



VOLUNTEERING IN WEST VIRGINIA ITS JUST A WAY OF LIFE



Volunteer
West Virginia

The State's Commission for National and Community Service



Message from Volunteer West Virginia

One of the most important and successful stories of West Virginia is its story of service. The Volunteer West Virginia 2016 Annual Report tells part of that story. The Commission's State Service Plan aligns its work in three important areas: Meeting Critical Community Needs, Expanding Civic Engagement, and Collaboration with Nonprofit and Service Partners.

The story of our work during the months following the June flooding became one of the best examples of citizen-led problem solving and leadership. Community volunteers stepped in to help families find safe housing, ensure children received the care they deserve, and identified unique solutions to pressing challenges. You asked questions and we found solutions together. Where do I go if I want to volunteer? How can I register to help when the needs are changing so quickly? Can Volunteer West Virginia collect data on volunteerism during the response? Our communities led the way as we set up volunteer reception centers, and connected thousands of individuals who wanted to help families that needed help. Our many thanks to each of you that played a role in overcoming these challenges.

Every day we find ourselves with the distinct honor of being West Virginians in a time when there is no place we would rather be. Each of us have a role to play in talking with our neighbors, solving problems in our town, and telling our story of service. Together, we will ensure that the state of volunteering and service in West Virginia remains strong.

Sincerely,

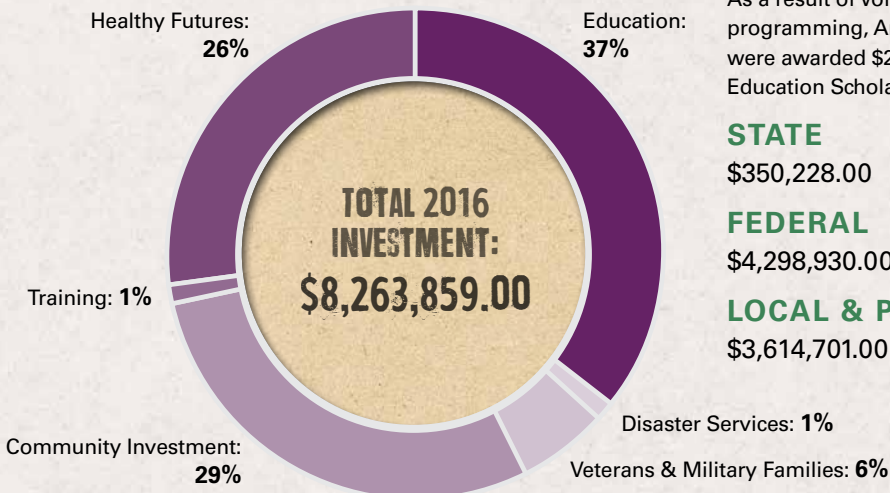


Heather Foster,
Executive Director



Sammy Gray,
Commission Chair

VOLUNTEER WEST VIRGINIA 2016 INVESTMENTS



2016 Funding Sources

In 2016, for every state dollar invested in Volunteer West Virginia, the state receives \$12.27 in federal funds and \$10.32 in local and private funds.

As a result of Volunteer West Virginia programming, AmeriCorps members were awarded \$2.2 million in Segal Education Scholarships in 2016.

STATE

\$350,228.00

FEDERAL

\$4,298,930.00

LOCAL & PRIVATE

\$3,614,701.00



TELLING OUR STORY OF SERVICE

Our mission challenges West Virginians to strengthen their communities through service and volunteerism.

Volunteer West Virginia programs help people of all ages make transformative decisions and give back to the communities they love. Our disaster and volunteer initiatives connect thousands of people with training and service opportunities. AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers serve at more than 472 local sites, expanding the capacity of nonprofits. These members contribute more than \$4.5 million to local economies each year. AmeriCorps members frequently find employment as a result of service (43% in 2015). Additionally, in rural areas, unemployed volunteers are 55% more likely to find employment than non-volunteers.

West Virginia's Unified State Service Plan Areas of Impact:

Engaging Service to Meet Community Needs	Expanding Civic Engagement	Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 55 County Program Impact > Increased Resources in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Panhandle • North Central West Virginia • Southern West Virginia > 1,000 Total AmeriCorps Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 360,649 West Virginians volunteered in 2015 (+60,000 from prior year) > #2 in nation for Generation X median volunteer hours > Volunteers donated 39.32 million hours of service to WV in 2015 	<p>Our state service plan is a shared responsibility. New partnerships this year support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local foods, • Higher education, and • Youth volunteerism.



ABOUT NATIONAL SERVICE IN WEST VIRGINIA



Funded federally by the Corporation for National and Community Service and matched with state and local contributions, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs in West Virginia include more than 3,700 individuals of all ages and backgrounds serving at more than 740 total sites. Since 1994, 12,000 residents have served more than 18 million hours in AmeriCorps and have qualified for more than \$28,560,000 in Segal Education Scholarships. Senior Corps programs like Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP provide services to more than 1,200 individuals each year and serve with 310 community groups statewide.



Our 2016
Impact

VOLUNTEER WEST VIRGINIA TRANSFORMS THE MOUNTAIN STATE



WEST VIRGINIA RANKED
3rd in the nation
for enrolling AmeriCorps members.

LEVERAGED
228,340
volunteer hours,
valued at over
\$6.1 million.



Recruited and managed
33,723 volunteers.



AmeriCorps members earned
\$2.2 million
in Segal Education Scholarships.





IT'S IN THE NUMBERS

- > Coordinated 1,250 service events.
- > 637 AmeriCorps members served at 181 education sites.
- > 25,743 youth served by all Volunteer West Virginia programs.
- > Helped 26,168 individuals increase food security.
- > CERT volunteers invested 4,642 hours in the community hosting preparedness events and service projects.
- > Assisted 15,479 disaster survivors.
- > 15 veterans served as AmeriCorps and VISTA members.



DEPLOYED 300
AMERICORPS AND VISTA MEMBERS
for disaster response and recovery.

IMPROVED
2,265 ACRES
of public land.




SERVED
222,658
healthy meals.



3,232
veterans and
military families
SERVED.



A SHY SMALL TOWN GIRL FINDS HER VOICE



The story of how Jessi Gardner fell in love with hand tools, stayed in her hometown, and created her dream job, without even realizing it, all thanks to AmeriCorps.

Jessi Gardner grew up in the rural town of Leager, West Virginia. Nestled deep between the mountains in McDowell County, Jessi never wanted to leave. “Leager felt like home,” Jessi said. “It is a small town with friendly people. I felt safe in the mountains.”

Jessi’s great-grandpa moved to Leager to work in the railroad, back when there was a bustling Main Street, drive-in movie-theater, and skating rink. The town was a tight knit community, “I grew up watching my dad garden. If he saw someone who needed food, he always gave it to them. Mom and dad are like that, they have big hearts. It’s just a way of life in West Virginia, everybody helps everybody.”

Like so many young people in the state, as Jessi got older, she was faced with the familiar question, “Should I stay, or should I go?” “Most people my age left after they graduated high school. My close friends stayed two or three years, I felt like I lost everyone.”

By chance Jessi heard about AmeriCorps through a friend. An outdoor adventure facility in the nearby town of Davy was looking for AmeriCorps volunteers. The crew would build hiking and ATV trails to bring tourism to the area. Jessi’s first day brought quite the learning curve.

“I didn’t know anything,” she confessed. “Growing up, my dad did most of the work around the house.” The AmeriCorps team hit the ground running, clearing out an old trail. The pruners looked like the best option. “I didn’t want to learn,” Jessi reminisced. “I’m sticking with my pruners. I wasn’t going to do any of that hard work.” Jessi hid in the back of the crew, and although she was apprehensive, she thought, “I’ll ride this out.”

“I never planned anything until AmeriCorps. This is changing my life.”



The pruners may have seemed to be the best option, but boy did Jessi's arms hurt at the end of the week. That is when her appreciation grew for other hand tools. Slowly but surely, she began to fall in love with her crew and the Twin Branch Adventure Facility. "I gained a lot of confidence in myself," Jessi explained. "I always wanted to be independent, but I didn't know how. I've been independent ever since I started AmeriCorps. No matter what comes along, I can handle it."

As Jessi's four year AmeriCorps term began to wind down, she didn't want to leave Twin Branch. "I told them, I don't want to leave. I refuse to leave." Jessi's volunteer service transformed her into a completely different person. "If it wasn't for AmeriCorps, I'd still be that little girl back in the corner. Now it's a completely different ballgame."

Luckily for Jessi, she didn't have to leave Twin Branch. She had become such an asset at her site, they created a staff position for her. "I never planned anything until AmeriCorps. This is changing my life."

No longer the shy girl in the back of the crowd, Jessi has grown to be the leader of the Twin Branch AmeriCorps team. I tell them, "Try it at least once. If you don't like it, you'll never have to do it again." Who knows, you might just fall in love.

Wanted: VOLUNTEERS

Kind Hearts & Busy Hands

volunteerwv.org   

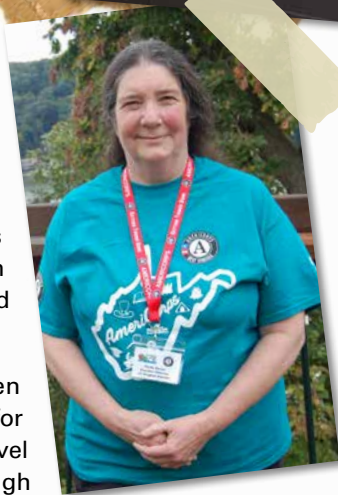


PACK YOUR BAGS FOR WEST VIRGINIA



How AmeriCorps Brings Young Talent to the State

Phyllis Baxter is a West Virginian by choice. Called to the mountains in 1979, she moved to the state in her twenties. "Coming from Oklahoma, I wanted to live in the country, somewhere that has more water, taller trees, and mountains," said Phyllis, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area Executive Director. "I visited friends here and fell in love."



A matchmaker of sorts, Phyllis and her nonprofit have been orchestrating love affairs with West Virginia through AmeriCorps for over ten years. Each September, about 35 AmeriCorps members travel from near and far to serve a year in the Mountain State through Appalachian Forest Heritage Area. Much like Phyllis, many members move to the state sight unseen and fall in love with it.

Based in Elkins, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) is a regional, grassroots effort to integrate central Appalachian forest history, culture, natural history, products, and forestry management into a heritage tourism initiative to promote rural community development.

AmeriCorps not only makes AFHA successful, but it is also a magnet for drawing young talent to the state. Volunteers have relocated from as far away as Alaska, Oregon, and Massachusetts to serve in Elkins. One member moved from Iowa to Arthurdale in Preston County.

"In our program, we are looking for college graduates with skills in conservation, cultural heritage, and community development," said Phyllis. "We know it's hard for people to find jobs and stay here. We see this as a way to buck this trend. We provide an opportunity for young people in the state. They bring talent and enthusiasm, some even find a way to stay."



AFHA AmeriCorps members can be found in local museums, national forests, and historic sites in small towns like Thomas and Marlinton. For many nonprofits, having an extra set of hands is priceless.

“One of the things I see, particularly in the heritage side, is that many of the organizations we work with are all volunteers, or at most they have one staff person,” said Phyllis. “The members work with boards and volunteers, and they’re almost always the youngest people in the room. On some boards, the youngest person on the board is sixty. These experienced, trained, talented young people bring a younger viewpoint, fresh enthusiasm, and talent to get things done.”

Not only do members find an opportunity to serve in West Virginia, they also get to experience a slice of small town hospitality. “The community reacts very positively to our members,” said Phyllis. “These are all small communities. The AmeriCorps members are fairly visible, both by what they do, and because they are new young people in the town. We get very positive comments and reactions, people invite them into their homes and make them feel welcome.”

What are the AmeriCorps members’ biggest fears about moving to West Virginia? “One of the most persistent fears is driving in the snow,” said Phyllis. Despite this fear, AFHA AmeriCorps continues to bring young talent to serve and thrive in the Mountain State.



UP AND RUNNING!

AmeriCorps VISTA, Getting Things Done For WVU Medicine Jefferson Medical Center

When Paul Koczera was approached to be an AmeriCorps VISTA he didn't know what he was getting himself into. A new VISTA site through West Virginia's Promise, WVU Medicine's Jefferson Medical Center in Ranson, was looking for creative ways to connect with the community to extend health and wellness.

"We place a large focus on improving patient health beyond our hospital walls," said Arlene Fernandez-Anderson, Director of Outreach and Project Management Services. "We need plenty of resources that can help us make connections to ensure people can remain healthy longer."

A passionate health enthusiast, Paul was the perfect match for the new VISTA position. By chance, he had met Dr. Mark Cucuzzella, a doctor at the medical center, at a local shoe store and learned about the new program. Paul had been diagnosed with a brain malformation in 2008, and his dream of training for the U.S. Air Force Combat Control Team was crushed. "I was torn away from something I thought I was meant to do," said Paul. "But I suddenly realized I had something special that I could share with other people."

Through Paul's VISTA service, the medical center started a Walk With a Doc program, in which patients receive a prescription to walk with their doctor. Paul also helped organize the community's first running camp, which served ninety youth over the summer. "This VISTA program is important because it gives the community an opportunity to learn about health and wellness with their neighbors," said Paul.

Thanks to VISTA, the medical center's new health and wellness program is up and running. Paul's supervisor Arlene Fernandez-Anderson confessed, "I don't know where we would be without the VISTA position. We are very thankful to have the opportunity. Not only has VISTA been transformative for the community, but also for Paul." Born to serve, Paul now has new energy and motivation for all he can achieve in a different kind of service.



WV FLOOD

Volunteer West Virginia on the Scene: Thousand Year Flood Volunteer Management

In June, West Virginia's thousand year flood brought a wave of kind-hearted souls from near and far wanting to help. Before the rain stopped, Volunteer West Virginia teamed up with West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the State Emergency Operations Center, to point eager volunteers in the right direction. The small state agency could not have anticipated where the next few months would lead.

Within two days, a call center, staffed by volunteers, was established at the office. More than 5,000 individuals signed up on the Volunteer West Virginia website to volunteer. Phones rang off the hook. Visitors to the website jumped from the monthly average of 4,000 to a whopping 50,000. Staff and volunteers responded to thousands of calls and messages from people who needed help and people offering help.

To help manage this unprecedented number of volunteers, Volunteer West Virginia worked with partners to establish Volunteer Reception Centers in Clay, Kanawha, Greenbrier, and Nicholas County. The centers registered volunteers and referred them to local agencies to help with relief efforts. More than 3,900 volunteers passed through the centers serving over 56,094 hours. From the folks in Kanawha County coordinating volunteers from a supermarket parking lot using only pencils and paper, to the unique solutions in Greenbrier County for logging hours via text message, volunteers were there to help.

It is impossible to count the number of flood volunteers. The power of volunteers is often underestimated. However, in times of trouble, they'll be there to help.



"Thank you to the Volunteer West Virginia staff for coordinating flood volunteer efforts. No one appreciates enough the power and major contribution of volunteers. Our state's volunteers are so very fortunate to have your office. Thank you so very much for all your staff does, each and every day, to make West Virginia the caring and wonderful place it is."



Kay Goodwin

- Cabinet Secretary
Kay Goodwin,

WV Department Education
and the Arts

“We’re AmeriCorps, and we get things done.”

National Service Thousand Year Flood Response

More than 300 AmeriCorps members helped with flood response and recovery. Many came from flood-ravaged counties and other parts of West Virginia.

Others came from as far away as Washington State and California to help muck out homes, do damage assessments, and coordinate spontaneous volunteers. Months later, AmeriCorps members continue to help through the WV Strong long-term flood recovery VISTA team and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps.

Additionally, 85 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members served 1,405 hours helping with flood response. These volunteers helped muck out homes, distribute donations, prepare meals, and provided wellness checks and emotional support.



“I was never prouder of being a West Virginian than being among those people.”

Volunteer Highlights: Some of Our Favorite Moments

- > Wayne Worth and his team have dedicated every Sunday following the flood in Kanawha and Clay County to help with recovery efforts. Social worker by day, community volunteer by night, and a lover of West Virginia, Wayne has used Facebook to form a team of volunteers to help with the grassroots effort. Volunteers meet every Sunday to fix homes and comfort families impacted by the flood. In total, Wayne and his crew have repaired over 16 homes.
- > Natasha Hudnall thought she was picking up flood supplies. Little did she know, she was about to get a car from a complete stranger.

Natasha lost her home in the flood and hours later lost her car in a mudslide. After the flood she had been walking to work, only to find out she was being moved to a store six miles away. That same day, thanks to the help of Rayna and Mike Cutrona and the previous car owner in Martinsburg, she received the surprise of her life.



Left -Right bottom row: Tracy Brady, Devyn Rose, Ashley Truman, Sug Sams, Wayne Worth. Back row Left-right: Rhiannon Brady, Tera O'Conner, Johnnaston Kimble and his Daughter Kendra, Cathy Purpura, Joe Jenkins, Jim Groff.

DISASTER SERVICES: HOW WE HELP YEAR ROUND

WE:

- Support Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in training.
- Mobilize AmeriCorps members to respond to disasters through WV Disaster Corps and WV Strong.
- Promote disaster preparedness through Ready WV.
- Partner with response agencies to engage citizens in disaster response and recovery.



VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



The 2016 Governor's Service Awards recognized outstanding volunteers on September 6th at the State Culture Center. From providing recreational opportunities for youth in the southern coalfields to starting a farmers market in Bridgeport; from saving cats and dogs lives to creating the first handicap accessible boat ramp in the state, all seven recipients of the Governor's Service Awards illustrate the wide impact volunteers make in West Virginia.



From left to right: Nancy Young (Mountaineer Spay Neuter Assistance Program), D. Clif Schoonover, John Hoffman & Jordan McVey (Ansted Improvement Motivators), Kay Goodwin, Cabinet Secretary Education and the Arts, Amanda Whitman, Debbie Workman, Amanda Workman, Bob Workman, Deana Spaulding

Not pictured: Nathaniel Smith, Grayhound Youth Sports



Volunteering West Virginia



West Virginia
Library Commission

Volunteer West Virginia now has a TV show on the Library Television Network. Launched in 2016, the program showcases local organizations and opportunities to serve.



Governor's Day to Serve

This fall, friendships formed and neighbors united for the fifth annual Day to Serve, making the Mountain State shine a little brighter.



Volunteers: **10,200**



Volunteer hours: **42,070**



Service Events: **555**



Food Collected: **131,270 pounds**

"I've always been proud of the hardworking spirit of West Virginians. Now, more than ever, I'm excited by the potential of West Virginia's local communities to inspire others, create positive change, and challenge others to do the same. Whether you get involved with your local church, mentor kids in your community school, support a local farmer's market or coordinate a fundraiser, your service makes an impact: #GoVolunteer!"



Carl Ray Tomblin

Governor Early Ray Tomblin thanking flood volunteers at an emergency distribution center in Clendenin.

GRANTS

AMERICORPS

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area/ Growing Heritage

Multiple Sites, 12 Members

To enhance economic resources through heritage tourism.

\$158,400.00

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area/ Enhancing Assets

Multiple Sites, 26 Members

To promote environmental stewardship of at-risk ecosystems.

\$322,500.00

Citizen Conservation Corps of WV

McDowell & Wyoming County, 26 Members

To construct and improve public recreational and cultural heritage projects in southern West Virginia.

\$138,587.00

Grow Ohio Valley

Ohio County, 17 Members

To expand local food, gardening education programs, and food availability in the Mid-Ohio Valley area.

\$143,543.00

High Rocks Educational Corporation

Pocahontas & Greenbrier County, 37 Members

To provide mentoring and tutoring to students during the school year as well as at two academic summer camps.

\$322,038.00

Mid-Ohio Valley Board of Health

Multiple Sites, 19 Members

To provide information, support and education to help improve the health and wellness of West Virginians.

\$163,954.00

Ohio West Virginia Youth Leadership Association

Tucker County, 20 Members

To build the entrepreneurial and civic leadership skills of 550 children and teens during summer camps.

\$97,344.00

Playmates Child Care on Behalf of the Cabell Wayne Early Childhood Council

Cabell & Wayne County, 31 Members

To provide educational support and services for children and youth in Cabell and Wayne counties.

\$12,400.00

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia

Multiple Sites, 28 Members

To support 12 nonprofit organizations in the preservation of historic properties.

\$310,339.00

The Education Alliance

Multiple Sites, 35 Members

To support the curriculum-based mentoring of 560 students.

\$225,761.00

United Way of Central West Virginia /LifeBridge

Multiple Sites, 70 Members

To serve in education, veterans, and health and human service organizations.

\$903,068.00

West Virginia University Research Corporation/Energy Express

Multiple Sites, 510 Members

To promote reading skills for more than 2,800 children living in rural and low-income communities.

\$1,250,996.00

DAY TO SERVE MINI-GRANT

Eastwood Elementary School

Morgantown

Create the Eastwood Elementary Black Bear Trail for educational and physical activities for students.

\$300.00

United Way of Central West Virginia

Charleston

Various projects for Day of Caring.

\$300.00

Doddridge County Family Resource Network

Doddridge County

Sewing with seniors pillowcase project.

\$299.00

Kanawha County Master Gardeners

Charleston

To construct raised beds for Manna Meal garden in South Charleston.

\$300.00

Lewis County First

Weston

Repairs to VFW building in Weston.

\$291.34

Coal River Mountain Watch

Montcoal

Cleanup of Marsh Fork Alumni Park.

\$285.00

Preservation Alliance

Fairmont

Cleanup of Historic Dunbar School in Fairmont.

\$297.00

Caritas House

Morgantown

Landscaping and maintenance of HIV/AIDS garden.

\$300.00

Friends of Blackwater

Davis

Blackwater River cleanup.

\$210.00

Marshall Medical Outreach

Huntington

Free medical care event in Huntington.

\$133.89

The Education Alliance

Morgantown

Free meals for the homeless.

\$100.00

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS (IN-KIND SUPPORT)

Beckley CERT

Beckley, 36 Members

Gilmer County CERT

Gilmer County, 17 Members

Greenbrier Valley CERT

Greenbrier County, 60 Members

Hardy County CERT

Hardy County, 30 Members

Harrison County CERT

Harrison County, 30 Members

Jefferson County CERT

Jefferson County, 50 Members

Marshall County CERT

Marshall County, 4 Members

Mid-Ohio Valley Regional CERT

Calhoun, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt & Wood County, 80 Members

Monongalia County CERT

Monongalia County, 78 Members

Monroe County CERT

Monroe County, 87 Members

Pendleton County CERT

Pendleton County, 15 Members

Pleasants County CERT

Pleasants County, 16 Members

Raleigh County CERT

Raleigh County, 25 Members

Summers County CERT

Summers County, 12 Members

Tyler County CERT

Tyler County, 50 Members

Upshur County CERT

Upshur County, 12 Members

2016 COMMISSIONERS

Sammy Gray, Chairman • First Energy • Charleston

Josh Asbury

WV Department of Education • Summersville

Mercedes Jones Castle • Cross Lanes

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Southwestern Community Action Council, Inc • Huntington

Emily Fisher

Growing Wings Consulting • Triadelphia

Jimmy Gianato

West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management • Charleston

Secretary Kay Goodwin

Department of Education and the Arts • Charleston

Kim Good • United Way of Central West Virginia-Senior Corps Program • Charleston

Reta Griffith • Frontier Communications • Marlinton

Michael Hooper • Jackson Kelly PLLC • Wheeling

Blake Humphrey • WVU Student • Morgantown

Julia Keehner • Buckhannon

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Appalachian Council Head Start • Buckhannon

Mark Mangano

Northern Hancock Bank and Trust Company • Newell

Erica Mani • American Red Cross • Charleston

Larry McCallister

Wood County Commissioner (retired) • Washington

Linda Miller

Communication Workers of America • Charleston

Susie Nelson

Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley • Wheeling

Margaret Ann O'Neal

United Way of Southern WV • Beckley

Tiffany Redman

Dept. of Education and the Arts • Charleston

John Reisenweber

Jefferson Co. Development Authority • Martinsburg

Andrea Shirey

United Way Alliance of the Mid-Ohio Valley • Parkersburg

Janet Somerville

FGP Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council • Elizabeth

Betsy Southall • Corporation for National and Community Service • Charleston

Ann Worley • Beckley City Council • Beckley

2016 STAFF

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Moya Doneghy | Deputy Director

Cassandra Argo | AmeriCorps Program Officer

Krista Bradshaw | AmeriCorps Grant Officer

Heather Brunton | Financial Manager

Dana Bryant | Communications Coordinator

Waylon Bryant | VISTA & Community Services Coordinator

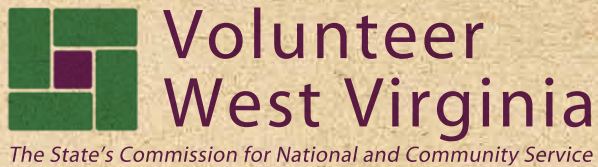
Gina Namay | Disaster Services Coordinator

Pam Dugan | Statewide Director, West Virginia's Promise

Lisa Tignor | Volunteer Program Coordinator

2016 AMERICORPS PROGRAMS





MISSION STATEMENT

Volunteer West Virginia, the state's Commission for National and Community Service, challenges West Virginians to strengthen their communities through service and volunteerism. We identify and mobilize resources, promote an ethic of service, and empower communities to solve problems and improve the quality of life for individuals and families.

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volunteerwv.org

