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SERVE WISCONSIN

Press Release - Serve Wisconsin Receives Volunteer Generation Fund Grant to Improve Local Disaster Response Efforts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With the goal of improving local and statewide efforts to prepare for and respond to disasters, Serve Wisconsin has received a [2020 Volunteer Generation Fund \(VGF\) grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service](#) to develop local Community/Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD/VOAD).

“Serve Wisconsin will use the \$235,917 VGF grant to support the efforts of all streams of national service in Wisconsin to prepare, respond, and recover from disasters by building a national service volunteer force across the state and strengthening the partnerships and collaborative efforts in the local communities between national service, volunteer organizations, businesses, and governments statewide,” said Jeanne Duffy, Executive Director of Serve Wisconsin.

Since 2016, Wisconsin has experienced eight federally declared disasters throughout the state, including flooding, straight-line winds, tornadoes, winter storms, and the most recent COVID-19 pandemic, with these disasters requiring coordinated responses between local and statewide organizations and officials. Serve Wisconsin and its AmeriCorps programs have provided recovery assistance for many of these disasters, including organizing recovery teams in 2019 to address flood damage in Adams, Juneau, and Monroe Counties and storm damage in Oconto and Langlade Counties.

Over the past several years and during the current COVID-19 crisis, Serve Wisconsin has assessed the current disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts throughout the state and have identified specific gaps within this arena, including the absence of local COAD/VOADs and the resources for cohesive volunteer engagement and management. The goal of local COAD/VOADs is to actively involve those in their communities in disaster preparedness efforts and to ensure effective response and coordination amongst responders during disaster recovery efforts.

Currently there are only active local COAD/VOADs in the Southeast and East Central regions of Wisconsin, with the majority of the disasters over the last five years impacting rural regions in other regions of the state. Serve Wisconsin will use the VGF grant funding to work with community and statewide organizations to develop local COAD/VOADs throughout the state.

“Serve Wisconsin is excited to begin working with communities throughout the state to develop local Community/Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters. This initiative will strengthen Wisconsin by providing the local communities the ability to better prepare, respond, and recovery from disaster events,” said Ruhamah Bauman, Disaster Response Coordinator with Serve Wisconsin.

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Serve Wisconsin is the state commission for national and community service. Our mission is to promote service, provide training, and allocate resources to programs that enrich lives and communities through service and volunteerism. We currently support 26 AmeriCorps programs and 950 AmeriCorps members throughout the state and work collaboratively with Senior Corps and other national service programs. We are governed by a 21-member citizen board appointed by the Governor. For more information about Serve Wisconsin or funded AmeriCorps programs, visit www.servewisconsin.wi.gov.

This funding is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency for volunteering, civic engagement, and national service programs like AmeriCorps. For more than two 25 years, more than 1 million dedicated Americans have joined AmeriCorps and pledged to 'get things done.' This year, the 75,000 AmeriCorps members serving in schools, nonprofits, community and faith-based organizations, will do the same as they rebuild communities, support veterans, fight the opioid epidemic, prepare students for success, foster economic opportunity, and more. Those interested in serving can learn more at AmeriCorps.gov/join.

