school communities in 35 partner schools in the metro Atlanta area. AmeriCorps members serve as classroom assistants, reading/math tutors, volunteer recruiters and coordinators, community and parental outreach trainers, and after-school enrichment providers.

## **JEKYLL ISLAND STATE PARK AUTHORITY GEORGIA SEA TURTLE CENTER (GSTC)**

AmeriCorps members serve in every aspect of the Center's mission. Members are dedicated to educating the center's guests and school outreach program participants, participating in sea turtle rehabilitation and diamondback terrapin monitoring, conducting night time sea turtle saturation tagging and nest management, and coordinating volunteers. Additionally, all members are trained and available to the Glynn County Emergency Management Agency for community disaster response.

# AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS: 2019-2020 PROGRAM YEAR

## **NEW AMERICAN PATHWAYS**

AmeriCorps members serve the needs of refugee children and youth from Sudan, Burma, Iraq, Burundi, Liberia, Afghanistan, and Somalia through five schools in Clarkston. AmeriCorps members provide support to war-affected children and families who have been relocated to Georgia to provide comprehensive after-school, summer and recreation programs for refugee youth grades K-12 through the pre-identified partner schools.

## **NORTHWEST GEORGIA HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP, INC.**

At the Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership (NGHP), Members serve as associate promotoras, assisting NHGP's full-time promotoras with providing culturally appropriate services such as health care education, mentorship, and translation in North Georgia. The AmeriCorps members are responsible for helping low-income, medically underserved Hispanic clients.

## **ONE WORLD LINK/GEORGIA SERVES**

AmeriCorps members provide career mentoring, volunteer opportunities, and soft and hard skills workshops in Macon. The host sites include Mercer University, United Way of Central Georgia, New Town Macon, and the Motivating Youth Foundation.

## **RELAY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Full-time AmeriCorps Professional Corps members serve in the Atlanta Public Schools and KIPP Metro Atlanta Schools in the innovative teacher residency program. Corps members are responsible for improving outcomes for K-12 students and getting certified to serve as full-time teachers, poised for a career improving educational and life outcomes for students in low-income communities.

## **TEACH FOR AMERICA (TFA) METRO ATLANTA**

This organization provides a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping break the local cycle of education inequity. Leaders teach for two years, going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students achieve at high levels. Armed with the experience, conviction, and insight that come from leading children to fulfill their potential, alumni are working from all sectors to shape our schools, policies, and investments in low-income communities.

# AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS: 2019-2020 PROGRAM YEAR

## **THE SCHOLARSHIP ACADEMY**

The Scholarship Academy AmeriCorps members serve as Facilitators of a Financial Aid Prep Course, host Quarterly Financial Aid Awareness events and conduct County-Wide Financial Aid Assessments and Trainings in school system in the metro-Atlanta area. AmeriCorps members are responsible for increasing the financial aid awareness of economically disadvantaged high school students. Through this volunteer engagement pipeline, AmeriCorps members will guide community leaders in teaching families how to create four-year college funding plans and training students how to research and understand financial aid options.

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

Georgia 4-H AmeriCorps State Program engages AmeriCorps members in direct service and capacity-building to address critical community needs. Through 16 counties across the state, AmeriCorps members are working to further the 4-H mission and build capacity in their community by addressing critical issues like (1) childhood obesity, (2) military family support, (3) providing youth development through in-school 4-H club meetings, and (4) supporting youth in their endeavor to build confidence and develop their public speaking skills.

## **UNITED WAY**

Project Health Access AmeriCorps members help build the capacity of community clinics to increase the health outcomes of the uninsured and underinsured in the metro area and in targeted communities and ensure access to SSDI/Medicaid for disabled, homeless individuals.

## **YOUTH VILLAGES INNER HARBOUR CAMPUS**

Youth Villages AmeriCorps is partnered with Youth Villages-Inner Harbour campus, a not-for-profit residential treatment facility serving youth with emotional and behavioral challenges, children caught in the cycle of sexual, physical, substance or emotional abuse, and youth attending Inner Harbour as an alternative to Youth Detention Centers. The Corps members are responsible for increasing academic performance and engagement, improving civic engagement, and increased acquisition of life skills in support of work, school and life success to a vulnerable population of students with severe emotional and behavioral issues.

# AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL



Georgia Serves provides oversight for Georgia’s Single State programs. However, Nationally, AmeriCorps consists of the Single State Programs, National Direct Programs that apply directly to AmeriCorps, the Agency as well as AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps Senior Programs.

Nationally, AmeriCorps engages more than 80,000 Americans in intensive service each year at over 21,000 sites including 501(c)3 non-profit organizations, schools, and local government. Since 1994, more than 1 million AmeriCorps Members contributed more than 1.4 billion hours in service across America and have mobilized more than 2.3 million volunteers. AmeriCorps Members tackle communities’ most pressing problems through direct service.

Meeting Community Needs in Georgia: Last year more than 2,800 Americans of all ages and backgrounds met local needs, strengthened communities, and expanded economic opportunity through national service in Georgia. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) invested more than \$15 Million to support cost-effective community solutions, working hand in hand with local partners to empower citizens to solve problems. AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are preparing today’s students for tomorrow’s jobs, reducing crime, and reviving cities, connecting veterans to services, fighting the opioid epidemic, helping seniors live independently, and rebuilding communities after disasters. Service members served at more than 500 locations across Georgia, including schools, food banks, homeless shelters, health clinics, youth centers, veterans’ facilities, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Through a unique public-private partnership, CNCS, its grantees, and project sponsors generated more than \$10.3 Million in outside resources from businesses, foundations, public agencies, and other sources in the last year. This local support strengthened community impact and increased the return on taxpayer dollars.

# GEORGIA STUDENT SERVICE AWARD



To engage high school youth in service and high-quality service-learning, the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism (GCSV) instituted the Georgia Student Service Award during the 2011-2012 school year as a pilot project to recognize teenagers who make significant contributions to their communities through volunteer service. The GCSV continues to promote this program to recognize students engaged in volunteerism. More than 65 schools have participated in the program since its inception.

The Georgia Commission awards certificates and service honor cords at graduation ceremonies to Georgia students who meet a predetermined threshold of service hours in their communities. To qualify for the Georgia Student Service Award, 200 volunteer service hours by graduation is required. Graduating seniors who reach the milestone will receive a certificate and a red, white, and blue service cord to be worn at graduation ceremonies.

During the Spring of 2020, 99 students from 19 schools received cords and certificates. They served a total of 42,462 hours. Involvement was down from 2019 due to COVID 19. In 2019, 207 students participated and served 57,746 hours.

A member of the school staff must act as sponsor/administrator and register their school [at this website](#). The sponsor/administrator must certify and submit student information and service hours. This record of service may only include direct contact hours (hours on task).

Service can be performed through school sponsored activities and/or through outside organizations such as churches and other clubs. Both public and private schools are eligible to participate in the Georgia Student Service Award program. Home schooled students may also participate if hours can be certified by an adult.

# GCSV BOARD AND STAFF

## COMMISSIONERS

---

**Dr. Myra Tolbert**

*Board Chair & Program Committee Chair*

**Elaine S. Hollis**

*Chair, Legislative Education Committee*

**Jen Guynn**

*Chair, Service and Development*

**Matt Campbell**

*Vice Chair*

**Ann Rosenthal**

*Secretary*

**Myra Cunningham**

*Ex-Officio*

Aimee Yrlas Simpson  
Lora Grady  
Cayanna Good  
Christy Ellerbee  
Cynthia Jenkins  
Paul Matthews  
Evan Karanovich  
Kathy Colbenson  
Lisa Perry

Quintez Gurndy  
Semba Brittain  
Kristie Sharp  
Rosla Plant  
Ethan Pender  
David Hamilton  
June O'Neal  
Michael Smith

## COMMISSION STAFF

---

**Linda Thompson**

Executive Director

Zaneta Ivery  
Program Officer

Tamara Anthony  
Program Officer

Kimberly DuPree  
Program Officer  
Financial Grants Administrator



**AmeriCorps**  
Georgia



**Georgia Serves**  
**Georgia Department of Community Affairs**  
60 Executive Park South, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329  
[www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov)

[AmeriCorpsGA@dca.ga.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsGA@dca.ga.gov)