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**Kentucky Welcomes AmeriCorps Members, Joins Nationwide Celebration
of 1 Million AmeriCorps Members**

More than 1,000 join the 1 million Americans who have served in AmeriCorps since 1994

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 27, 2016) – This month, Kentucky welcomed a new class of AmeriCorps members pledging to “get things done,” joining the 1 million men and women who have taken the same pledge since the program’s inception.

The event, one of many happening across the nation this fall, occurred as the 22-year-old AmeriCorps program celebrates a major milestone: Surpassing 1 million members.

The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS), part of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), administers the Kentucky AmeriCorps program and has partnered with Kentucky Senior Service Corps Association (KSSC), a nonprofit group that supports Senior Corps programs in the commonwealth, to celebrate this milestone at the Owensboro Convention Center.

CHFS Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson said she was proud of the AmeriCorps members’ deep commitment.

“Kentucky AmeriCorps is dedicated to its mission of getting things done, and I salute new, returning and alumni members for their service,” Glisson said. “You have shown a focus on helping communities today to build a better future for all of Kentucky.”

AmeriCorps and Senior Corps are federal National Service programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The event brought together members from all Kentucky National Service programs for training and a swearing-in ceremony – a first-time collaboration for Kentucky.

CNCS CEO Wendy Spencer CEO administered the AmeriCorps pledge to the 400 attending AmeriCorps members who kicked off their year of service in 94 of Kentucky’s 120 counties. Spencer also administered the Senior Corps pledge to more than 150 Senior Corps members as a part of the collaborative event.

In total, there are 1,000 new and returning AmeriCorps and more than 4,000 Senior Corps members serving Kentucky this year. Not all members could attend the pledge ceremony because of commitments to the organizations where they serve or because they are less than full-time members.



KCCVS Executive Director Joe Bringardner said the landmark 1,000 members is another high point for Kentucky AmeriCorps this year after the program received more than \$6 million in AmeriCorps federal funding for its 19 programs.

“To have hundreds of members come together today marks a new beginning, giving us all hundreds of points of inspiration,” Bringardner said. “This is not just a celebration of service, it is a celebration of opportunity – for members, for citizens and for Kentucky communities that will see the positive changes from the efforts of the state’s programs.”

During the event, and in addition to training, AmeriCorps members participated in three service projects: packing 40,395 meals with Love the Hungry, attaching handwritten notes to 2,000 stuffed animals that first responders give to children as part of Kosair Charities’ “Bears on Patrol” program and assembling 600 “Blessing Bags” with toiletries and other items for people who are homeless and/or in local shelters.

Kentucky AmeriCorps members address critical issues across the commonwealth – like teaching and tutoring students, combatting homelessness, providing drug resistance education, protecting environmental resources, serving veterans and military families, empowering victims of domestic violence and assisting low-income senior citizens. During their service, AmeriCorps members will expand opportunity for themselves, gain skills and experience to jump start their careers and earn education scholarships for their service.

Spencer said Kentucky AmeriCorps members are making a powerful impact.

“I am proud to welcome these new AmeriCorps members into the national service family today – they are the heart of everything we do,” Spencer said. “Today, they join a network of more than 1 million men and women who have joined AmeriCorps to make our country stronger. ‘Thanks a million’ to all the AmeriCorps members for their dedication, and we thank our outstanding partners who make their service possible.”

As part of the two-day training before the swearing-in ceremony, Bringardner and Spencer led an Owensboro Business Roundtable to discuss Employers of National Service, a national initiative that connects AmeriCorps alumni with employers from the private, public and nonprofit sectors.

Through this initiative, employers will have increased access to a dedicated, highly qualified and mission-oriented pool of potential employees, and national service alumni have additional opportunities to apply their skills in the workplace. This was the first of many planned forums with state businesses and organizations about Employers of National Service.

On Oct. 7, the CNCS officially kicked off a nationwide campaign to say “Thanks a Million” to the 1 million AmeriCorps members who have pledged to “get things done” for America. This year, more than 75,000 individuals will comprise the class that includes the 1 millionth AmeriCorps member.

Since 1994, more than 1 million men and women have served in AmeriCorps, providing more than 1.4 billion hours of service addressing critical challenges from poverty and hunger to disasters and the dropout crisis. AmeriCorps members have earned more than \$3.3 billion in education scholarships to pay for college or pay back student loans.

In the Commonwealth, nearly 10,000 Kentuckians have served more than 15 million hours and have qualified for AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$34.1 million. Join the thousands of AmeriCorps members and alums celebrating this extraordinary milestone by visiting www.nationalservice.gov/onemillion or follow the celebration on Twitter using #1of1Million and #ThanksAMillion.

Learn more about the Kentucky’s event at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/ameriCorps/launch>. Connect with Kentucky AmeriCorps on Facebook and Twitter at @ServeKY.

the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.