

Julie Sande
Commissioner

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Serve Alaska & AmeriCorps Alaska: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service

Friday, January 12, 2024 (Anchorage, AK) — The Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service stands as a day to honor his legacy each year, uniting Americans across the country in volunteer efforts to enhance local communities, reinforce racial equity, expand civic opportunities, and foster respect for individual differences. This day serves as a tangible step toward realizing the beloved community envisioned by Dr. King. Observed annually on the third Monday in January, MLK Day holds the distinction of being the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service, encouraging all Americans to volunteer for the betterment of their communities. For the past quarter-century, AmeriCorps has been entrusted with leading this nationwide effort.

In partnership with the King Center, AmeriCorps continues its stewardship of MLK Day initiatives across the nation. We invite AmeriCorps members and residents of Alaska to join us in stepping up to serve communities throughout the State on Monday, January 15, 2024. This is an opportunity to stand in solidarity with hundreds of thousands of Americans engaging in volunteer service.

"Through acts of service, we can unite communities, empower individuals to stand against hatred, construct bridges, and mend societal divides. Service is the common ground that brings people together, transcending barriers of race, religion, and zip code," highlighted **Katie Abbott, Executive Director** of the Serve Alaska State Commission. "We extend an invitation to our community members to honor Dr. King's enduring legacy of social justice and equity by joining us in volunteering, not just on this day, but throughout the entire year."

Day of Service Projects — AmeriCorps members in Alaska, in partnership with local organizations and tribal groups, will commemorate MLK Day with the following projects:

- **Alaska Public Defender Agency Social Advocate AmeriCorps Members Ensuring Justice (SAME)**—Members across the state will serve their communities in the following projects:
 - **Fairbanks** - Members in Fairbanks will partner with GreenStar of Interior Alaska. They will recycle electronics to combat pollution in Fairbanks, consistently cited as one of the most polluted cities in the nation. Ten volunteers are needed.
 - **Media coverage** is welcome, but kindly refrain from interviewing members/volunteers, the event will start at 10 a.m.

- **Anchorage** – Members in Anchorage will partner with the Pioneer Home. They will talk with and interview residents to compile the interviews for a coffee table book that will be available at the facility. Concurrently, they will host a game/crafts event for residents who prefer not to participate in the conversation. The intent is to provide a sense of community for the elderly residents who are unable to leave the facility. Ten volunteers are needed.
 - **Media coverage** is at the discretion of the Anchorage Pioneer Home, the event will go from noon to 5 p.m.
- **Juneau** – Members in Anchorage will be partnering with the Zach Gordon Youth Center. They will check the expiration dates of canned goods, sort youth clothing donations by size, organize dishes and cutlery while transferring some to the kitchen, turn compost, scrap the chicken pen, and add to the compost. The event will take place on January 17th at 10 a.m. due to staff availability.
 - **Media coverage** is at the discretion of the Zach Gordon Youth Center and the Alaska Public Defender Agency in Juneau.
- **Sitka School District AmeriCorps Program**— Sitka AmeriCorps will be partnering with the Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter to support the shelter’s efforts. Their service day will involve three projects:
 1. **Pet Shoppe** – Four members will organize a space at the shelter for pet food, leashes, and other pet-related items. Members will clean, create labels, move, and remove items, sort through current items, and organize them into a visually pleasing shoppe atmosphere.
 2. **Indoor Dog Park** – Five members will disassemble and remove existing dog kennels, thoroughly clean the space, and, if time allows, recreate the area into a fun and usable space for dogs to socialize and play.
 3. **Cat Jungle** – Three members will reimagine the cat space, a smaller enclosed area requiring thorough cleaning, reorganization, and a fresh coat of paint.
 - **Media coverage** is welcome at the discretion of the Sitka Animal Shelter.
- **RurAL CAP Resilient Alaska Youth (RAY)**— RAY members serve in many different communities and on January 15th for MLK Day of Service will work on a variety of service projects that each member is designing to meet a specific need in their community. They will be completing different service projects based on elder needs in their communities, these include:
 - **Scammon Bay** – a member will talk with youth about bullying and take them to gather bundles of willows for elders to use for firewood. Another member will run a food drive to kickstart a food bank. These projects support the community because many residents in Scammon Bay have not received their SNAP benefits in 3-8 months, and at least a quarter to a third of the community is facing food scarcity as their subsistence resources are running out.
 - **New Stuyahok** – a member will create a mural with the youth who attend his program.

- **Stebbins** – a member will talk with youth about the possibilities and potential in their future and have each of them create an art project about their dream job.
- **Nanwalek** – a member will help the youth in her program with mask-making. Residents in Nanwalek celebrate New Year in a multi-day celebration that ends in mid-January, and youth will be participating in a cultural/community-building activity by making masks for the event.
- **Pitka's Point** – a member will shovel driveways and chop wood for elders with the youth in his program.
- **Koyukuk** – a member will help youth serve lunch and dessert to the community at the school building.
- **Media coverage** is at the discretion of each community and project.

The MLK Day of Service shines a spotlight on service as a powerful force to bridge economic and social divides – today and throughout the year. Projects across the nation include delivering meals, refurbishing schools and community centers, collecting food and clothing, signing up mentors, reading to children, promoting nonviolence, and more. For more information, visit AmeriCorps.gov/MLKDay

Serve Alaska promotes and supports volunteerism across the state and brings AmeriCorps programs to Alaska. It is overseen by no fewer than 15 and no more than 25 voting Commission members appointed by the Governor. The Serve Alaska sub-grantees operate in almost every region of the state, bringing much-needed support and training to rural and urban Alaska. Serve Alaska is housed within the Division for Community and Regional Affairs and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development at the State of Alaska.

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for volunteerism and national service, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency invests more than \$800 million in grants for local nonprofit, community, tribal, and state organizations; places more than 250,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at AmeriCorps.gov.

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Media Contact: Mirna Estrada, (907) 269-4561, mirna.estrada@alaska.gov