Massachusetts Service Alliance
Serving Communities, Expanding Opportunities

2014 ANNUAL REPORT
Dear Friends of MSA,

This year over 2,500 of AmeriCorps and Commonwealth Corps members did a year of service in Massachusetts communities and over 1.42 million people volunteered episodically. Our Corps members and volunteers tackle the most stubborn problems in our communities and have stepped into roles that few others would accept while making a lasting difference in the lives of those they serve. In many cases, the corps members extend their service beyond one year or accept a career position in a community organization that is tackling these issues in the communities in which these problems persist.

We hear time and again from people who have served how much they gained from their service. In difficult job markets, service and volunteering provides experience that gives a job seeker an edge. The Corporation for National and Community Service’s (CNCS) report, Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment, provides the most compelling empirical research to date establishing an association between volunteering and employment in the United States. The research showed that volunteers have a 27 percent higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers. This year, CNCS launched Employers of National Service, a new initiative to recognize the valuable skills gained by the 900,000 Americans who have participated in AmeriCorps since 1994 and the 215,000 who have participated in the Peace Corps. Employers of National Service builds a talent pipeline which connects AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with leading employers from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors to create recruitment, hiring, and advancement opportunities.

All of our AmeriCorps and Commonwealth Corps members receive skill building opportunities, and in some cases, professional training and/or certifications that impact their post-service employability. Our service and volunteerism programs are building a generation of people who care passionately about making a difference in the lives of people in our communities and they are using their service and volunteering experience to pursue their passions professionally, and personally.

It is with pride and pleasure that we share with you the Massachusetts Service Alliance 2014 Annual Report. Please join us in celebrating the corps members, volunteers, and organizations that are making a difference every day in Massachusetts communities.

Emily Haber, CEO
Lawrence Bailis, Board Chair

The Massachusetts Service Alliance, established in 1991, is a private, nonprofit organization that serves as the state commission on community service and volunteerism. Its mission is to catalyze the innovation and growth of service and volunteerism by creating partnerships that maximize resources, expertise, capacity, and impact.

In support of our mission, MSA invests public and private funds in institutions and organizations; convenes and mobilizes individuals, nonprofits, corporations and government entities to link strategies related to service and volunteerism; builds capacity of programs and agencies through training and technical assistance; and advocates for the development and promotion of public policies and private initiatives that incorporate service and volunteerism as effective strategies to address community needs.

Happy 20th Anniversary, AmeriCorps!

The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) and the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University proudly hosted a big 20th anniversary bash for AmeriCorps on September 12, 2014. Uniting more than 1,500 Massachusetts AmeriCorps members, alumni, and friends of National Service at the Gantcher Center at Tufts University, the celebration provided an opportunity to reflect on two decades of extraordinary accomplishments.

Inspirational words were shared by host Alan Solomont, Dean of the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service; Robert Gordon, President of Be The Change, Inc.; and Congresswoman Katherine Clark (D-Massachusetts 5th). MSA’s event was part of a nationwide celebration of the anniversary that included tens of thousands of AmeriCorps members, alumni, and supporters reaffirming AmeriCorps’ commitment to “get things done for America.” The event also kicked-off a year of service for over 1,000 AmeriCorps members serving in Massachusetts. During a live-streaming simulcast from the White House, President Clinton and President Obama announced an exciting new commitment to expand national service, a special initiative to improve pathways to employment for AmeriCorps alumni, and the Stars of Service award to encourage community service by young people.

Congratulations to all of the AmeriCorps members serving in Massachusetts and to all of the AmeriCorps Alumni who continue to make a difference in our great state!
2014 Overview and Highlights

**Official “Massachusetts Service & Volunteerism Day” Signed Into Law**

Massachusetts officially has a day to recognize the impact volunteers and service corps members make on the lives of so many people in the Commonwealth. On April 23, 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law “An Act to Create an Annual Service and Volunteerism Day.” The law sets apart the second Thursday in April, or such other Thursday in its conjunction with a federally recognized National Volunteer Week, as Massachusetts Service and Volunteerism Day. The legislation creates a day to honor the incredible contributions made by volunteers and service corps members and the organizations in which they serve throughout the Commonwealth every year. In 2013, 1.42 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds across the state served with hundreds of local nonprofits, schools, faith-based organizations and community groups, contributing nearly 158 million hours of volunteer service.

**Building Awareness and Support for MSA and Service and Volunteerism at the State House**

Nonprofit leaders, community volunteers, service corps alumni, and other friends and advocates of the service and volunteerism sector gathered at the foot of the Massachusetts State House Grand Staircase on April 10, 2014 for the 2nd Annual Massachusetts Service & Volunteerism Day. The speaking program included testimonials from: a 71-year-old Foster Grandparent who dedicates her time tutoring at-risk youth; an uber volunteer with Boston Cares who has contributed over 1,000 hours to agencies such as the American Red Cross Boston Food Pantry and Room to Grow; AmeriCorps and Commonwealth Corps Alumni whose lives have been shaped by their year of service; and nonprofit leaders who testified how committed volunteers make a tremendous impact on the capacity of an organization. MSA and friends were joined by Legislative champions State Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington) and State Representative Michael Moran (D-Brighton) who encouraged the audience to reach out to their legislators to support increased funding to the field. MSA also had an opportunity to educate House and Senate members and staff on the role we play across the state and the various services we provide during a Legislative Briefing at the State House on February 24, 2014.

**Expansion of Service in Massachusetts through New Federal Agency Partnerships**

During the last two years, the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) has joined forces with multiple Federal agencies to address tough challenges facing our nation through service. These collaborations offer an expansion of opportunities for thousands of Americans ready to serve while increasing the capacity of Federal agencies like FEMA, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the USDA to carry out their missions. MSA is excited to be a part of this expansion of service in Massachusetts through New Federal agency partnerships.

**AmeriCorps**

During 2013–2014 over 1,300 AmeriCorps State members answered the nation’s call to service by addressing critical needs in the Commonwealth. Full and part-time members spent one year performing intensive service in the areas of academic enrichment, disaster preparedness and response, land conservation, mentoring, citizenship assistance, legal services and housing. Members served in every region of the state, from the Berkshires to the Cape, Springfield to Worcester, and Greenfield to Boston.

Barnstable County (AmeriCorps Cape Cod) • Citizen Schools Massachusetts • City Year Boston • City of Boston/BPE (Boston Promise Corps) • DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services (RISE AmeriCorps Program) • Just A Start • Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (MassLIFT) • Northeastern University (Massachusetts Promise Fellowship) • Phoenix Charter Academy (Phoenix Urban Fellowship) • South Coastal Counties Legal Services (Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency Program) • Springfield College (Springfield College School Turnaround AmeriCorps) • Springfield College (Springfield College School Turnaround AmeriCorps) • Student Conservation Association (SCA Massachusetts) • Tenacity, Inc. (Tenacity Corps/Enabling Academic Engagement) • United Teen Equality Center (Youth Empowerment Corps) • United Way of Massachusetts Bay (Lynn AmeriCorps Program)
SPOTLIGHT> Gwen Kozlowski, Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow, 2010-2011

Gwen Kozlowski reflects on her experience serving as a MassLIFT AmeriCorps member and how it was a driving force in getting to where she is today.

I served as a member of the Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT) AmeriCorps Program at Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust in Athol, MA. In my role as a Land Steward, I learned what it takes to help ensure that long-term conservation goals are reached. Welcomed by the staff of incredibly dedicated professionals at Mount Grace, I was introduced to how land conservation works from start to finish, including landowner outreach, funding, land stewardship, and everything in between. My main responsibilities included creating baseline documentation reports for conserved properties and conducting annual monitoring visits to make sure no violations of the conserved properties had occurred. I also designed and facilitated workshops to instruct community members on how to conduct annual monitoring visits.

As part of the stewardship team, I helped strengthen the organization’s capacity and protect inspiring landscapes of central Massachusetts for generations to come. I learned that land conservation is a long-term commitment, and I was proud to help ensure the stewardship goals were being met for each property. While serving at Mount Grace, I learned one of the key elements was fostering positive relationships between the land trust, landowners, and community members. Serving with the public in these settings developed my abilities and desire to explain ecological and technical concepts in a manner that untrained people can understand. This experience gave me the skills needed that led me to my current position as the Stewardship & Education Manager at the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, where I work to get more people aware of the natural resources found in the city of Lowell. My service has also inspired me to give back to my community, and I currently volunteer as a Big sister through the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Program. From protecting landscapes that matter to creating a professional network and career development, serving through AmeriCorps sparked my enthusiasm for a career in conservation.

SPOTLIGHT> City Year Boston

City Year Boston is an education-focused AmeriCorps program that partners with public schools to keep students in school and on track to graduate. City Year Boston AmeriCorps members are 17-25-year-olds who serve full time in urban schools in 21 Boston schools.

I served as a member of the City Year Boston corps members arrive at school before students in 21 Boston schools. Diverse teams of City Year Boston corps members arrive at school before the bell rings and stay until the last student goes home, providing both whole-class and individualized attention to students throughout the day. Corps members receive more than 100 hours of training throughout the year to equip and prepare them to better support teachers’ instruction and classroom management through tiered interventions.

City Year Boston AmeriCorps members also access intensive training in areas such as communication, team collaboration, project planning, and relationship cultivation. Through City Year’s career development resources and professional mentorship programs, their corps members develop leadership skills to help them grow into active global citizens.

During the 2013-2014 school year, 90 percent of elementary and middle school students tutored by City Year AmeriCorps members improved literacy skills. Nearly half of middle school students tutored by corps members improved performance by one or two letter grades in English. Additionally, 800 students mentored by corps members increased their attendance rates, leading to more than 10,000 hours of added learning time.

As part of the stewardship team, I helped strengthen the organization’s capacity and protect inspiring landscapes of central Massachusetts for generations to come. I learned that land conservation is a long-term commitment, and I was proud to help ensure the stewardship goals were being met for each property. While serving at Mount Grace, I learned one of the key elements was fostering positive relationships between the land trust, landowners, and community members. Serving with the public in those settings developed my abilities and desire to explain ecological and technical concepts in a manner that untrained people can understand. This experience gave me the skills needed that led me to my current position as the Stewardship & Education Manager at the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, where I work to get more people aware of the natural resources found in the city of Lowell. My service has also inspired me to give back to my community, and I currently volunteer as a Big sister through the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Program. From protecting landscapes that matter to creating a professional network and career development, serving through AmeriCorps sparked my enthusiasm for a career in conservation.

SPOTLIGHT> Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency Program: A Project of South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.

Making a difference in someone’s life is not the exception, it’s the rule for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency AmeriCorps Program (MLASSP AmeriCorps). Each year vulnerable children, victims of domestic violence, seniors, homeless families, people with disabilities, and veterans seek civil legal assistance to access life’s most basic necessities: stable housing, freedom from violence, health care, and the opportunity to provide for their families. It is the mission of the MLASSP AmeriCorps to leverage the ability of statewide civil legal aid offices to provide much needed assistance to qualified individuals seeking civil (non-criminal) legal help.

MLASSP is a statewide AmeriCorps program, administered by the South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc., that places 28 college and law school graduates at nonprofit civil legal aid organizations in low-income communities across the Commonwealth. In the 2013-2014 service year, MLASSP advocates served over 49,000 hours over 46 weeks and recruited 288 volunteers that served over an additional 5,000 hours. Together the advocates leveraged the ability of their legal aid organizations to assist 4,489 qualified low-income clients, enabling 794 individuals to transition into or maintain safe, healthy, affordable housing.

MLASSP advocates coordinate “Lawyer for the Day” programs at housing courts, recruit pro bono attorneys, give housing rights workshops, address the civil legal needs of veterans, and assist staff attorneys with a full range of services that enable low-income individuals and families to maintain stability. Many of the MLASSP alumni remain as staff at legal aid and non-profit organizations, comprising a wonderful network of advocates in the fight against poverty through legal advocacy. All MLASSP advocates leave their service year with first-hand experience in the practice of poverty law and the knowledge that they have truly made a difference.

2013-2014 AmeriCorps State Programs Impact in Numbers:

- 1,308 members served
- 1,225,274 hours
- 16,450 community volunteers were recruited/supported to serve
- 133,321 hours
- 10,506 disadvantaged children/youth were served, including
  - 8,409 individuals mentored and
  - 3,200 students who achieved improved academic performance and/or improved academic engagement
- 1,139 preschool students demonstrated gains in early literacy skills
- 701 individuals/families transitioned to safe, healthy, affordable housing
- 135 miles of trails and rivers were improved
- 735 acres of parks and public lands were rehabilitated
- 35 individuals received training in environmentally conscious energy efficient practices
- 1,320 individuals received disaster preparedness education and response/recovery services
- 1,139 individuals and families received legal services
- 59 organizations reported that they are more effective because of the capacity-building services provided by AmeriCorps members
Commonwealth Corps

The mission of the Commonwealth Corps is to engage Massachusetts residents of all ages and backgrounds in service to strengthen communities, address unmet community needs, and increase volunteerism. The Commonwealth Corps provides opportunities for skill building and leadership development and encourages a lifelong commitment to civic engagement.

Members provide direct service, build capacity of local organizations, and recruit and mobilize additional volunteers — while developing their own professional skills and building a grassroots movement of volunteers across Massachusetts.

Commonwealth Corps enables organizations and individuals that might not have the capacity to take part in other corps-based programs to expand their service to the community. With this program, Massachusetts remains on the cutting edge of promoting service as an innovative strategy to meet community needs. MSA administers this state-funded program, which was established in 2007. Since its inception, 875 Commonwealth Corps members have provided over 510,000 hours of service in areas such as community development, health services, early education, afterschool or summer programming, and volunteer recruitment and management. Through June of 2014, members’ service has impacted over 569,000 individuals across the state and leveraged over 26,000 additional volunteers, who contributed an additional 615,000 hours of service.

Commonwealth Corps IMPACT by the numbers (2013-2014)

36 Commonwealth Corps members provided over 42,000 hours of service at 15 host site partner organizations across the state, reaching over 9,600 new beneficiaries, improving services for almost 44,000 existing beneficiaries, and directly impacting almost 65,000 individuals through their service. Members recruited and/or managed over 1,500 community volunteers who contributed over 40,000 hours of additional service. Through their capacity building and volunteer recruitment efforts, members leveraged over $1,000,000 worth of cash or in-kind support for their host site organizations.

EXAM PLES OF IMPACT IN:

Economic Opportunity: 1,077 individuals received job training or placement services, and over 782 individuals received assistance in pursuing educational opportunities, or in receiving professional certification, licensure, or credentials.

Education: 14,749 children participated in Commonwealth Corps connected education programs, and 10,562 students demonstrated gains in school readiness (early childhood) or improved school engagement (K-12)

Health/Nutrition: 740 individuals utilized preventive and primary health care services and programs, and 250 individuals participated in health education programs.

2013-2014 Host Site Partners:

Economic Opportunity/Workforce Development Focus Area • HAP, Inc. [Springfield] • Lutheran Social Services [West Springfield/ Worcester] • More Than Words [Boston/Waltham] • Providence Ministries for the Needy, Inc. [Holyoke]


Health and Nutrition Focus Area • Samaritans, Inc. [Boston/Greater Boston]
Commonwealth Corps Stories
The Commonwealth Corps has a dual focus on members’ positive impact in their organizations and communities, as well as on members’ own growth and development. Ranging in age from 18–66, our 2013–2014 members all chose to serve as a way to give back, and they included: recent high school and college graduates looking for practical, real-world experience; current students serving while pursuing their degrees; individuals seeking an opportunity to sharpen their skills and a return to the professional world after full-time parenting or a mid-life career shift; and other members in or considering retirement. These members brought a breadth of strengths, experiences, and backgrounds to the Corps, and their impact will be felt for years to come.

SPOTLIGHT>

More Than Words
More Than Words (MTW) empowers youth who are in foster care, court-involved, homeless, or out of school, to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business. It serves as a vehicle for youth court-involved, homeless, or out of school, to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business. It serves as a vehicle for youth to equip themselves with the skills they need for a successful transition to adulthood. MTW has been a Commonwealth Corps host site partner since 2012. Over the course of their partnership with MSA, they have engaged six Commonwealth Corps members to expand their efforts and pilot new initiatives, sustaining their impact in-house after their service term and applying to engage members in new ways in succeeding years. In 2013-14, MTW’s members helped coordinate and oversee volunteer activities, with the goal of building an engaged community that increased support for the organization and awareness of its mission. Their two inspiring members made a lasting impact by laying the groundwork for a sustainable system for managing and retaining volunteers across two sites in Boston and Waltham.

SPOTLIGHT>

Stephanie St. Louis
Stephanie St. Louis reflects on her experience serving as a Commonwealth Corps member with School on Wheels of MA (SOWMA)

I served as a Commonwealth Corps member with MSA and School on Wheels of MA (SOWMA). SOWMA educates children impacted by homelessness by providing academic support and one-on-one mentoring so children can reach their full potential. As a Volunteer Specialist, I greatly increased our tutor recruitment, registration, and communication systems, was able to translate for Haitian Creole speaking families, and assisted with writing parent newsletters and a February break enrichment project.

I joined Commonwealth Corps to give back to my community of Brockton. SOWMA has made me become more open minded about those who are less fortunate. My year of service allowed me to connect more deeply with the community and community members throughout Brockton. As my service came to an end, SOWMA offered me a full-time staff position to become their first Program Assistant. They have given me the opportunity to grow professionally and build connections. Most importantly, this experience has helped me understand the impact of homelessness in my community. Because of Commonwealth Corps, I am more confident and energized to inform others about homelessness and the impact of community service.

MSA Volunteer Management Trainings
MSA offered multiple training opportunities throughout 2014 to provide nonprofit organizations with the education needed to gain the maximum benefit in working with volunteers, the community, board members, and marketing.

In the spring, 82 attendees were involved in three workshops, which focused on finding and managing volunteers, identifying the areas in which volunteers are the most effective, and navigating and using social media networks. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Google+. The two workshops offered in the fall drew 58 attendees, and included methods of evaluating volunteer success, as well as increasing board member involvement in fundraising and organizational support.

Thank you so much to the trainers that made the 2014 trainings a success. MSA looks forward to providing new and innovative trainings in 2015.

Service Enterprise Pilot in North Central Massachusetts
In June 2013, the Massachusetts Service Alliance was selected by Points of Light as one of 17 organizations nationwide to pilot a cutting edge training and certification program called the Service Enterprise Initiative (SEI). The term Service Enterprise was coined by the national campaign Reimagining Service in 2010, and shortly thereafter, CaliforniaVolunteers took the initial steps to create a training curriculum to develop this burgeoning concept. A Service Enterprise is an organization that leverages volunteers and their skills to successfully deliver on the social mission of the organization. These high performance organizations have deeply integrated volunteers into their strategic plan and organizational structure, thereby allowing them to reduce costs, increase efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to fulfill their mission.

In a joint effort with volunteer connector partner, United Way of North Central Massachusetts, MSA launched the SEI certification program in the Leominster/ Fitchburg region. Five agencies participated in this pilot year: The Boys and Girls Club of Leominster and Fitchburg, Twin Cities CDC, Our Father’s House, Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, and Leominster Office of Emergency Management. This cohort successfully underwent the Service Enterprise Diagnostic assessment to gain a deeper knowledge about their volunteer program, and participated in the four training modules created by CaliforniaVolunteers and Points of Light. All five agencies are on track to complete their Service Enterprise Certification by April 2015.

Spring 2014:
Social Media 102: You’re Social, Now What? Making Social Media Work for You

Uncovering the Hidden Gem: Making Skills-Based Volunteering Work for Your Organization

Using ROVI Methods to Leverage Volunteers Strategically

Fall 2014:
Getting Your Board Engaged In Fundraising and Supporting Your Organization

Relative Impact, Return on Investment Workshop: A New and Relevant ROI Measuring Model
MSA Supports National Days of Service

MLK Day 2014
MSA’s Martin Luther King Day of Service Initiative inspired thousands of people from Holyoke to Cape Cod to spend a “Day ON” with projects including: food and clothing drives for low-income families, creating bedtime kits and lap desks for hundreds of homeless children, and environmental stewardship through planting 600 tomato plants and clearing trails for public use. By investing more than $47,500, MSA’s 13 grantees recruited and supported over 4,900 volunteers on or during the week of MLK Day, 2,000 of which were new volunteers.

These volunteers accomplished over 15,000 hours of service throughout Massachusetts, continuing a tradition of unwavering success during the MLK Day of Service Initiative for MSA!

National Volunteer Week, April 6-13, 2014
National Volunteer Week allows individuals and nonprofits the opportunity to expand their capabilities by engaging volunteers in social change and actively demonstrating their collective power to make a difference. In 2014, MSA granted 19 local organizations nearly $65,000 to lead over 4,500 volunteers in service projects across Massachusetts. Through more than 13,000 hours, volunteers assisted these nonprofits in a wide variety of activities to strengthen their communities.

Several projects focused on fostering healthy living for families through cleaning neighborhood blocks and river banks, gathering food for local pantries, and providing service learning through the creation of sustainable, interactive classroom and community gardens. The opportunity for communities to unite and create a sustainable impact in a short amount of time is unique to National Volunteer Week, and MSA is proud to support this initiative.

September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance
The September 11th Day of Service provides a unique platform for service opportunities that positively impact the community during a time of remembrance and commemoration. In 2014, MSA proudly supported eight organizations and more than 1,000 volunteers involved in emergency response education, service with veterans centers, celebrating the lives of lost loved ones through creating murals and community events, as well as other local projects.

By granting nearly $16,500 to accomplish the September 11th Day of Service projects, MSA is honored to be a part of inspiring positive change, unity, strength, and caring in the community.
United Way of Pioneer Valley (UWPV) mobilizes people and resources to strengthen communities throughout Hampden County, South Hadley and Granby. To improve the quality of life for the region’s citizens, UWPV works toward: ensuring all youth graduate from high school with a 21st century education ready for success in college, career and life; families are financially stable and build assets; and residents facing a short-term crisis can secure food, fuel and housing assistance. Volunteer Engagement is one of four key strategies employed to meet these goals.

Over the past two years, UWPV has seen a 48% increase in volunteerism as a result of the UWPV Volunteer Connector.

At a glance, UWPV’s 2014 volunteer engagement efforts included:
- Volunteer program capacity building to provide technical assistance, resources, and training to nonprofits and develop cross-sector networks with 45 member organizations (local colleges, non-profits, and businesses).
- Coordinated 16 volunteer service days which engaged 1,142 volunteers in service with 36 agencies and six different school districts.
- Days of Caring — Recruited 930 volunteers for 34 agencies and two school districts.
- “Stuff the Bus” — Recruited 67 volunteers for backpack distribution to over 1,300 homeless children.
- Youth-Generate — Recruited 79 high school students from four high schools for four projects.
- Youth and Company Service Days — Matched 66 volunteers to community service projects.
- 2014 UWPV volunteer portal — Registered 145 nonprofits and referred at least 1,323 people to volunteer opportunities.

Changes in unrestricted net assets from operations $52,232
Net Investment Income $162,741
Change in unrestricted net assets $214,973
Unrestricted Net Asset (Beginning Balance) $1,459,606
Unrestricted Net Asset (End Balance) $1,674,579
Volunteer lending a helping hand at a community-wide cleanup during an MSA-supported National Volunteer Week Service Project at the East End House in Cambridge, MA.