

# Virtual Meeting Tips & Best Practices

## Rules of Engagement



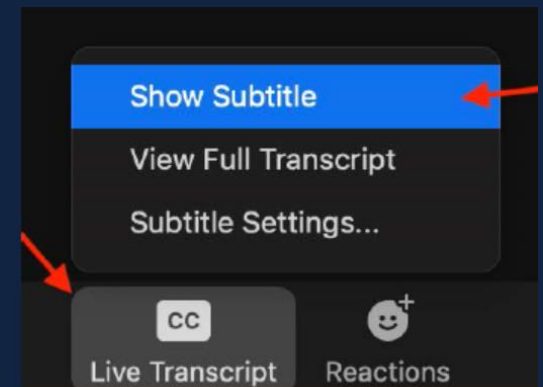
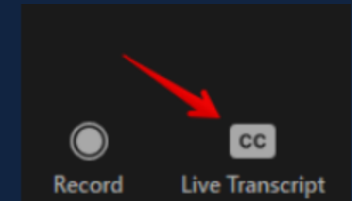
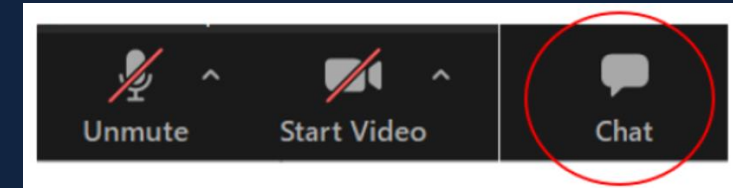
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# Leveraging Transformative Resources to Meet Community Needs and Ignite a Lifetime of Civic Engagement

June 8, 2023

Office of Research and Evaluation



# Setting the Stage

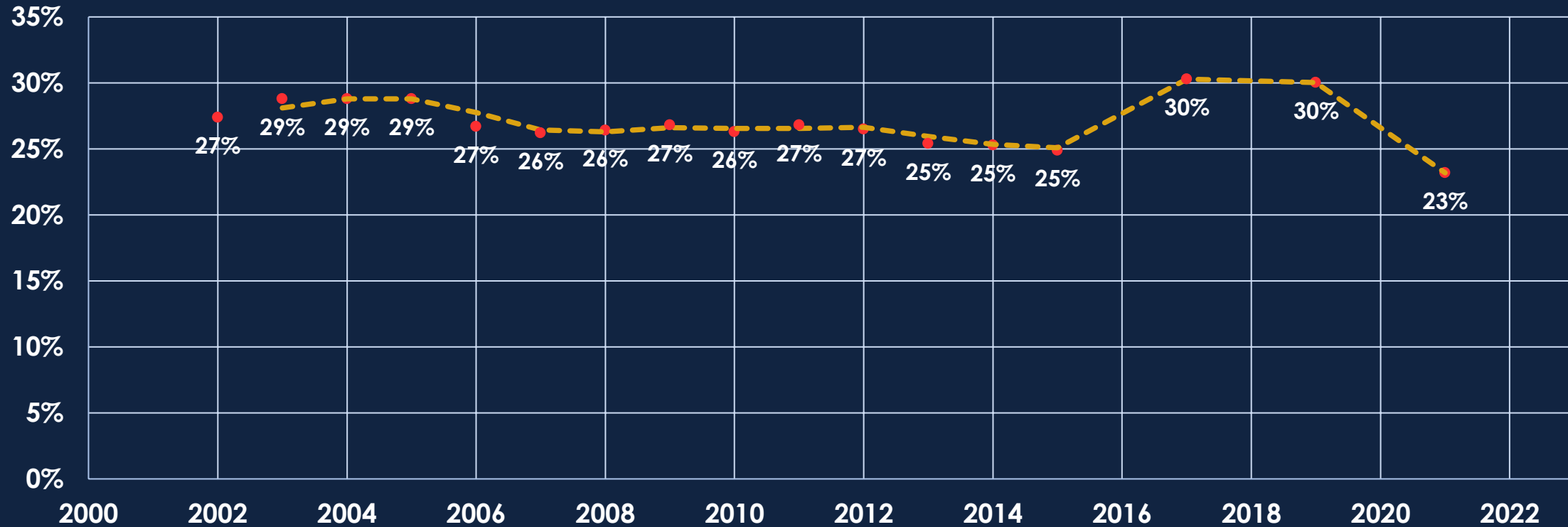
Jehyra M. Asencio Yace, PhD

Research Analyst, AmeriCorps



# Stability in the national volunteering rate ... until COVID

## National Volunteering Rate, 2002-2021



Source for 2002-15 figures: Grimm, Robert T. Jr., and Dietz, Nathan. 2018. "Where Are America's Volunteers? A Look at America's Widespread Decline in Volunteering in Cities and States." Research Brief: Do Good Institute, University of Maryland.



## Life Cycle Evaluations

- Build evidence in high priority areas of work
- Use a bundling approach
- Increase evaluation capacity
- Foster peer learning

## Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) and the 2020 Cohort Evaluation

- Program established by congress in 2009.
- In 2022, AmeriCorps expanded the VGF Program scope to other organizations and entities and has a current cohort of 18 grantees nationwide.
- Evaluation designed with FY 2020 Cohort will be completed in early Fall.
- AmeriCorps first effort to examine program models and best practices.

# Scholarly Literature Review

\*New version to be published this Summer!

## Volunteer Management Practices

- Match Volunteers to Roles Based on Interest
- Support Volunteers Professionally and Emotionally
- Clearly Define Volunteers' Roles
- Train Volunteers and Provide Learning Opportunities
- Provide Volunteers with Feedback and Recognition

## Volunteer Recruitment Practices

- Communicate the Organization's Investment in Volunteers
- Match Volunteers' Motivations to Volunteer Recruitment Messaging
- Explicitly Invite Different Populations of Interest

Samantha Spinney, PhD

Principal Investigator of Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation, ICF

Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation  
Preliminary Findings

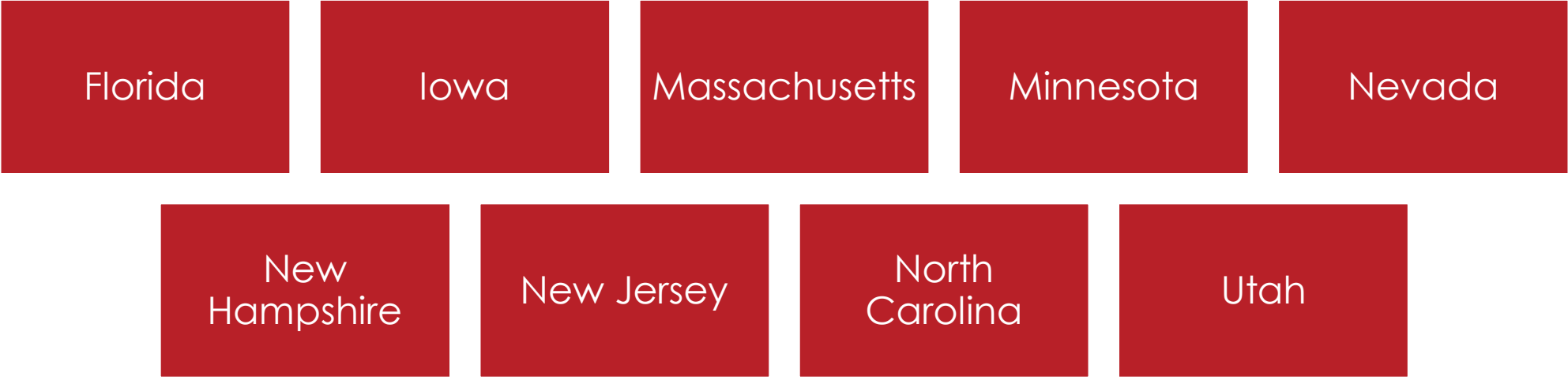


# Evaluation Overview

**Purpose:**

Learn more about how state commissions who received a Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grant in 2020 are using funding to support volunteer management

**Participating state commissions:**





# Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Strategies provided by commissions during training and capacity-building activities:

- Writing stronger volunteer position descriptions
- Creating easy entry activities
- Recruiting different types of volunteers
- Aligning volunteers to tasks they enjoy doing
- Demonstrating appreciation

Strategies depend on the type of volunteer, size of organization, capacity of organization, staffing, etc.

# Emerging Topics in Volunteer Engagement

## Managing volunteers in COVID-19

- Stopping or pivoting use of volunteers
- Success engaging volunteers trained in medicine
- Training and capacity building: operating with fewer volunteers, recording volunteer trainings, engaging volunteers virtually

## DEI in volunteer management

- Overrepresentation of volunteers among more privileged groups
- Training and capacity building: engaging diverse volunteers (e.g., updating recruitment language)
- A DEI lens, but not always a specific



# Challenges

Low training participation

Measuring volunteer retention

Networking opportunities

Training on data collection and management

Lack of DEI in Service Enterprise



# Preliminary Outcomes

Creation of  
volunteer  
management  
networks

Expanded reach

Improved  
volunteer  
onboarding

Better alignment  
of volunteers to  
needs

Leader in the  
county or state

Approachability  
of Service  
Enterprise

Improved  
volunteer  
descriptions

Continued  
training  
opportunities

Qualification for  
larger grants

# Volunteer Management Models Identified in the Study



**Service  
Enterprise**

**Stanford  
Pathways**

**Human  
Resource  
Management**

# Kayla Paulson

Service Enterprise Program Administrator, ALIVE



# Service Enterprise

National Accreditation in Strategic Volunteer Engagement



## Great way to amplify AmeriCorps programming & funding

- **Senior Corps:** Help stations create more impactful opportunities, strengthen community engagement, and be able to report hours, outputs, & outcomes
- **AmeriCorps:** Strengthen organization's ability to recruit, train, and supervise members in addition to bringing in volunteers to amplify and supplement AmeriCorps' efforts
- **VGF:** Change management program that focuses on building an organization's capacity to engage volunteers (need I say more?)

**Kayla Paulson,  
CVA**

Experienced:

- RSVP Director
- Interim  
AmeriCorps  
Director
- VGF Volunteer  
Center Leader

# Service Enterprise

National Accreditation in Strategic Volunteer Engagement



## Service Enterprises (Organizations)

Fundamentally leverage volunteers and their skills throughout the organization to achieve its social mission.

## Service Enterprise Program

Cross-functional multi-level organization team solely focused on improving the way they leverage the skills, time, and talents of volunteers.

## SE Training & Implementation Hubs

Partners across the nation that deliver the SE program by providing training, coaching, and facilitating change with a cohort of organizations.

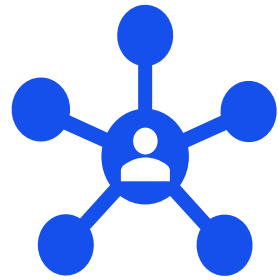


# Service Enterprise Program

Guiding Principles



**Volunteer  
Ecosystem**



**Make it  
Core**



**True  
Community  
Needs**



**Need to  
Invest**



**DEAI**

# Service Enterprise Program

## Key Outcomes & Findings



- All organizational capacities are **significantly and markedly stronger** for nonprofits with a strong volunteer management model
- **Significantly better led and managed**
- Significantly **more adaptable, sustainable and capable of going to scale**
- Operating as a Service Enterprise requires strong and **well-developed human resources management practices**
- Are equally as effective as their peers without volunteers but at almost **half the median budget**

# How Service Enterprise Works for Orgs.

Transforming Organizations to Strategically Engage Volunteers



## Volunteer Engagement 101 Training Series

Prepares organizations by training individuals in volunteer engagement core competencies.

## Organization Change Management Program

Organization transformational process bringing a cross-functional multi-level team together for true cultural change.

## Diagnostic & Debrief

SE trainers facilitate a debrief conversation about research-based report & specific recommendations.

## National Network

Service Enterprise Training & Implementation Hubs connect regularly sharing resources, problem-solving, and connecting organizations across the nation.

## Continuous Learning & Improvement

ALIVE offers Academies & a Community of Practice that is exclusive to Service Enterprise organizations.

## Custom Training & Coaching

Adaptive to the needs of the organization and provides the ability to meet them where they are.

# Become an Implementation & Training Hub: Join the Service Enterprise Movement

Maximize Your Resources with a Proven & Established Program



## Plug & Play Program Model with Curriculum

- Volunteer Engagement Training Program
- Diagnostic & Debrief
- Service Enterprise curriculum
- Training & coaching topics with resources

## Training & Technical Assistance for Hubs

- Marketing & communication support
- National network with monthly training
- Regular train the trainer opportunities
- And more

# Putting the Recommendations Into Action

## Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Strategies



- ✓ Clear & impactful volunteer position descriptions
- ✓ Low-barrier & low-commitment opportunities as points of entry
- ✓ Diversified opportunities to meet people where they are
- ✓ Job-crafted roles for mutual benefit
- ✓ Communicate & celebrate how volunteer efforts make a difference
- ✓ Demonstrate the contributions & value volunteers bring

# Putting the Recommendations Into Action

Engaging Diverse Volunteers

**al!ve**<sup>TM</sup>  
Service Enterprise Program



- Rethink the V-word
- Do WITH not FOR
- Build volunteer ladders
- Ask what the barriers are
- Bust down barriers with volunteers & partnerships
- Create an inclusive culture of belonging

# Putting the Recommendations Into Action

Sustainable, Adaptable & Scalable

**ALIVE**<sup>™</sup>  
Service Enterprise Program



- Epidemics (COVID)
- National Disasters (Derecho/Hurricane)
- Recession

# Putting the Recommendations Into Action

Promising Practices & Training



- Service Enterprise is available to not-for-profits, government entities, and proprietary health organizations
- Available across the nation
- Email [ServiceEnterprise@volunteeralive.org](mailto:ServiceEnterprise@volunteeralive.org) to connect with your Implementation & Training Hub or to become one



# Michelle Raymer

Senior Volunteer Engagement Officer,  
Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service



# About Volunteer Iowa

## **Mission:**

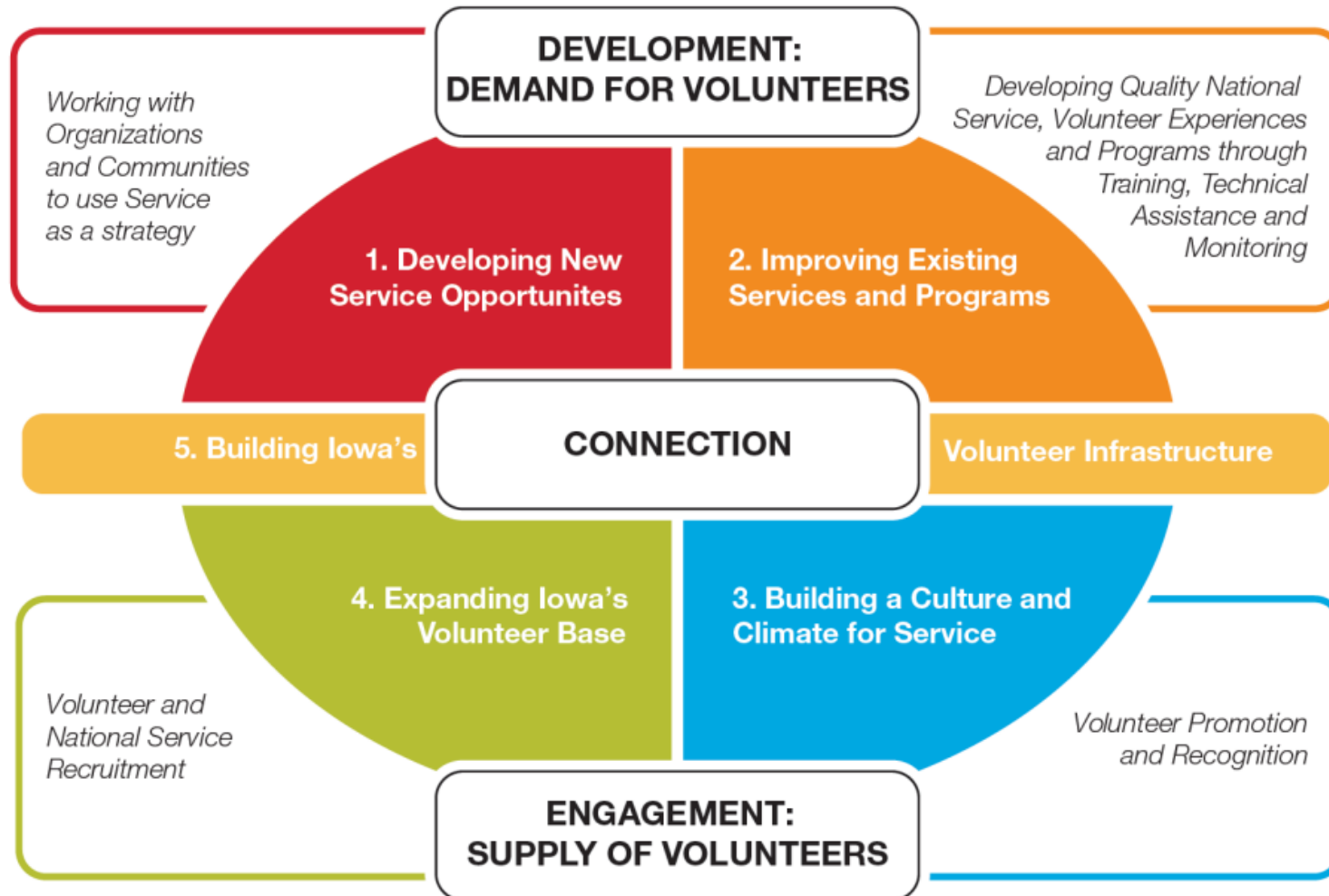
To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering

## **Vision:**

To create an Iowa where all citizens are empowered through service to meet community challenges and make lives better.



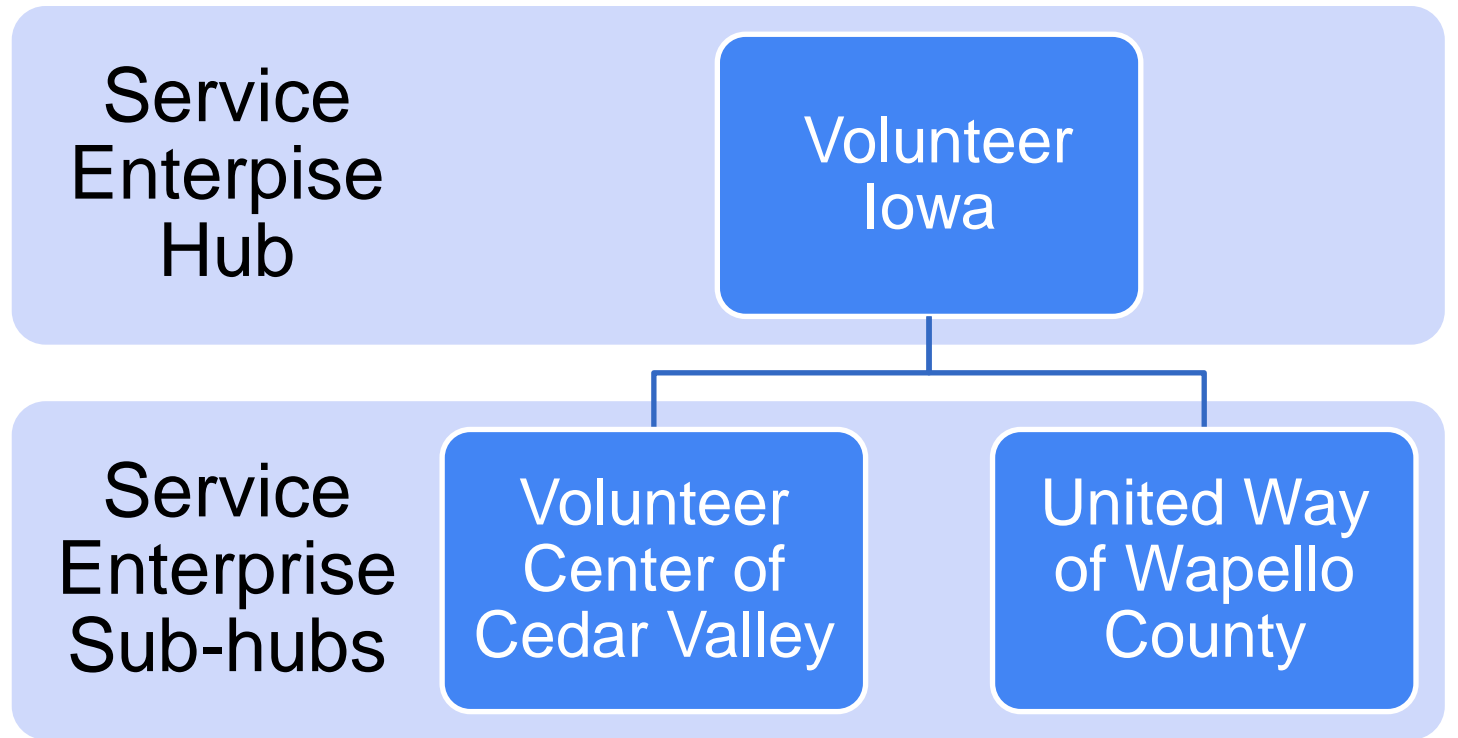
# About Volunteer Iowa



# Iowa VGF Activities

- Volunteer Center Subgrants
- Statewide Training and Resources
- Service Enterprise
- Get Connected
- Disaster Response
- City Volunteer Engagement Initiative
- Youth Volunteering

# Service Enterprise in Iowa



# Service Enterprise in Iowa

- Over 70 certified Service Enterprises
- Shift in organizational culture
- Increase in volunteers
- Increase in skilled volunteers
- Volunteer Engagement Professional retention
- Strengthened network of local leaders

# Lisl Hacker

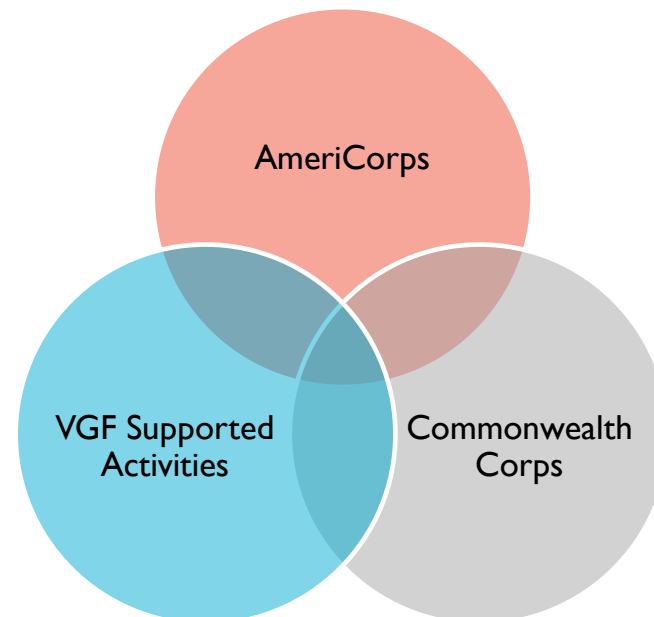
Director of Training and TA,  
Massachusetts Service Alliance



# MASSACHUSETTS SERVICE ALLIANCE

We expand volunteerism and service in Massachusetts by providing individuals and organizations with funding, training, and support, which enables them to strengthen communities and make our Commonwealth a better place to live.

We are attuned to the Commonwealth's current needs, strategically harnessing service members and volunteers to respond to emerging issues affecting Massachusetts residents and developing programs that across the state to address those areas. We support organizations with varying missions to increase volunteerism and service in all areas of critical need.



**AmeriCorps**  
Massachusetts





# VGF IN MASSACHUSETTS

Through the support of the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) since 2010, the Massachusetts Service Alliance has successfully leveraged thousands of volunteers by supporting volunteer opportunities in Massachusetts. MSA is undertaking a comprehensive approach that will enhance and build upon past VGF efforts to build the capacity of organizations in the Commonwealth to more effectively engage volunteers. MSA supports the volunteer sector through:

- **Service Enterprise Initiative** – supported over 120 organizations and certified 75%
- **Youth Development Volunteer Initiative Grants** to nonprofits to better engage volunteers in youth development programming
- **MA Conference on Service & Volunteerism** - statewide with between 300-400 attendees
- **Fall and Spring Trainings** on effective volunteer management practices
- **COVID-19 Resiliency/Recovery Grants** aimed to support volunteer programming needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

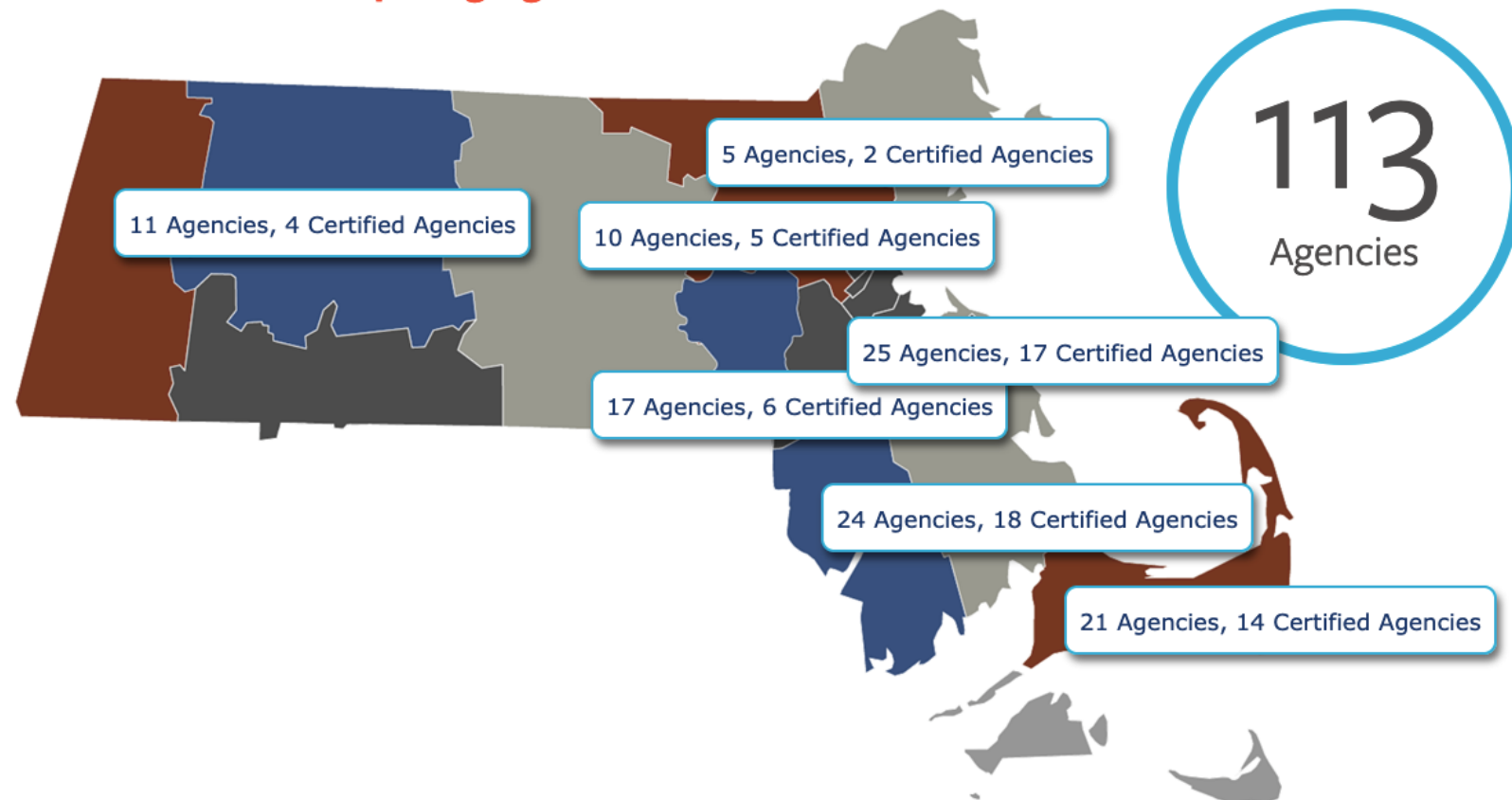


**AmeriCorps**  
Massachusetts



# SERVICE ENTERPRISE

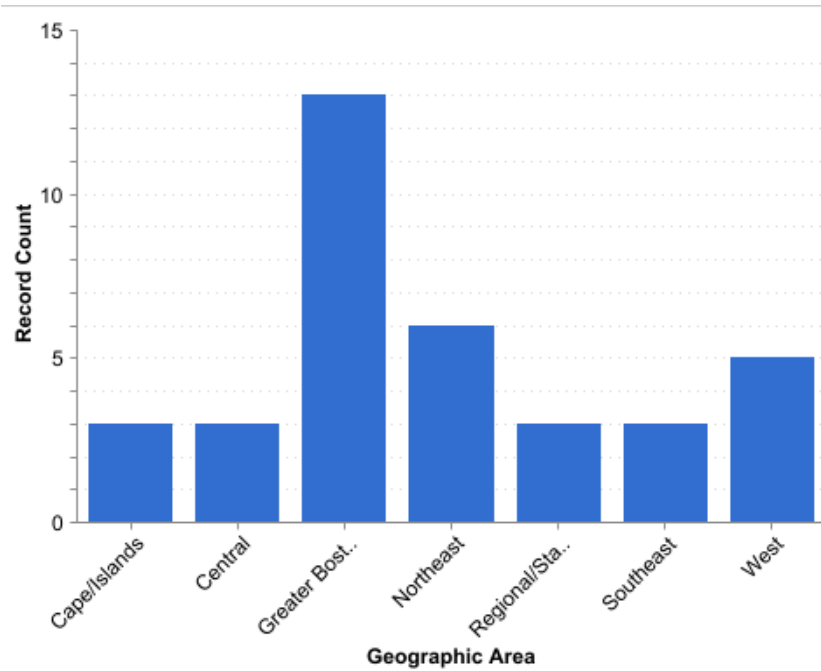
## Certified and Participating Agencies in Massachusetts



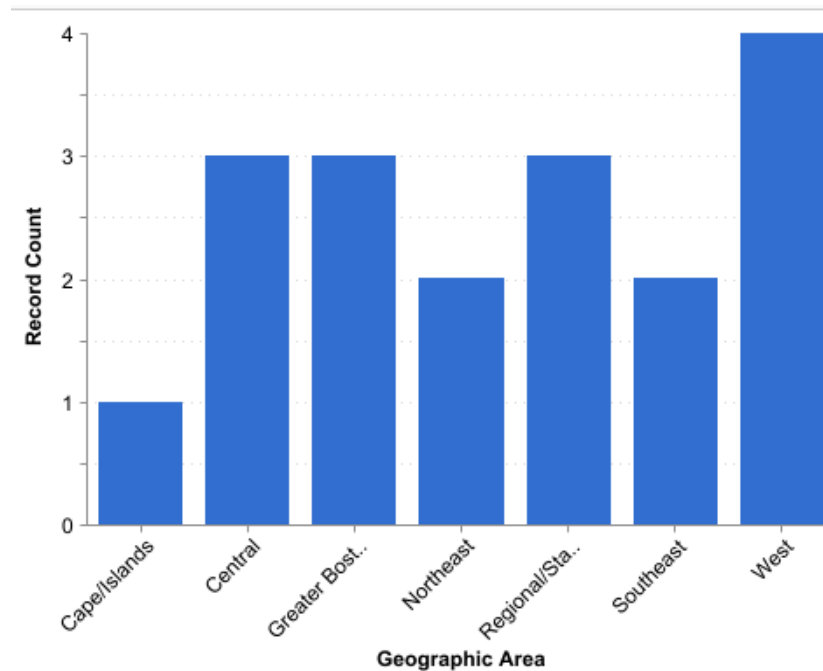
113  
Agencies

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE GRANT

## Proposals Received



## Proposals Funded



Geographic Area

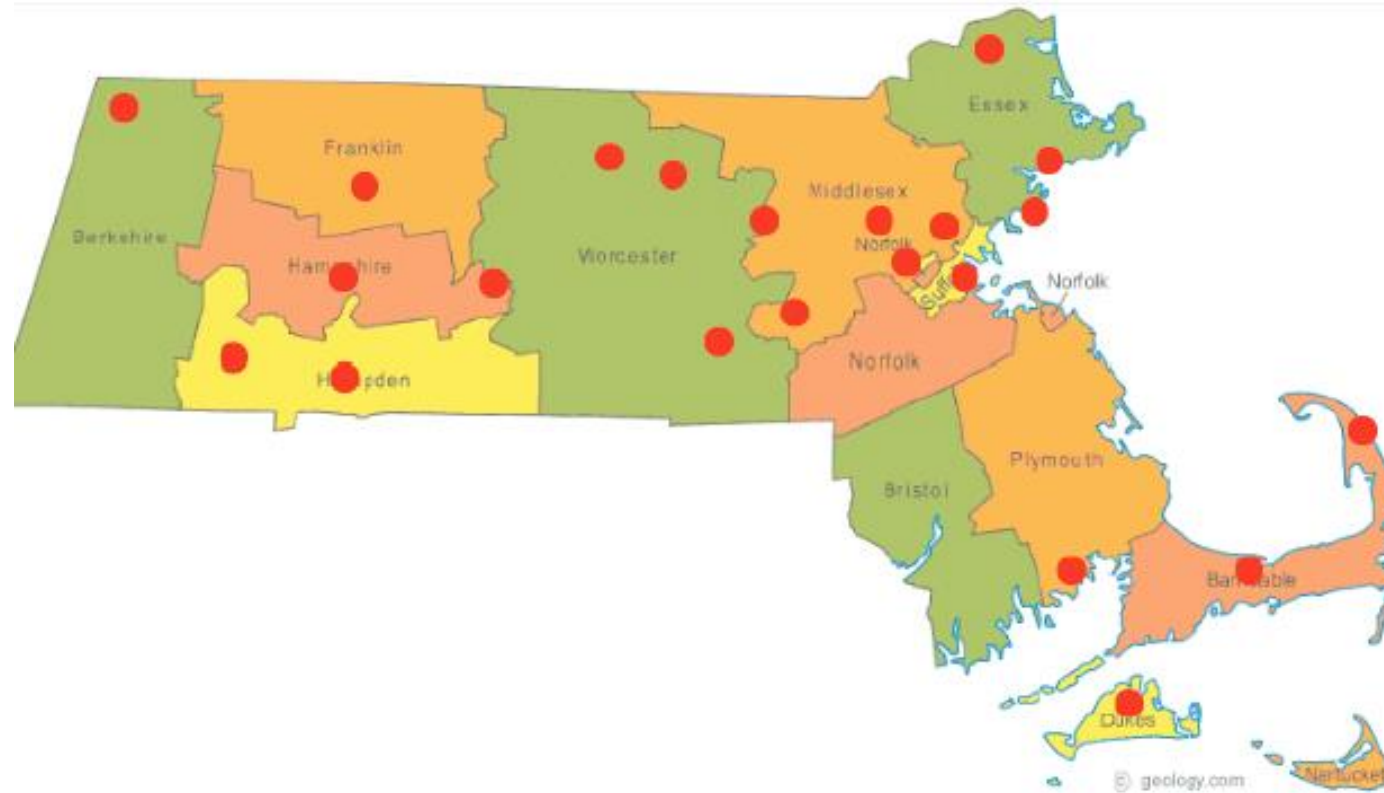


**AmeriCorps**  
Massachusetts



MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE

# COVID RESILIENCY/RECOVERY GRANTS

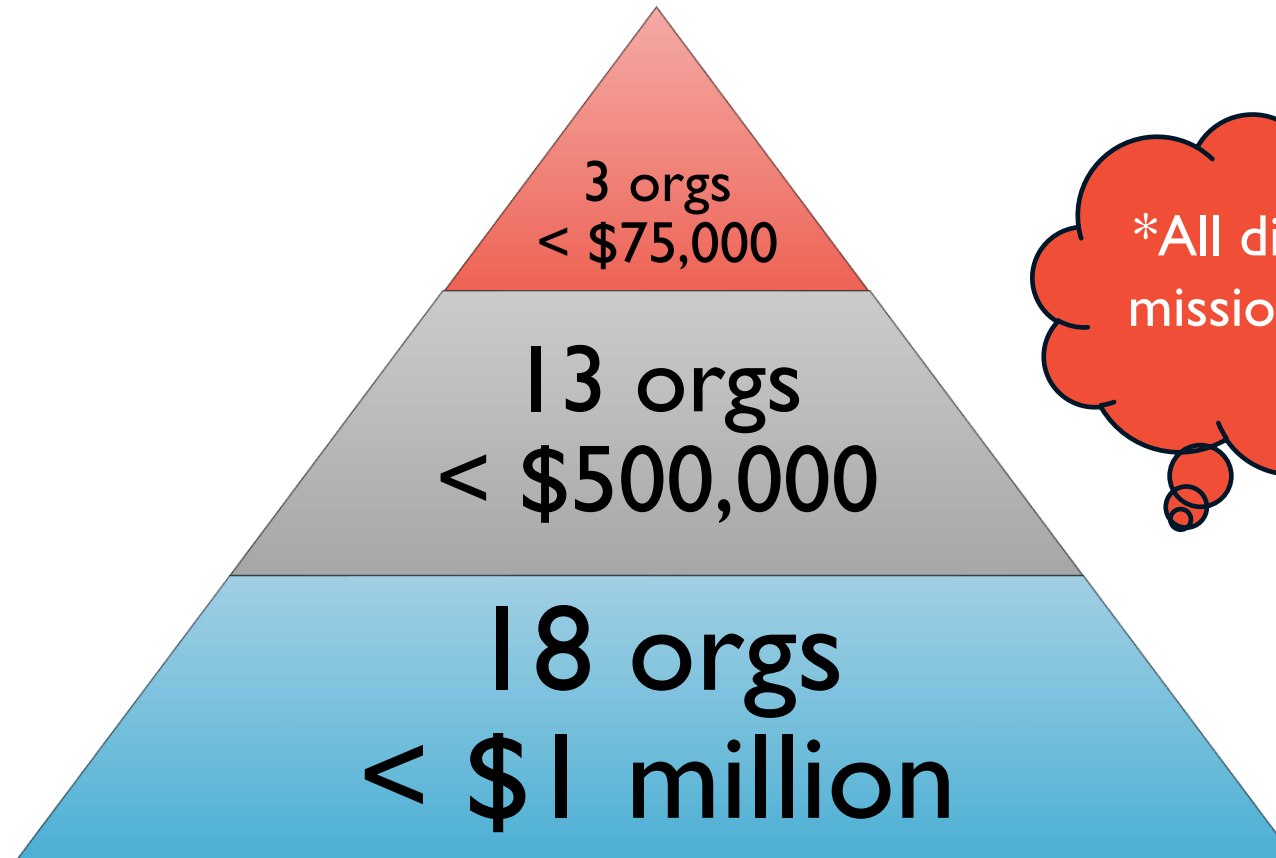


**AmeriCorps**  
Massachusetts



MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE

# COVID RESILIENCY/RECOVERY GRANTS - ORG OPERATING BUDGETS



\*All different mission areas

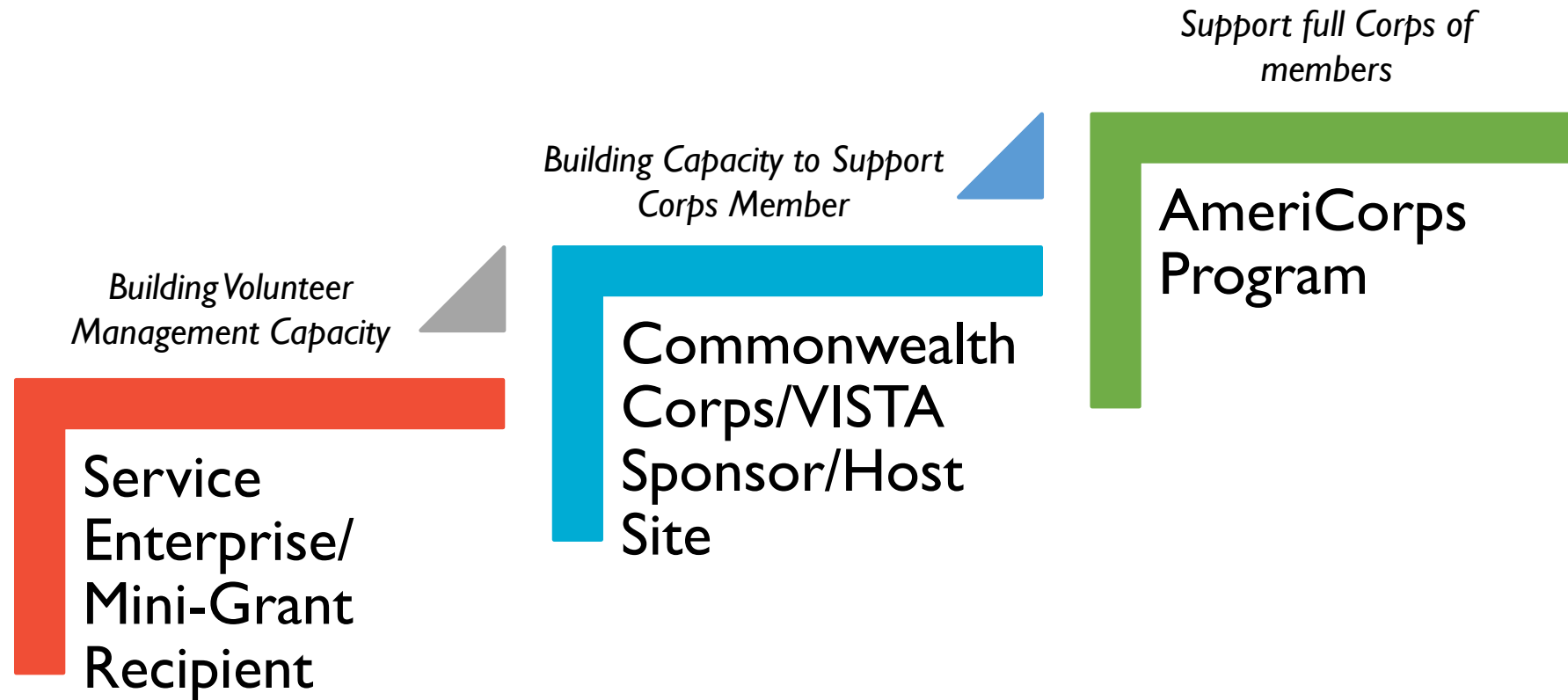


**AmeriCorps**  
Massachusetts



MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE

# ENTRY POINT INTO WORK WITH THE COMMISSION



\*See the same trajectory with potential member recruitment and development



**AmeriCorps**  
Massachusetts



MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE

# Shane Dermanjian, MPP

Research Analyst, AmeriCorps



# The AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey

- AmeriCorps members take the **Member Exit Survey** (MES) upon exiting the program - over 350,000 responses since 2015
- Early-exiters and those that finish service both take the survey
  - Members take the survey as many times as they serve
- 75-80% of members in a given fiscal year complete the MES
- MES gauges members' experiences, feelings, sentiment, attitudes - helps monitor progress towards agency's strategic goals around member development







# The MES captures the *AmeriCorps* Member *Theory of* *Change (TOC)*

## Vision:

- Creation of empowered and prepared citizens
  - More civically engaged
  - Will work to strengthen their communities
  - Dedicated to improving the lives of those in their community

## Four Pathways to Achieving Vision:

- Participants develop along **four** pathways essential in developing empowerment and preparation necessary to be a change-oriented, active community member

# MES Pathways



Cultural Competency

Civic Engagement

Life and Career Skills

“Getting Things Done”

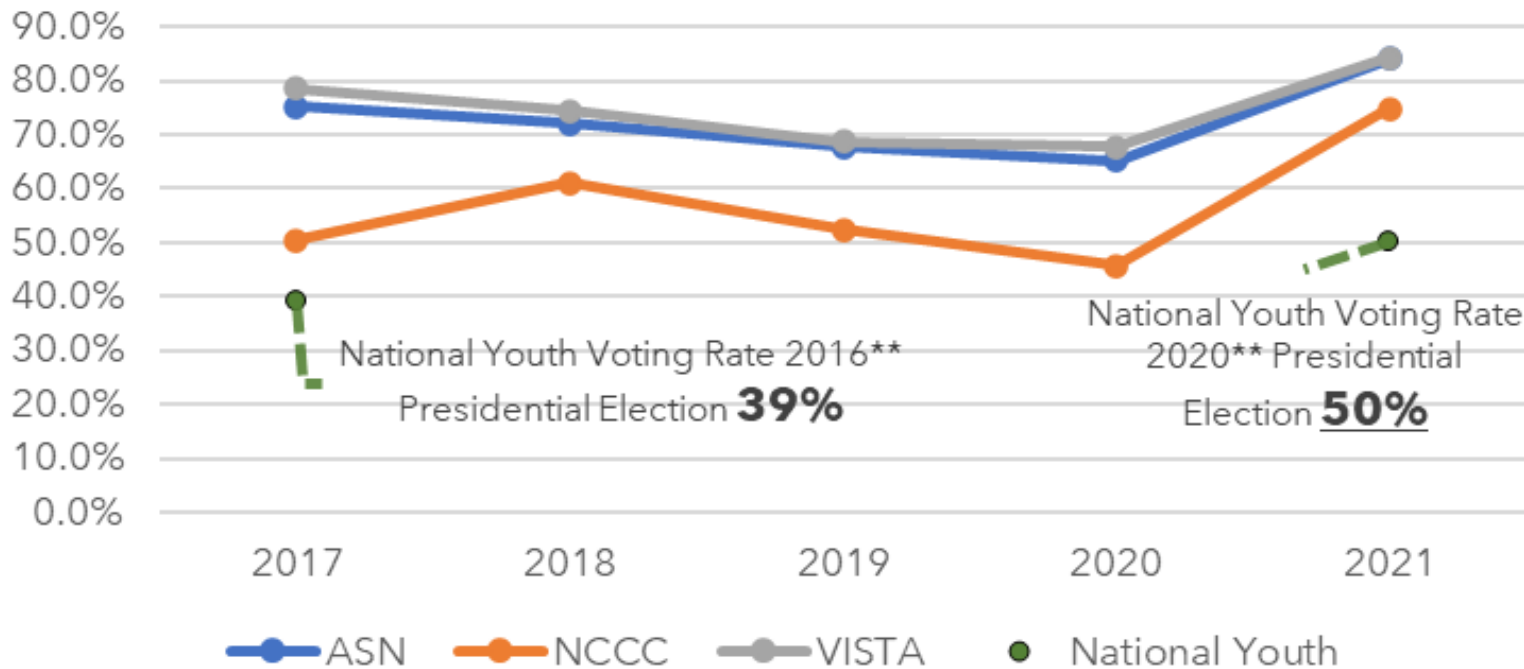
# Civic Engagement in the MES (2017 – 2021)



- **Increased community engagement:** most members across all programs reported a higher likelihood of participating and volunteering in their communities after having served in AmeriCorps, though there was a slight decrease amongst all members from 2020 to 2021.
- **Increased frequency of discussing sociopolitical issues:** starting in 2019, all members reported a decrease in how often they discussed and linked larger political, social, local, or national issues to their communities compared to previous years, although levels increased past pre-2019 levels starting in 2020.
- **High levels of attachment and obligation to their community:** the majority of ASN and VISTA members expressed a strong personal attachment to their community from 2017 through 2021
- **High levels of member confidence to adequately address community concerns:** most members felt they could do something about a problem in their community by:
  - creating plans
  - getting others to care about the problem,
  - organizing meetings
  - expressing one's views in front of a group
  - contacting elected officials

# Civic Engagement in the MES (2017 – 2021)

Comparison of Youth Voter (aged 18 - 29) Turnout in "Last" Presidential Election for Exiting AmeriCorps Members vs. National Population



**AmeriCorps members aged 18-29 vote in presidential elections more than the general population of the same age**

# Bridging Differences in the MES (2016-2020)

## How do AmeriCorps members **bridge differences**?

On surveys taken between 2016 - 2020, the vast majority of departing AmeriCorps members agreed that they:

Enjoy exploring differences  
between co-workers  
and/or friends from  
different cultures  
and backgrounds



93%

Respect the values  
of people from  
different cultures  
and backgrounds



97%

96%



Enjoy interacting  
with people from  
different cultures  
and backgrounds

93%



Feel confident when  
interacting with  
people from different  
cultures and backgrounds

Members  
report  
**positive**  
outcomes  
*regardless* of  
service  
completion



20) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements – participating in AmeriCorps was a worthwhile experience in terms of furthering:

Strongly Agree or Agree		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Finished		86%	86%	85%	86%	84%
Did not Finish		65%	66%	66%	80%	76%
<b>Difference</b>		<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>

Strongly Agree or Agree		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Finished		90%	90%	90%	91%	89%
Did not Finish		71%	72%	72%	83%	80%
<b>Difference</b>		<b>19%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>

Strongly Agree or Agree		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
						89%
Did not Finish		73%	75%	74%	86%	82%
						86%

# AmeriCorps Reflection

Emily Stock

Project Manager for Volunteer Initiatives, AmeriCorps



# Q&A Panel Facilitator

Jehyra Asencio Yace, PhD  
Research Analyst, AmeriCorps



# Q & A Panel Discussion:

- [Shane Dermanjian](#), MPP, Research Analyst, AmeriCorps
- [Lisl Hacker](#), Director of Training and TA, Massachusetts Service Alliance  
[Kayla Paulson](#), Service Enterprise Program Administrator, ALIVE
- [Michelle Raymer](#), Senior Volunteer Engagement Officer, Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
- [Samantha Spinney](#), PhD, Principal Investigator of Volunteer Generation Fund Evaluation, ICF
- [Emily Stock](#), Project Manager for Volunteer Initiatives, AmeriCorps

# Thank you for attending today's webinar

The recording and support materials will be provided in the next two weeks at:

<https://www.americorps.gov/webinar/leveraging-transformative-resources-meet-community-needs-ignite-lifetime-civic-engagement>

To inquire about the work presented in this webinar, please reach out to [Evaluation@cns.gov](mailto:Evaluation@cns.gov)

Join us on 6/22/2023 from 12:30 to 2:30pm  
for the next webinar in this series

**Double Trouble:  
Reigniting Civic Engagement through Pandemics and Disasters**

Registration is available now on the  
AmeriCorps Impact and Evidence Webinar Page

