



THE NEED

Maryland communities face a myriad of challenges in education, the environment, health, human needs, and more. To tackle these challenges, more than 28,000 nonprofits have developed in Maryland – and many of them rely on volunteers to help them meet their missions. A 2009 report in the Stanford Social Innovation Review emphasized an increased need for volunteers: “The nation’s nonprofits are under strain from the current economic crisis, a leadership drain as older executives retire, and high turnover among younger staff. Volunteers are an undervalued and underused resource for tackling these challenges.” Despite that need, Maryland nonprofit organizations regularly report that they need help recruiting and managing volunteers and lack the resources to do so effectively.

THE PROGRAM

Volunteer Maryland (VM) helps meet these needs by placing AmeriCorps members in nonprofit organizations throughout the state to serve as volunteer coordinators, bridging the gap between communities facing critical problems and citizens who want to volunteer to solve those problems. The first step is to establish partnerships with organizations that can benefit from mobilizing volunteers. Together, VM and the partner organizations then work to recruit, train, and supervise AmeriCorps members to serve as Volunteer Maryland Coordinators.

THE RESULTS

Education: At Patterson Park Public Charter School in Baltimore, 40 percent of third - sixth grade students tested below proficiency in reading and 20 percent were below grade level in math in 2007. Knowing that engaging families can be a key piece in student achievement, Patterson Park partnered with VM to engage parents as volunteers during academic and school support activities. The VM Coordinator developed a flexible program that enabled parents to volunteer around their existing schedules. As a result, 88 percent of families participated in the school community in the 2008-2009 school year and 95 percent of evaluated family members indicated increases in their students’ interest in academics, behaviors, attention, and social skills.

Environment: A report by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation demonstrated that Wicomico County leads all other Maryland counties in the percentage of farmland lost to development between 1982 and 1997 and the Maryland Department of Planning reported that Dorchester and Caroline counties join Wicomico as threatened in land protection. The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance works to protect watershed in these three counties and Delaware. Nanticoke partnered with VM to build the Nanticoke Creekwatchers Water Monitoring Program. In just one year, the VM Coordinator coordinated 111 volunteers in monitoring water quality and cleaning up 725,000 watershed acres.

Health: Maryland has the sixth highest breast cancer rate in the United States; in 12 Maryland counties, breast cancer mortality rates are above the national average. Though early detection is a key to survival, in 2006, 20 percent of women over 40 had not undergone a mammogram in the past two years. Susan G. Komen for the Cure partnered with VM to create a volunteer speakers’ bureau that would provide breast health education at businesses, schools, health fairs, and community events. The VM Coordinator developed a volunteer program and recruited 34 volunteers who educated 2,310 individuals in breast cancer prevention and health. Nearly 80 percent of event attendees reported an increase in breast health knowledge after the presentations.

Since 1992, Volunteer Maryland has worked with 557 AmeriCorps members to mobilize 89,661 volunteers, contributing more than 1.3 million hours of service to Maryland communities.

In the 2009–2010 program year:

- 91 percent of partner organizations reported that volunteer activities are better managed and supervised as a result of the Volunteer Maryland partnership.
- 86 percent of partner organizations reported that the organization does a better job of recruiting volunteers as a result of the Volunteer Maryland partnership.

In a 2010 survey of former partner organizations:

- 100 percent have sustained or improved their ability to manage and utilize volunteers effectively.
- 91 percent have sustained or improved their ability to recruit volunteers.

**What can we achieve together?
Applications for a partnership year are due March 25, 2011.
www.volunteermaryland.org**