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[Home](#) [Editorials](#) [News](#) [Obituaries](#) [Police Briefs](#) [Sports](#)

[RATE CARD](#) • [GENERAL INFORMATION CHART](#)

OUR NETWORK

- [Boston Sun](#)
- [Charlestown Patriot-Bridge](#)
- [Chelsea Record](#)
- [East Boston Times Free Press](#)
- [Everett Independent](#)
- [Jamaica Plain Gazette](#)
- [Lynn Journal](#)
- [Mission Hill Gazette](#)
- [North End Regional Review](#)
- [Revere Journal](#)
- [Winthrop Sun Transcript](#)

EDITORIALS

Guest Op-Ed: National Service Makes Local Impact: Americorps Members Are Strengthening Greater Boston Communities

by [Beacon Hill Times Staff](#) • March 8, 2019 • [0 Comments](#)

In his

inaugural address, President John F. Kennedy asked Americans what they could do for their country. Nearly 60 years later, thousands are answering that question by serving in AmeriCorps, a national service program administered by the Corporation for National

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and Community Service. Across Massachusetts, 2,400 AmeriCorps members are serving this year, addressing the Commonwealth's most pressing needs in the areas of education, health, workforce development, and the environment.

The week of March 10-16 is AmeriCorps Week, which celebrates the valuable contributions of the AmeriCorps members who pledge to "get things done" for America. In Massachusetts, AmeriCorps members are tutoring and mentoring at-risk youth pre-K through high school, expanding access to recovery and treatment services for those struggling with opioid addiction, preparing communities for natural disasters, teaching young people how to grow and cook nutritious foods, providing support services to refugees and immigrants, preserving and rehabilitating our forests and waters, and more.

This year, AmeriCorps members are serving at three locations in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood. An AmeriCorps member serving with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition is assisting refugees and immigrants with job readiness, citizenship, and English language instruction at YMCA Training. AmeriCorps Legal Advocates has two members providing residents with civil legal assistance at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee.

"Whether it's serving a year in a pre-K classroom or on the trails in our state parks, our dedicated AmeriCorps members are making lasting change in cities and towns all across this great Commonwealth. They are meeting local needs, they are developing leadership skills, and for many, they will choose to stay in Massachusetts after their year of service and remain active and engaged citizens making a difference in our communities every day," said MSA

ARCHIVES

- [March 2019](#)
- [February 2019](#)
- [January 2019](#)
- [December 2018](#)
- [November 2018](#)
- [October](#)

2018

- [September 2018](#)
- [August 2018](#)
- [July 2018](#)
- [June 2018](#)
- [May 2018](#)
- [April 2018](#)
- [March 2018](#)
- [February 2018](#)
- [January 2018](#)
- [December 2017](#)
- [November 2017](#)
- [October 2017](#)
- [September 2017](#)
- [August 2017](#)
- [July 2017](#)
- [June 2017](#)
- [May 2017](#)
- [April 2017](#)
- [March 2017](#)
- [February 2017](#)
- [January 2017](#)
- [December 2016](#)
- [November 2016](#)
- [October 2016](#)
- [September 2016](#)

CEO Emily Haber.

AmeriCorps members in Massachusetts may receive a modest living allowance, student loan deferment, health insurance, childcare, and professional development. Members who successfully complete their service receive an educational award of up to \$6,095 to help pay for college, graduate school, vocational training, or to pay off student loans.

Since AmeriCorps began in 1994, more than 35,000 Massachusetts residents have served through the national service program, generating over \$1.13 billion in community impact. These AmeriCorps members have also earned \$63.2 million in education awards. Those interested in joining AmeriCorps can learn more at AmeriCorps.gov/join.

Barbara Moffat is the Associate Vice President for Media and Community Relations at Western New England University in Springfield. She serves as the Chair of the Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA).

Emily Haber is the CEO of the Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA). MSA administers federal AmeriCorps grants to 25 programs in Massachusetts, supporting 1,400 AmeriCorps members.

The Massachusetts Service Alliance, established in

- [August 2016](#)
- [July 2016](#)
- [June 2016](#)
- [May 2016](#)
- [April 2016](#)
- [March 2016](#)
- [February 2016](#)
- [January 2016](#)
- [December 2015](#)
- [November 2015](#)
- [October 2015](#)
- [September 2015](#)
- [August 2015](#)
- [July 2015](#)
- [June 2015](#)
- [May 2015](#)
- [April 2015](#)
- [March 2015](#)
- [February 2015](#)
- [January 2015](#)
- [December 2014](#)
- [November 2014](#)
- [October 2014](#)
- [September 2014](#)
- [August 2014](#)
- [July 2014](#)
- [June 2014](#)

1991, is a private, nonprofit organization that serves as the state commission on community service and volunteerism. MSA invests in community-based organizations and institutions that rely upon volunteers and people engaged in service. Through investing, convening, advocating, and building capacity, MSA develops and supports programs like AmeriCorps that incorporate service and volunteerism as effective strategies to address the most pressing needs in the Commonwealth. To learn more about MSA's role across the state, visit www.mass-service.org.



REGIONAL BLURBS

Boston Sun – Back Bay, South End, Fenway, Kenmore

This year, over 60 AmeriCorps members are serving at locations throughout the Back Bay, South End, Fenway, and Kenmore neighborhoods. The Boston Health Care for the Homeless AmeriCorps program has 13 members providing care coordination and health education to homeless individuals and families at the Pine Street Inn, St. Francis House, and the Southampton Street Shelter. AmeriCorps members serving with Boston University's College Advising Corps are helping young adults with college readiness, advising, and support at the Boston Latin School, Edward M. Kennedy Health Careers Academy, Boston Adult Technical Academy, Josiah Quincy Upper School, and Snowden International High School. Through the Jumpstart AmeriCorps program, 28 college students from Boston University and Suffolk University are providing early childhood literacy education to pre-K children at the Ellis Memorial Center, Wang YMCA, United South End Settlements (USES), and IBA. Other AmeriCorps members are expanding the mentoring programs and

- [May 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)
- [March 2014](#)
- [February 2014](#)
- [January 2014](#)
- [December 2013](#)
- [November 2013](#)
- [October 2013](#)
- [September 2013](#)
- [August 2013](#)
- [July 2013](#)
- [June 2013](#)
- [May 2013](#)
- [April 2013](#)
- [March 2013](#)
- [February 2013](#)
- [January 2013](#)
- [December 2012](#)
- [November 2012](#)
- [October 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [June 2012](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)

volunteer engagement of local organizations, providing full classroom support to teachers in public schools, and more.

Beacon Hill Times

This year, AmeriCorps members are serving at three locations in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood. An AmeriCorps member serving with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition is assisting refugees and immigrants with job readiness, citizenship, and English language instruction at YMCA Training. AmeriCorps Legal Advocates has two members providing residents with civil legal assistance at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee.

Charlestown Patriot-Bridge

This year, over 30 AmeriCorps members are serving throughout Charlestown. Two AmeriCorps members serving with Boston University's College Advising Corps are helping young adults with college readiness, advising, and support at Charlestown High School. City Year Boston members are also serving at the Charlestown High School as well as the Edwards Middle School, providing full classroom support and academic engagement services. Members of the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Massachusetts Forests and Parks AmeriCorps program are completing high priority conservation projects at the Commandant's House and the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Chelsea Record

This year, AmeriCorps members are serving at three locations in Chelsea. Two FoodCorps AmeriCorps members are at Healthy Chelsea, providing hands-on nutrition education to youth through growing, cooking,

- [February 2012](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [December 2011](#)
- [November 2011](#)
- [October 2011](#)
- [September 2011](#)
- [August 2011](#)
- [July 2011](#)
- [June 2011](#)
- [May 2011](#)
- [April 2011](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [February 2011](#)
- [January 2011](#)
- [December 2010](#)
- [November 2010](#)
- [October 2010](#)
- [September 2010](#)

and eating healthy foods. An AmeriCorps member with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition is assisting refugees and immigrants with job readiness, citizenship, and English language instruction at the Chelsea Collaborative. Phoenix Charter Academy in Chelsea has three AmeriCorps members serving as academic tutors and mentors for formerly out-of-school young adults.

East Boston Times

This year, 25 AmeriCorps members are serving at various locations throughout East Boston. At East Boston High School, City Year Boston AmeriCorps members are providing full classroom support and academic engagement services while two AmeriCorps members serving with the College Advising Corps are providing students with college readiness, advising, and support. Through the FoodCorps AmeriCorps program, one member is serving at the Patrick J. Kennedy and Bradley School to provide hands-on nutrition education to youth through growing, cooking, and eating healthy foods. The Social Capital Inc. (SCI) AmeriCorps program has members serving at Maverick Landing Community Services, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, East Boston YMCA, Everyday Boston, and East Boston Community Soup Kitchen to enhance these organizations' youth development programming and volunteer engagement.

Jamaica Plain Gazette

This year, over 60 AmeriCorps members are serving at locations throughout Jamaica Plain. College Advising Corps AmeriCorps members are providing students with college readiness, advising, and support at Margarita Muniz Academy and the English High School. Through the Jumpstart AmeriCorps program, 32 college students from Simmons are

providing early childhood literacy education to pre-K children at the Jamaica Plain Head Start, Nazareth Child Care, and Nurtury Learning Center. City Year Boston AmeriCorps members are providing full classroom support and academic engagement services at the Curley K-8 School, the English High School, and the Hennigan K-8 School. Members of the Playworks Massachusetts AmeriCorps program are providing children with evidence-based activities that involve play and movement to foster social and leadership development at the Curley K-8 School, John F. Kennedy Elementary, and Joseph P. Manning Elementary.

Mission Hill Gazette

This year, AmeriCorps members are serving at five locations throughout Mission Hill. College Advising Corps AmeriCorps members are helping young adults with college readiness, advising, and support at the Fenway High School. A Mass Promise AmeriCorps member at Sociedad Latina is facilitating academic enrichment and college exploration programs for young adults. Eleven City Year Boston members are serving at the Tobin K-8 School, providing full classroom support and academic engagement services. An AmeriCorps member with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition is assisting refugees and immigrants with job readiness, citizenship, and English language instruction at the ABCD Parker Hill/Fenway.

Lynn Journal Through several programs, 25 AmeriCorps members are serving in Lynn this year. The United Way of Mass Bay and Merrimack Valley's North Shore AmeriCorps Program has 15 members focused on reducing the school drop-out rate among English Language Learners. They are serving at Girls Inc. of Lynn, The Children's Law Center of

Massachusetts, and Metro North YMCA as well as five public schools: Marshall Middle School, Breed Middle School, Lynn Classical High School, Lynn English High School, and Lynn Vocational Technical Institute, among other sites. Through the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI), one AmeriCorps member is serving at the Lynn Police Department providing street-level outreach to combat the opioid epidemic. The Social Capital Inc. (SCI) AmeriCorps program has members serving at The Food Project, Lynn Food and Fitness Alliance, Family and Children's Services of Lynn, and Girls Inc. to enhance their youth programming and volunteer engagement.

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