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NEWS RELEASE

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STATEWIDE AMERICORPS MEMBERS SWORN IN FOR YEAR OF SERVICE TO WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston, WV – Nearly 200 AmeriCorps members from across the state were sworn in Thursday at the Great Hall of the Culture Center at the State Capitol Complex. The ceremony marks the beginning of a year of service throughout the state.

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, engages West Virginians in solving community-identified issues through service. AmeriCorps members serve in 47 of West Virginia's 55 counties and address issues such as poverty, economic development, literacy and nutrition, just to name a few.

“The swearing-in ceremony celebrates the spirit of volunteerism in West Virginia and the commitment that these citizens make to their communities,” Kim Tieman, executive director of Volunteer West Virginia, the state's Commission for National and Community Service, said.

There are currently six year-long AmeriCorps programs in West Virginia, three education award-only programs, two summer programs and one planning program. Nearly 200 members serve in year-long programs that include the American Red Cross/Mid-Ohio Valley Chapter, Appalachian Forest Heritage Area, Building a Community of Champions, Coal Heritage Highway Authority, Jobs for a Stronger Ohio County, LifeBridge AmeriCorps, Communities Helping Communities, and the Ohio-WV

YMCA. Nearly 600 members serve in Energy Express AmeriCorps and Energy Express AmeriCorps Recovery, the state's two summer programs.

AmeriCorps members in West Virginia focus on community-identified needs, recruit and train local volunteers and increase the capacity of community-serving organizations. Members also become better community leaders and receive an education award worth \$4,725 that can be used to pay off student loans or attend an institution of higher education upon completion of their year of service. Members can receive up to two education awards by serving two years with an AmeriCorps program.

Through the Edward Kennedy Serve America Act, President Obama and his administration hope to expand AmeriCorps programs nationwide from 75,000 to 250,000 members by the year 2012. Other benefits of the Serve America Act, which went into effect on October 1, include an increase in the amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award that members receive and the ability to transfer an education award to a child, grandchild or foster child.

AmeriCorps programs in West Virginia are supported in part by grants from Volunteer West Virginia, the state's Commission for National and Community Service as well as other public and private resources. Volunteer West Virginia is a division of the Office of the Governor. The agency strengthens West Virginia communities through service and volunteerism.

Information on applying for AmeriCorps funding is available by contacting the Volunteer West Virginia at (304) 558-0111, by visiting [.volunteerwv.org](http://volunteerwv.org).

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