



## **Volunteers Maintain & Grow Communities**

*By Louisiana Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser*

Strategies any NLGA Member may consider to strengthen communities with volunteerism:

1. Louisianans volunteer more than 129-million hours per year, with an annual economic impact of \$2.8 billion for the state.
2. Recognize volunteers in your state thru your own recognition programs.
3. Recognize volunteers in specific populations. These may be Veterans Service Awards, Volunteer Awards Over Age 60, or an award like LA's below.

Established in 1993 under the Office of the Louisiana Lieutenant Governor, Volunteer Louisiana manages 16 AmeriCorps State programs, promotes volunteerism, and coordinates spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers in times of disaster. It is supported by grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service and the state itself. Volunteer Louisiana oversees AmeriCorps state service programs, plus identifies needs and opportunities to grow national service and volunteerism to meet critical community needs.

National service is about getting things done, strengthening our communities, encouraging civic responsibility and expanding opportunity. Louisianans volunteer over 129 million hours per year, with an annual economic impact of \$2.8 billion for our state. Volunteer Louisiana has hosted 19,950 AmeriCorps members who have provided over 7 million hours of community service in education, disaster response, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity, and healthy futures. Volunteer Louisiana has awarded over \$196,000 in grants to seventy nonprofits and local schools since 2010. In accordance with federal requirements, the Volunteer Louisiana Commission prepares a service plan every three years to establish state priorities.

On the Volunteer Louisiana web site, interested volunteers can search volunteer opportunities with organizations, and find ways to donate to the various efforts. Non-profit and faith-based organizations in need of volunteers can contact Volunteer Louisiana to list their opportunities.

Volunteer Louisiana recognizes volunteerism. The Louisiana Volunteer Service Award recognizes groups and individuals who serve with distinction, demonstrate excellence and have contributed 150 or more hours of service in a calendar year. The annual Champions of Service Award recognizes outstanding volunteers from seven geographic regions across the state, plus outstanding AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Corporate volunteer programs. The Community Service Diploma Endorsement is a diploma endorsement that Louisiana high school students may earn upon graduation for volunteering a cumulative 80 or more hours.

I am proud to be part of leading my state's effort to help meet the needs of residents through volunteerism and national service.