



Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Eric Friedlander
SECRETARY

275 East Main Street, 5W-A
Frankfort, Kentucky 40621
Phone: (502) 564-7042
Fax: (502) 564-7091

Statewide News Release

Media Contact:

Brice Mitchell

502.330.9912

brice.mitchell@ky.gov

Gov. Beshear Renews Pact With AmeriCorps for Disaster Assistance

Agreement lets out-of-state rapid response teams deploy here in times of need

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 9, 2024) – As the commonwealth approaches the three-year anniversary of the devastating tornadoes in Western Kentucky, Gov. Andy Beshear today announced the renewal of a three-year agreement that enables the [AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps \(NCCC\) Southern Region](#) to deploy disaster relief and recovery teams to Kentucky in times of need.

“We are keeping our promise that we will be there for our people affected by natural disasters every step of the way, as long as it takes,” said **Gov. Beshear**. “This agreement provides more helping hands to rebuild homes, work food and clothing donation sites and more. When we look out for our neighbors, we create a stronger, more resilient Kentucky that is ready to face any challenge that comes our way.”

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been in effect since 2019, and since then, Kentucky has faced several natural disasters that have brought destruction to communities by way of ice storms, flooding, mudslides, tornadoes and more. AmeriCorps has been a vital resource for the commonwealth during times of disaster relief and recovery.

In the aftermath of the Western Kentucky tornadoes alone, AmeriCorps NCCC teams conducted 140 outreach calls, collected and distributed 8,753 gallons of water, sorted 34,340 pounds of donations, cleared 19.25 miles of existing trails, provided educational support to K-12 students, maintained over 200 historic documents and artifacts, constructed 11 new homes, renovated 13 homes, removed over 22,000 pounds of debris, joined a local Red Cross office in distributing over 300 weather radios with storm safety information, partnered with International Orthodox Christian Charities to rebuild homes in Mayfield and worked with the city of Bowling Green to distribute food, clothes and other important donations to disaster-affected families.

“In times of natural disaster, it is incredible to see people from all walks of life come together to help people not just in their own communities but communities that may even be hundreds of



miles away,” said Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary **Eric Friedlander**.

The MOU not only means that AmeriCorps NCCC teams will come to Kentucky in times of need, but it also means that Kentucky AmeriCorps members can provide aid to other states in the region when necessary.

In addition to helping thousands of Kentuckians rebuild and recover, AmeriCorps NCCC has provided extensive clean-ups of waterways and state parks and saved irreplaceable historical artifacts from Mammoth Cave and Hindman Settlement School.

“Supporting Kentucky communities through both immediate disaster response and long-term recovery is central to the mission of AmeriCorps NCCC,” said **Stephanie Chan**, assistant program director with AmeriCorps NCCC. “The strength of Kentucky is found in its residents, and we’ve seen firsthand how each community drives its own recovery in unique ways. Disaster recovery isn’t one-size-fits-all – it’s shaped by the spirit, culture and needs of each community. AmeriCorps NCCC has been honored to stand alongside Kentuckians, helping to rebuild not just homes but the fabric of these remarkable communities.”

“While we will always mourn and understand the pain that so many of our neighbors have been through as a result of the 2021 Western Kentucky tornadoes, it’s worth noting that the legacy of that storm is more than the destruction that was left behind,” said Serve Kentucky Executive Director **Joe Bringardner**. “Because just as unforgettable is the incredible and inspiring response that we’ve seen from Team Kentucky and our federal AmeriCorps partners included. Together we will continue to create the common good in the commonwealth.”

Serve Kentucky’s mission is to engage Kentuckians in volunteerism and service to positively impact communities across the commonwealth. As a state service commission, Serve Kentucky oversees AmeriCorps funds and programs and works with local partners to support and promote service and volunteering.

AmeriCorps is a national service organization that was founded in 1993. With its current 200,000 volunteers and members, AmeriCorps is more than just a natural disaster relief organization. Services include veteran assistance, independent living services for the elderly, environmental projects and more.

For more information on the services that AmeriCorps provides, go to serve.ky.gov.

Committed To Being There Every Step of the Way

Gov. Beshear will visit Western Kentucky tomorrow to remember those lost and to thank those who continue the work of rebuilding.

Since the tornado outbreak, Gov. Beshear has announced 75 private sector projects for a total investment of more than \$3.3 billion and 5,113 new jobs in tornado-affected counties.

The Team Western Kentucky Tornado Relief Fund raised over \$52 million to pay for funeral expenses, aid survivors and build up to 300 homes in the area. To date, more than 221 homes have been built or significantly repaired or are under construction.

The West Kentucky State Aid Funding for Emergencies fund, which was established in 2022, has awarded about \$148 million to eligible cities, counties, public and nonprofit utilities and school districts for much-needed financial support.

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