



2023

SERVE ALASKA  
ANNUAL REPORT



AmeriCorps

ServeAlaska<sup>★</sup>



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**KATIE ABBOTT**

Dear Friends in Service and Volunteering,

2023 was a very exciting year for us at Serve Alaska, and we are thrilled to share with you the 2023 Serve Alaska Annual Report. AmeriCorps members and community volunteers continue to make a huge impact in our state and really represent the spirit of Alaska. I recently heard someone say, “The call to serve is the call to love. To love your neighbor, your community, and your planet.” We are seeing Alaskans across the state embody this idea every day. We invite you to keep serving your community, elders, youth, and planet and continue making a difference. The effect of these daily acts of kindness cannot be overstated and continues to create tremendous positive impacts across Alaska.

This past year, we were able to demonstrate the resilience and generous spirit of Alaska to many guests to our state including a hugely impactful visit from CEO of AmeriCorps, Michael Smith alongside a delegation of national partners including Center for Native American Youth, Native Americans in Philanthropy and Native Forward. Their five-day trip allowed them to see what we already know: that despite unique challenges, volunteering and national service thrives in Alaska and that local community members are using their lived experience and expertise to help their neighbors and prepare Alaska for the future.

At Serve Alaska, we are striving to create a funding partnership to lift local knowledge in partnership with state and federal resources. We have worked to make our grant-making more accessible while also trying to decrease burdens to sub-grantees to help them focus on impacts, not paperwork. We have been working with partners to create better member experiences including helping to connect them to education and workforce opportunities after their service. We will focus on continued improvements on these fronts going into 2024, as well as trying to expand our programming to new focus areas.

None of the work we do would be possible without tremendous efforts from so many people. I want to thank our AmeriCorps sub-grantees, AmeriCorps members, Commissioners, and Commission staff. They are passionate about helping Alaskans and work day in and day out to get things done for our state. I am also grateful for the partnership and funding from the State of Alaska and AmeriCorps. And finally, I want to thank every Alaskan that has stepped up to be of service and help. From volunteering at your local food bank, to serving as a mentor in a school, to bringing food to the elders in your community or shoveling snow for your neighbor, every bit helps make Alaska great and a special place to call home.

Katie Abbott  
Executive Director

# CONTENT

*	4-5	ABOUT US
*	6-7	COMMISSIONERS & STAFF
*	8	FACTS & FIGURES
*	9-15	CURRENT PROGRAMS
*	16	PLANNING GRANTEES
*	17	LEADERSHIP VISITS
*	18-21	DAYS OF SERVICE
*	22	AMERICORPS WEEK
*	23	MEMBER GATHERING
*	24	VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION
*	25	VOLUNTEER ADMIN TRANING



# ABOUT US

Serve Alaska, in partnership with AmeriCorps brings National Service programs to Alaska. The Serve Alaska sub-grantees operate in almost every region of the state, bringing much needed support and training to rural and urban Alaska.

## VISION

Our vision for Alaska is a vibrant and caring community, strengthened through service and volunteerism, to problem solve and improve the lives of all Alaskans using “Service as a Solution.”

## MISSION

We seek to foster, support and promote the ethic of service and volunteerism by inviting all Alaskans to contribute their time and talents to build healthy communities through the six focus areas.

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Families

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Commission is to engage Alaskans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service and volunteerism as a means of community and state problem solving and promoting participation in the National AmeriCorps Program.

## **WHAT IS SERVE ALASKA?**

Serve Alaska (SA) is one of 52 state service commissions developed to promote volunteerism and service at the local level. Serve Alaska achieves this through providing funding for AmeriCorps programming; technical assistance; training; and outreach. It is housed in the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development in the Division for Community and Regional Affairs.

## **WHY IS IT IN STATE GOVERNMENT AND HOW DOES IT FIT?**

State commissions, such as Serve Alaska, are designed to serve as the liaison between the federal government, state government, and local and regional entities in developing service and volunteerism models as a solution for community issues. When the Corporation for Community and National Service was created to fund and promote increased service opportunities, there was concern that the federal government could not understand the unique needs of every state—thus state commissions were created. State Commissions are made up of 15-25 governor appointed commissioners across different sectors and political parties to use federal funds for programming that makes sense at the local and regional level. Commissions serve as a key organization in the state to liaise with the non-profit sector to increase their capacity to provide measurable programming in a cost-efficient manner. Through a state service plan, state commissions perform outreach and needs assessments across the state by reaching out to community members, non-profit leaders, businesses, and local government officials. This helps to develop a road map for how the state can assist local communities in using volunteerism and service in a more meaningful way.

## **WHO IS AMERICORPS?**

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](http://AmeriCorps.gov).

## **WHO DOES SERVE ALASKA SERVE?**

Serve Alaska has a broad range of clients. These include non-profits, government, and faith based organizations interested in applying for AmeriCorps funds to start programming; non-profit volunteer administrators; AmeriCorps members; and any Alaskan that receives a benefit from the service provided by AmeriCorps members from youth in Rural Alaska to clients of public defenders to trail users to the elderly preparing for disasters.

# OUR COMMISSIONERS

SERVE ALASKA, THE STATE SERVICE COMMISSION, IS FUNDED THROUGH AMERICORPS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE OF ALASKA.



**GENEVIEVE SCHMIDT**



**JAMIE LYTTON**



**JEREMY HAWK**



**RAGA NADELLA**



**BRAD BILLINGS**



**LACEY BYRD**



**YATIBAEY EVANS**



**SHARON JACKSON**



**ELLEN HUGHES**



**CHRIS EVERSMAN**

**SERVE ALASKA COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO THREE YEARS TERMS**

\*TAYLOR MCCANN - NOT PICTURED

## OUR STAFF

SERVE ALASKA FUNCTIONS WITH A STAFF OF FOUR INDIVIDUALS WHO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO AMERICORPS PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND STAFF ACROSS THE STATE OF ALASKA. IT IS THIS COLLABORATION AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES THAT ENABLES THE COMMISSION TO BOTH ADDRESS AND SOLVE COMMUNITY NEEDS.



**KATIE ABBOTT**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
907-269-6720  
katie.abbott@alaska.gov



**CARLA BURKHEAD**  
**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**  
907-269-4674  
carla.burkhead@alaska.gov



**JILL FURBISH**  
**GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR II**  
907-269-4537  
jill.furbish@alaska.gov



**MIRNA ESTRADA**  
**COMMUNICATIONS AND RECRUITMENT**  
907-269-4661  
mirna.estrada@alaska.gov

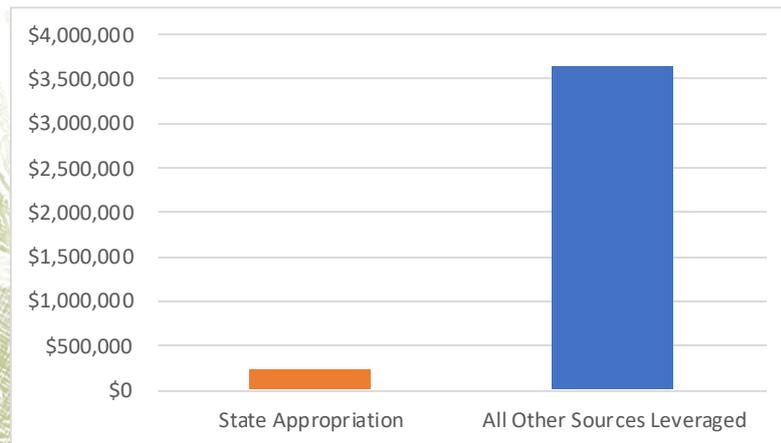
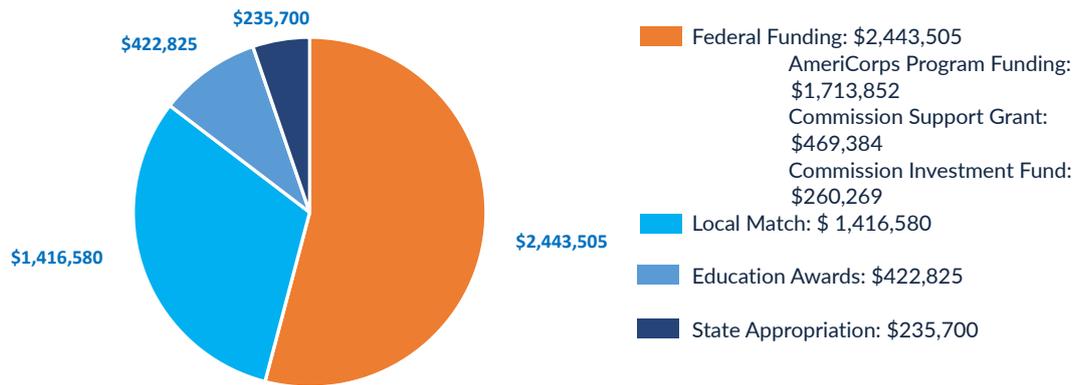


**AmeriCorps**

**ServeAlaska** 

# THE FACTS ABOUT SERVE ALASKA STATE SERVICE COMMISSION FUNDING METRICS

**IN 2022-2023 FOR \$235,700 IN STATE FUNDS, ALASKA RECEIVED:**





**13,270**  
CLIENTS SERVED



**297**  
VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED



**2,131**  
VOLUNTEERS HOURS

**TOTAL RESOURCES LEVERAGED:**  
**\$4,283,180**

# 2022-2023 AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

- Alaska Public Defender Agency
- Rural Alaska Community Action Program
- United Way of Southeast Alaska
- Sitka School District
- The Student Conservation Association
- Alaska Afterschool Network

## PLANNING GRANTEES

- Alaska Food Policy Council
- United Way of Anchorage





## ALASKA PUBLIC DEFENDER AGENCY

The AmeriCorps program at the Public Defender Agency provides a unique opportunity for clients involved in the legal system at the early stages to receive assistance navigating the social services network from AmeriCorps members who have committed to the service of others. Their clients can receive assistance applying for disability income, veteran's benefits, substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, housing, education, and other services in their communities. With the ability to access services in this manner through the AmeriCorps program, clients are able to make long-term improvements to their lives. Accessing these resources can improve legal outcomes in their cases, but more importantly, can help in overcoming non-legal barriers to successful integration into their communities. AmeriCorps members who serve with the Public Defender Agency have the opportunity to make profound impacts in the lives of those they serve and to build lasting relationships with other AmeriCorps members, personnel within the Agency, and residents of the communities in which they serve.

**MEMBERS PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME, JUSTICE-INVOLVED ALASKANS TO ADDRESS NON-LEGAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS AND ACCESS TO SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

### Member Reflection:

"I have been scheduling visits with my clients at the jail for at least one day of each week. I have not had success in finding transportation to detention facilities, so I usually take the bus to go to my visits. To be efficient, I schedule a few visits each time I go to the facility. Because of this, I find that after I have finished all that needs to be done for each client's meeting, we typically wait for about ten to fifteen minutes before an officer comes and escorts the client back. During this time, I have had some meaningful conversations with my clients. They often tell me about their family back home and even some stories about their childhood. I had one client tell me about how their family would be invited on cruises to show people their heritage. I think having these discussions with my clients provides me more perspective about their situations. It also allows me to see what my clients have had to overcome, most of the time alone without assistance. These conversations give me the motivation to keep working and advocating for them."



**Focus area: Healthy Futures**

**AmeriCorps Investment: \$286,380**

**Local Match: \$229,524**

# RURAL ALASKA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM



RurAL CAP's Resilient Alaska Youth (RAY) AmeriCorps program addresses rural Alaska's high rates of youth substance abuse and suicide through the cultivation of resiliency, supportive relationships, and positive cultural identity. RAY AmeriCorps members support youth through in-school, afterschool, and out-of-school activities in rural Alaskan schools, tribal governments, city governments or youth serving non-profits. They plan and implement curriculum across communities statewide. Members are individuals over 18 who promote positive development and experiential learning in youth through afterschool activities and life-skill building. RAY AmeriCorps members are recruited locally from their communities by a sponsoring community program partner like tribal or city councils, local schools, or health clinics. Members serve terms aligned with the academic calendar year and are provided with comprehensive training and support.

**MEMBERS ENGAGE  
ALASKA NATIVE  
YOUTH USING  
EXPERIENTIAL-  
BASED LEARNING  
AND CULTURAL  
ACTIVITIES IN 15  
RURAL  
COMMUNITIES  
ACROSS ALASKA.**

## Member Reflections:

"While serving in New Stuyahok I noticed one student who was always quiet and shy when he first started coming to our activities and now that he is coming more often, seems like he is slowly getting used to us and the youth. Youth have started asking me when I'm going to do activities again whenever they see me in public."

"As an AmeriCorps member I helped the students with butchering moose to be distributed to the community in Pilot Station. We hosted native arts projects such as dancing, beading, sewing/ quspaks, storytelling, and ice fishing. While ice fishing we traveled 40 miles upriver to the fishing spots or on the Yukon River outside of Pilot Station then shared in a community potluck."

"As an AmeriCorps member serving in Nanwalek, I held the "Sweetheart Pageant", an event that encourages young women to grow and show their skills. Some nights we practice two hours some nights it's longer but It helps the girls come together and have something to look forward to after all the COIVD. I also assist in hosting weekly seal dance practices and was able to be chaperone 13 youth on a trip to Anchorage to perform."



**Focus area: COVID 19 Recovery, Education, Economic Opportunity**

**AmeriCorps Investment: \$347,283**

**Local Match: \$347,283**



## UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA

United Way of Southeast Alaska AmeriCorps Program provides one on one interventions, mentorship, and works with adults who are striving to get degrees or certificates, works in pre-school programs and at a STEM education program.

AmeriCorps members are responsible for providing supplemental academic support and mentoring support to our youngest youth with a focus on increased literacy skills and improved academic success.

Service sites include: Juneau's five elementary schools, Zach Gordon Youth Center, Little Eagle and Raven Childcare, Alaska Housing Development Corporation, Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition, Juneau Economic Development Council, and the Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC)

**MEMBERS PROVIDE  
TARGETED SUPPORT  
TO PREK TO 12TH  
GRADE STUDENTS,  
YOUTH RESIDING IN  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
SHELTERS, OR  
ADULTS ACCESSING  
SERVICES AT AN  
ADULT EDUCATION  
CENTER.**

### Member Reflection:

"I felt very protective of the students I served. I didn't know how much I could teach them about reading and writing, though a significant improvement in literacy was achieved in all of them, but I mostly wanted to show them that school could be fun, and that they mattered."

"I visited the town of Newhalen for the Lake and Peninsula School District's annual SNAP (Sports, Native Youth Olympics, Academics, and Prom) event. SNAP is the one chance for all the students from grades 7-12 in the school district to get together since each village is only accessible by bush plane. It allows them the chance to participate in activities they otherwise would not be able to do in their small schools of mainly 10-20 kids. I went to the event to provide an initial demonstration of the robotics program run by my AmeriCorps host site Juneau Economic Development Council. The best part of the experience was when a counselor came up to me after one session and thanked us for the program. He said it was the first time he saw one student smile since his mom passed away a few weeks ago. It served as a good reminder to me that not only are students learning valuable skills, but they are being given a safe, comforting environment."

**Focus area: Education**

**AmeriCorps Investment: \$335,389**

**Local Match: \$179,595**



# SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT



Sitka AmeriCorps Program serves the community of Sitka through a partnership with the Sitka School District. The mission of the Sitka AmeriCorps Program is to mitigate the effects of high Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) scores prevalent in rural Alaskan communities, through building developmental relationships. Community needs are addressed on the grounds “increased resiliency leads to better long-term health and academic outcomes.”

This is accomplished through enrichment activities, academic support, capacity building, mental health and life skills, and mentoring. The program is also concerned with learning loss recovery from COVID-19.

Service sites include: Baranof Elementary School, Blatchley Middle School, Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School, Pacific High School, Sitka High School, Mt. Edgecumbe High School, Raven’s Way of Sitka, Sitka Counselling, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitkans Against Family Violence and Youth Advocates of Sitka.

Members are encouraged to perform ten percent of their total service hours engaged in service activities outside their primary placement. They often become active in local clubs, faith community, support groups and our tribal community, and learning more about the joys and challenges of the community in which they serve.

**MEMBERS  
SERVE TO INCREASE  
CHILDREN'S  
RESILIENCE TO THE  
EFFECTS OF  
COVID-19 AND TO  
REDUCE  
IMPACT OF HIGH  
ADVERSE  
CHILDHOOD  
EXPERIENCE  
SCORES IN SITKA.**

## Member Reflection:

“I worked with a client that expressed troubling information to me during the session. The information had not been expressed to anybody else yet and I immediately knew that it was pertinent information for the counseling center. I got in touch with a higher power within Sitka counseling as well as the client’s clinician and was able to get some changes made regarding the situation. By the next week, the situation was resolved.”

“At Mount Edgecumbe High School we started taking the kids to the radio station to host their own show on KCAW. Each Sunday night, I bring a group of kids and watch them find their voice through the radio. They get to choose their own songs to play and then talk about them, share the weather, and the community calendar.”

**Focus area: Education & Healthy Futures**

**AmeriCorps Investment: \$534,800**

**Budgeted Match: \$330,000**





## THE STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

The Student Conservation Association's (SCA) Alaska Corps team is focused on providing young adults opportunities to grow competitive skills in the field of conservation trail work to prepare them to move into jobs with their project partners after their term of service.

The SCA Alaska Conservation Corps is a 14-week AmeriCorps program focused on leadership development, completing trail work projects and building a sense of community. Members of the crew spend 3 months on service projects with various federal, state and local agencies across Alaska. Members collaborate on a variety of projects in partnership with various federal, state, and local partners, on numerous conservation projects across Alaska. Teams sometimes operate with partner staff or on their own to produce the outputs of the project. The program is tailored for members to develop skills based on hands-on conservation service experience, professional development training, and nationally recognized certifications.

Alaska Corps teams live and work together for the duration of their program. SCA emphasizes the importance of community building and growth in interpersonal skills throughout the program.

Federal partners include: National Park Service, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

**MEMBERS  
PROVIDE  
CONSERVATION  
STEWARDSHIP TO  
PUBLICLY  
ACCESSIBLE LANDS  
IN ALASKA.**

### Member Reflection:

"We engaged in a Day of Service in Chugach State Park where trails were in rough shape from years of neglect and high usage due to their proximity to urban Anchorage. Several trail building projects were scouted and prepared ahead of time so members could practice our newly acquired trail building skills and perform trail repair."

"The biggest success I observed was seeing the Steese National Conservation Area Trail completely rehabilitated by AmeriCorps members. We removed a half mile of old boardwalk and replaced it with new construction. This trail is significant because it protects fragile alpine habitat while allowing low-impact public access to over 1.2 million acres of Federally managed land."



**Focus area: Environmental Stewardship**

**AmeriCorps Investment: \$210,000**

**Budgeted Match: \$195,000**

# ALASKA AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK



Alaska Afterschool Network AmeriCorps is a statewide AmeriCorps program directed by the Alaska Afterschool Network. The goals of the Afterschool AmeriCorps program are: To engage more girls in out-of-school time STEM learning and to create a pathway into an exciting career in afterschool and summer learning.

COVID-19 has significantly disrupted student learning throughout Alaska. Additionally, Alaska has struggled to recruit and retain women in the STEM workforce. The Afterschool AmeriCorps program seeks to address these two concerns by engaging girls in afterschool STEM programming to accelerate student learning and support STEM equity.

Community partners include: Anchorage 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Boys & Girls Clubs of Alaska.

**MEMBERS SUPPORT  
STUDENTS IN  
AFTER-SCHOOL  
PROGRAMING  
PROVIDING  
STRUCTURED  
ACTIVITIES TO MEET  
THEIR SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL NEEDS.**

## Member Reflection:

“There are lots of kids at Lake Otis Elementary School where I served in the summer, I think 200 kids per day. I decided early on that I was going to try to remember all of their names; and I think I’ve memorized, like, over 75% of kid’s names. One day a kid was doing a circus act thing, and I asked for his name. He said, “my name is \_\_\_\_\_.” About five days later I saw him in the hall, and I said, “hey \_\_\_\_\_!” And his face lit up and he said back to me, “Thank you so much for remembering my name!”

“One of the kids that I really enjoyed working with was a teen, and he really likes to cook... he came to me with a specific recipe, and while we made it we were talking. It turns out he’s in foster care, as well as his brother. He told me when we were cooking about all kinds of things they are dealing with at home, and that this [Boys & Girls Club] is a place where he goes to feel safe. He and his brother would both greet me at the door when I showed up to site.



**Focus area: Education**

**Note that this program was funded with 2021-2022 funds.**



## PLANNING GRANTS

A planning grant serves the purpose of assisting an organization in the initial stages of conceptualizing and developing a brand-new AmeriCorps program. These grants are allocated for a one-year duration and are distinct in that they do not cover the support of AmeriCorps members.

Throughout the planning period, the applicant is entrusted with the task of crafting an AmeriCorps program that effectively addresses a specific need within their community or communities.

The staff at Serve Alaska plays a dual role in administering these grants while also offering valuable support and guidance to aid the applicant throughout this critical planning process.



### **Alaska Food Policy Council**

Alaska Food Policy Council proposes to strengthen an AmeriCorps program with a planning grant across the State of Alaska, that will focus on the AmeriCorps focus areas of Healthy Futures and Economic Opportunity.



### **United Way of Anchorage**

### **United Way of Anchorage**

The United Way of Anchorage proposes to strengthen an AmeriCorps program with a planning grant in the Municipality of Anchorage, that will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Healthy Futures, Education, and Economic Opportunity.

# AMERICORPS LEADERS & PARTNERS VISIT ALASKA



- 1. NCCC Director Ken Goodman's Exploration of Conservation Projects (June):** National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) Director Ken Goodman visited Alaska in June, focusing on exploring and understanding the conservation projects undertaken by AmeriCorps members serving in Alaska year-round. During his visit, Goodman participated in field activities, gaining firsthand experience of the environmental initiatives led by AmeriCorps in Alaska. This engagement not only showcased the impact of AmeriCorps in conservation efforts but also highlighted the collaborative relationship between NCCC and Serve Alaska in addressing critical environmental and community challenges.
- 2. SCA CEO Lidia Soto Harmon's Collaboration Summit (July):** In an effort to further enhance environmental stewardship, Lidia Soto Harmon, the CEO of the Student Conservation Association (SCA), visited Serve Alaska in July. The visit included a summit where SCA and Serve Alaska leadership discussed strategies to expand opportunities for young individuals interested in conservation. This meeting aimed to foster a stronger partnership between the two organizations, leveraging their combined resources to empower more AmeriCorps members in making a lasting impact on the Alaskan environment. Soto Harmon's visit emphasized the importance of cross-organizational collaboration in achieving shared conservation goals and promoting youth engagement in environmental initiatives.
- 3. Michael Smith, CEO of AmeriCorps and Yasmeen Shaheen-McConnell, Senior Adviser for Strategic Partnerships, Visited Alaska (August):** AmeriCorps leadership traveled the state alongside partners from Center for Native American Youth, Native Forward, and Native Americans in Philanthropy. During their five days in Alaska, they visited the communities of Bethel, Scammon Bay, and Fairbanks, and hosted discussions on workforce development, member experiences, and higher education. The delegation prioritized meeting with Tribes in Alaska to hear how AmeriCorps can be stronger partners.
- 4. President Biden's Recognition of Serve Alaska's 9/11 Ceremony (September):** In a momentous occasion, President Biden paid a visit to Alaska in September. During his visit, he had the opportunity to meet Serve Alaska's Executive Director, Katie Abbott, and interact with currently serving members as part of the 9/11 Ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) in Alaska. This recognition from the highest office in the land underscores the importance of the work being done by Serve Alaska and its members.

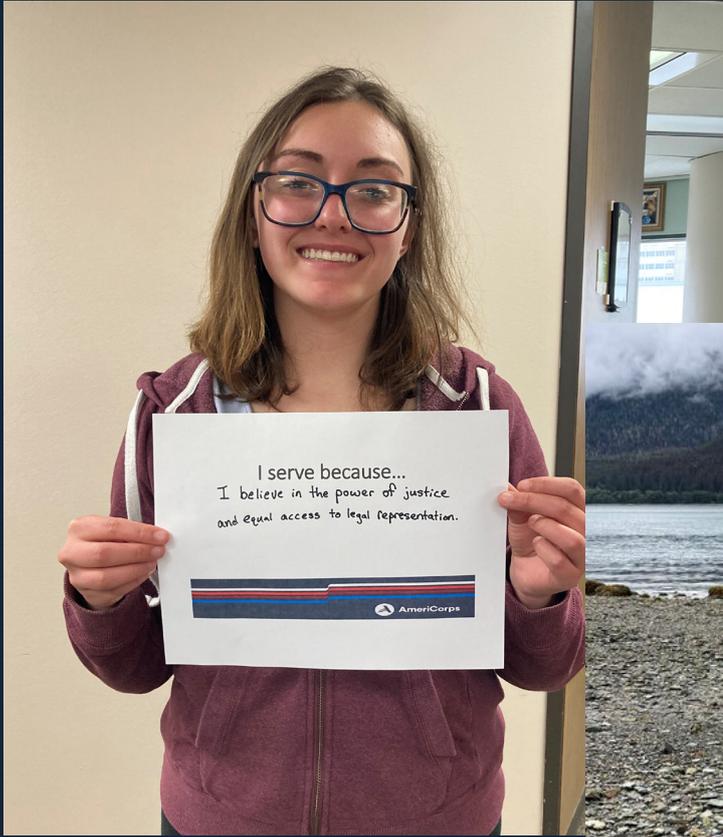




# 9/11 DAY OF SERVICE

**Day of Service Projects** – AmeriCorps members in Alaska, in partnership with local organizations and tribal groups, commemorated 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance with the following projects:

- **Sitka AmeriCorps Marine Debris Cleanup:** AmeriCorps members in Sitka partnered with the Sitka Sound Science Center and local citizens to lead a marine debris cleanup on Kruozoff Island. This initiative aimed to address the unsightly beach trash while mitigating potential hazards to marine life.
- **RurAL CAP Resilient Alaska Youth Opioid Overdose Prevention Kits:** AmeriCorps members from RurAL CAP Resilient Alaska Youth assembled opioid overdose prevention kits for Project Hope in collaboration with the State of Alaska Office of Substance Misuse and Addiction Prevention. This effort contributed to the ongoing fight against substance misuse.
- **Alaska Public Defender Agency:** AmeriCorps members affiliated with the Alaska Public Defender Agency executed diverse projects across the state:
  - **Anchorage** members took an active role in the second day of Special Olympics events, embodying the spirit of service by providing crucial assistance wherever needed. From meticulous scorekeeping to facilitating event setup and ensuring a smooth take-down process, their dedicated involvement underscored a commitment to inclusivity and the success of the Special Olympics, reinforcing the values of unity and community support.
  - **Fairbanks** members organized a collection drive for cold weather gear to support those in need, reinforcing the commitment to community well-being.
  - **Juneau** members engaged in the collection of seaweed from the local beaches, contributing to the Zac Gordon Youth Center Garden Bed. The seaweed obtained will play a vital role in preparing the garden beds for the upcoming growing season, showcasing a sustainable and community-oriented approach.





# MLK DAY OF SERVICE

**Day of Service Projects** – AmeriCorps members in Alaska in partnership with local organizations and tribal groups commemorated MLK Day of Service with the following projects:

- **Sitka AmeriCorps** members celebrated by honoring Brave Heart Volunteers, a non-profit providing free care. With handmade cards, a luncheon, and a creative activity, they acknowledged the vital role volunteers played in shaping Sitka's community.
- **RurAL CAP Resilient Alaska Youth AmeriCorps** members celebrated MLK Day by designing and implementing diverse service projects in their respective communities. Activities included a community art project, food delivery for elders, trash collection, clothing and food distribution, and a community celebration. Collaborating with local tribes, schools, or city governments, RAY members addressed specific needs in their areas.
- **United Way of Southeast Alaska AmeriCorps** members collaborated with the Southeast Alaska Foodbank to serve lunch at the Glory Hall Emergency Shelter for around 70 people. They also organized the collection and distribution of toiletry donations, addressing hunger and homelessness in the community.
- **Alaska Public Defender Agency AmeriCorps** In Fairbanks, members across Alaska engaged in impactful MLK Day service projects. In Fairbanks, they organized a warm clothing drive and served breakfast at the Bread Line. Anchorage members assisted at the Downtown Soup Kitchen Hope Center, while Palmer members conducted a winter gear drive for My Grandma's House. The efforts aimed at addressing community needs, from clothing for the vulnerable to supporting children served by nonprofits.





# AMERICORPS WEEK

AmeriCorps Week 2023, observed from March 12-18, was a dedicated period to honor and appreciate the commitment of millions of Americans who have chosen to serve their country through AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors. This week-long celebration recognized the selfless contributions of members and volunteers who, often as the first on the ground and the last to leave, strive to leave their projects in better conditions than they found them.

With a focus on sustained, results-driven service, AmeriCorps engages 200,000 Americans annually. Throughout AmeriCorps Week, the nation acknowledged the significant impact of these members and volunteers, who play pivotal roles in various areas such as COVID-19 response, education support, hunger and homelessness alleviation, natural disaster response, opioid epidemic combat, assistance to seniors, and support for veterans and military families. AmeriCorps Week served as a testament to the diverse and vital contributions made by individuals committed to bettering communities through their dedicated service.





The 2023 AmeriCorps Member Gathering, held from March 8th to 10th at the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel & Spa, brought together AmeriCorps members from across the state for a dynamic celebration of service.

Themed “United in Service,” the event offered a unique platform for networking, learning about life after AmeriCorps, and honing service skills through a mix of speakers, workshops, and team-building activities.

The 2023 AmeriCorps Member Gathering in Anchorage served as a hub for inspiration, collaboration, and skill development, reinforcing the commitment of AmeriCorps members to making a positive difference in their communities.

---

## **2023 AMERICORPS MEMBER GATHERING**

# VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

On April 25th, 2023, Serve Alaska, AmeriCorps Alaska, and Just Serve hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in Anchorage for National Volunteer Week. Lieutenant Governor Dahlstrom and Mayor Bronson attended, recognizing key volunteers from various organizations. Sponsored by MOA, Bridge Builders of Anchorage, JustServe, Serve Alaska, and Crumbl Cookie Company, the event celebrated volunteers' contributions to disaster services, economic opportunity, education, and more.

Katie Abbott, Serve Alaska's Executive Director, commended volunteers for addressing local needs. Allison Smith from Just Serve Alaska highlighted the event's role in uniting leaders and volunteers from over thirty organizations to celebrate community-building efforts. The collaborative impact of volunteers, often partnering with AmeriCorps, was noted.

AmeriCorps' research showcased volunteers' economic value, with more than 400 Americans contributing through national service in Alaska. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers served at over 100 locations, 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, AmeriCorps and its partners generated more than \$1.5 million in outside resources, strengthening community impact and increasing the return on taxpayer dollars.





In 2023, Serve Alaska collaborated with Beth Steinhorn, President of VQ Volunteer Strategies, to deliver a vital resource for volunteer administrators statewide—the Alaska Volunteer Administrators Training. This six-week virtual course, offered at no cost, comprised six 90-minute sessions, providing in-depth insights into crucial volunteer management practices.

Tailored for new and mid-level professionals (0-5 years' experience) in nonprofit, community, faith-based, higher education, or government organizations in Alaska, the training aimed to empower administrators with a robust foundation for successful volunteer engagement.

This strategic initiative highlighted Serve Alaska's commitment to fortifying the volunteer infrastructure, acknowledging the pivotal role of administrators in ensuring impactful volunteer experiences. The training not only facilitated individual professional development but also promoted a culture of excellence in volunteer administration, contributing to the overall effectiveness of volunteer programs throughout Alaska. Serve Alaska plans to continue to bring professional development opportunities similar to this to the field

---

## **VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATORS TRAINING**



AmeriCorps

ServeAlaska<sup>★</sup>

THE VISION OF SERVE ALASKA IS A  
**VIBRANT AND CARING  
COMMUNITY,**  
— STRENGTHENED THROUGH —  
**SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM,**  
**TO PROBLEM SOLVE & IMPROVE**  
THE LIVES OF ALL ALASKANS  
USING “SERVICE AS A SOLUTION”.

---

# Serve Alaska

## State Service Commission

Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA)

Department of Commerce, Community, and  
Economic Development (DCCED)

550 W. 7th Ave Suite 1640,  
Anchorage, AK 99501