

## MID-YEAR REPORT FOR OUTCOME PROGRESS

*Reporting for: July 1 – November 30, 2020*

**Agency Name: Volunteer Center of Story County**

**Program Name: Volunteer Engagement**

### Brief Description of Program:

Volunteers are an essential component of non-profit organizations. The Volunteer Engagement programs and services provided by the VCSC involve introducing community members to positive and successful volunteer experiences around causes they care about, assisting individuals and groups connect to opportunities with local organizations and events, supporting local agencies and groups as they develop their internal capacity to engage volunteers to achieve their social missions through training, sharing expertise, resources and networking, and recognizing volunteers for their efforts.

Volunteering and volunteer engagement are broader than direct service (i.e. -- stuffing envelopes, working with clients, or other hands-on activities) to an organization. These efforts also include raising awareness, advocacy efforts and the philanthropic support of organizations. Volunteer service is only way for people to engage in building a strong and resilient community, being engaged also includes voting, exercising purchase power, social entrepreneurship, utilizing social media, the workplace (corporate citizenship and employee) volunteer programs, and financial support. Our programs and services strive to help people find individual meaningful ways to act around causes important to them to develop skills, make a difference, and build a community.

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Programs and services provided include:

- **Volunteer Referrals** -- (available to all local organizations and groups, and volunteer interests. ASSET funding is restricted to only promote and encourage volunteering and engaging volunteers with the ASSET-funded agencies, as of FY2019-2020)
  - Maintain an online referral system with 163 agency partners, including all ASSET funded partners, and a monthly average of 100 available volunteer opportunities.
  - Regular communication and promotion of available volunteer opportunities and upcoming events through a variety of media to raise awareness of needs and inspire volunteering.
  - Regular meetings and communication with partner agencies on current volunteer needs and opportunities.
  - Individual conversations (phone, in-person, email) and presentations about benefits of volunteering, available opportunities, and considerations for volunteering.
- **Days of Service and Custom Service Projects and Support**

- Coordinate and deliver community-wide volunteer opportunities inspired by National Days of Service (9/11 Day, MLK Day), and other national/global service campaigns (Family Volunteer Day, Global Youth Service Day, #GivingTuesday, Good Deeds Day).
- Partner with local organizations to create projects and activities that advance their social missions, benefit their clients or program participants, and provide a gateway for volunteers to engage further with the agencies after the introductory activity.
- **Volunteer Awareness Campaigns**
  - Random Acts of Kindness Week and Volunteer Madness -- social media campaigns highlighting the need for volunteers, the potential of volunteering to make a difference, and how easy it is to be a volunteer.
  - List of volunteer opportunities in local media -- utilizing radio, print, electronic, and social media to highlight available volunteer opportunities with local partner agencies.
  - Global Volunteer Month -- April of each month is dedicated to recognizing volunteers and their impact in creating our resilient communities.
- **Volunteer Engagement Training and Network**
  - Volunteer Management Training Series -- Offering a 6-week online course for volunteer coordinators on the basic ideas of the volunteer engagement process. Delivered in cooperation with the other 13 Volunteer Centers of Iowa and with support from Volunteer Iowa (State Volunteer Commission).
  - Volunteer Engagement 201 Series -- Additional professional development for volunteer engagement professionals. Offering 2-4 workshops annually, diving deeper into topics related to volunteer engagement (i.e. risk management, technology trends and volunteers, marketing strategies for recruiting volunteers).
  - Service Enterprise Initiative -- A nationally certification change management process for organizations to adopt a more effective culture for volunteer engagement throughout the organization. More information at: <https://youtu.be/DbhTYhiHHzU>
  - Story County Volunteer Coordinators -- Creating a network of volunteer engagement professionals to learn from, collaborate with, and support each other.
- **Workplace Volunteer Program Support**
  - Facilitating custom service projects, making strategic connections for corporate engagements with area partners, and providing support for developing employee volunteer programs in local workplaces.
- **Volunteer Recognition**
  - **Story County Youth Volunteer Awards**

- Annual presentation recognizing the volunteer efforts of youth (individuals or groups) under the age of 25 for their efforts to build a strong community.
- **Daily Points of Light Award**
  - National recognition of outstanding volunteers for their efforts to build a stronger community through their contributions.
- **Presidential Volunteer Service Awards**
  - The VCSC is a certifying agency for this national recognition for individuals and families who volunteer 400 or more hours a year in our community.
- **Prudential Spirit of Community Awards**
  - The VCSC is the certifying agency for this national award that recognizes one high school and one middle school student from our service area annually for their service.

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## **Definitions of Terms --**

**Volunteer** -- anyone who participates in awareness, service, advocacy, or philanthropic efforts. without expectations of monetary compensation for their efforts, to take action and identify and address community needs.

**Active, Registered Volunteers** -- an individual who accessed the VCSC online volunteer referral system in the last two years to connect to a volunteer opportunity with a partner agency or VCSC opportunity.

**Partner Agency**-- An agency, organization, or community group that has an active (current) account in the online volunteer referral system.

**Clients** -- The VCSC considers clients to be individuals who: 1) are active, registered volunteers, 2) volunteers who participate in VCSC events, service opportunities, and educational presentations, 3) partner agencies who have active accounts in the online referral system, or access VCSC programs and services to support their own volunteer engagement efforts, and 4) the individuals and groups who provide organizational support to the VCSC as board members, skill based volunteers, and other positions specific to the VCSC.

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Anyone can volunteer, regardless of age, race, income level or ability. Opportunities can be created or modified, as necessary. These are demographic metrics the VCSC continues to work to develop feasible collection methods, that are accurate and sensitive to cultural and privacy considerations. In order not to create additional barriers to volunteering, we are working to determine the best way to collect this information when mandated to do so and will update our statistics at that time.

**1. Program/ Service Outcome (Change/ Benefit to Clients/ Community) – please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on program/ service outcome from July 1 to date:**

Volunteering continues to be essential to the VCSC partner agencies (ASSET and non-ASSET funded), the VCSC, and the community. The number of views on the online referral system for opportunities and agency information has averaged 1,200 per month since July 2020. The number of available opportunities in the system has held steady at an average of 100 /month. The number of need responses dropped between July and September but increased in October and continues to rise in November, and to-date in December.

The type of volunteer opportunities available with partner agencies and at the VCSC continues to evolve in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of remote, virtual, and small-group opportunities continues to grow. Several VCSC partner agencies suspended all volunteer opportunities in response to the pandemic and have yet to resume volunteer activities.

VCSC presentations have been suspended and will resume in virtual formats beginning in 2021 as an on-demand feature through the VCSC website, electronic communications, and online referral system.

Regular communication between the VCSC and ASSET-funded agencies continues on a regular basis to assess current volunteer needs and volunteer engagement capacity for each partner.

The Story County Winter Wrap campaign was a winter coat and gear donation drive to support local shelters and Story County community school districts between October 24 and December 1. Over 80 hours of volunteer time collected, sorted, inventoried, and distributed over 1,100 items (coats, hats, scarves, gloves, mittens, boots, and snow pants), to Story County residents in need through area clothing pantries, shelters, and school districts.

A Veteran's Day project was coordinated with support from the Mucky Duck Pub for county residents to send a thinking of you or card of thanks to area veterans and seniors in November. Fifteen people participated in this event.

Area employers continue to reach out to the VCSC to learn about volunteering locally, with particular interest in available remote, virtual and do-it-yourself opportunities.

**2. Measurement Used (How Often, Tools Used) – please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on measurement used from July 1 to date:**

Volunteer registrations and referrals made are tracked through the VCSC online volunteer referral system and reported out as frequently as requested by stakeholders and funders, (monthly, quarterly, or annually).

Volunteer attendance and participation is recorded by sign-in (paper or electronic) and/or head counts at all VCSC Events and presentations. This provides the number of volunteers engaged and number of volunteer hours served in addition to the number of volunteers registered and referred on through the online referral system.

Volunteers serving directly with the VCSC report their time served (verbally, electronically, or on paper timesheets), upon request or as required by program funders through 2019-20. Beginning in FY20-21, verified time sheets are universally utilized.

Participant feedback is collected as part of reflection activities at all VCSC presentations, through surveys and interviews to assess gaining new skills and how confident participants are in utilizing those skills as volunteers.

Satisfaction surveys are sent to all event volunteers who registered in advance of the event electronically and handed out as paper copies at VCSC events to assess volunteer experience, satisfaction and confidence in using new skills or concepts going forward. The same survey is again sent at the end of the year as an attempt to capture additional data if it was not submitted at the time of the original volunteer event.

Partner agencies are sent a survey twice a year (electronically and by mail) to assess agency needs for VCSC support and satisfaction with VCSC programs and services as that relates to achievement of the partners' social missions. VCSC staff communication with each ASSET-funded agency directly (phone, in-person, electronically, and by mail) on a regular basis throughout each year specifically, as required by ASSET funding.

**3. Measurement Update (Please provide update on measurement data collected based on the ABF 5(O) from July 1 to date):**

Partner agencies were sent a satisfaction survey in September with an updated copy of the partner agency agreement and highlights of available VCSC services. Surveys were sent to 158 agencies, 31 responses (19.6%) were received back.

All (ASSET and non-ASSET) VCSC partner agencies received a report detailing how their account and posted volunteer opportunities were viewed and responded to for FY20 in July.

A volunteer experience survey has been sent to 271 volunteers since July 1 that have responded to opportunities through the VCSC online referral system. 32 responses were completed (11.4%).

VCSC staff have communicated with ASSET-funded agencies specifically at least once during this time frame regarding current volunteer needs, upcoming events, pandemic and derecho effects, and for feedback through interviews.

**4. Outcomes Achieved (Result to Clients/ Community) – please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on the outcomes achieved from July 1 to date:**

All 31 (100%) responding agencies indicated there were satisfied or very satisfied with the VCSC programs and services. 13 (41.9%) of the responses were from ASSET-funded agency partners.

After receiving the activity report from the VCSC, 6 agency accounts (all non-ASSET) were deactivated, 14 of 158 were updated by the VCSC, and another 8 were updated by the agencies themselves.

From the Volunteer Experience Survey – (n = 32 respondents)

- 75% (24) of the respondents were contacted by the partner agency within 2 weeks of expressing interest. 13% (4) of the respondents were not contacted. 78% of the respondents said they were contacted email.
- 72% (23) of the respondents report they did volunteer after responding.
- 59% (19) of the respondents report they had a good volunteer experience. No respondents reported a bad volunteer experience. 7 volunteers (22%) were indifferent about their experience.
- 53% (17) of respondents report serving over 4 hours after responding. 28% (9) respondents served under 4 hours.
- 66% (21) of respondents had not volunteered previously.
- 47% (15) of survey respondents report responding to between 1 and 5 volunteer opportunities.
- Survey respondent comments:
  - “I have just discovered if [the VCSC website], will use more often.”
  - They [agency] have been nice and fast with responding.”
  - “I just started volunteering this past year.”
  - “I appreciate the work of the VCSC – would like to connect more corporations with the opportunities.”

From conversations with ASSET-funded agencies –

“We are holding off on volunteers through the pandemic.”

“Thank you for your time, and willingness to help up think and identify virtual and remote opportunities up for volunteers.”

“We are probably going to regret it, but we won’t risk it.”

“We need to create more virtual and remote opportunities. Thank you for your ideas and for promoting do-it-yourself volunteering ideas.”

“I appreciate the resources you’ve provided about volunteering and safety precautions during COVID.”

“It’s great that you (the VCSC) will work with large groups, students and businesses to get them volunteering. We can’t handle the large numbers, but appreciate what you get them to do [i.e. hygiene kits], and then a few will come on through to us. It works great.”

**5. Barriers Encountered (please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on the barriers encountered from July 1 to date):**

The pandemic has been the hardest challenge of the year to date for the VCSC. While the number of available opportunities with partner agencies has decreased, and the type of opportunity has changed to be more virtual or remote. The interest in volunteering has increased. We receive 25% more phone calls each month, and the online referral system sees an average of 5,120 views each month on the agency account pages and available opportunity listings. All VCSC events and opportunities have shifted to remote or do-it-yourself types of service which is a smaller number of volunteers to engage.

The second greatest challenge is the restriction in ASSET funding for Volunteer Management being tied solely to placing volunteers in direct service with the other ASSET funded agencies. This has led to excluding VCSC Volunteer activities that are essential for the VCSC operation, increased staff workload for accounting and reporting activities and does not allow for the seasonal flow of volunteer interest and available opportunities. (Interest and demand are consistently equal each month for volunteers and from volunteers). This restriction precludes over 60% of the volunteers referred to non-ASSET funded agencies which is leading to community members being less interested in volunteering if all they know/hear about is causes and needs that do not appeal to them. If volunteers do not have a positive experience, they are less likely to volunteer in the future.

**6. Clients Served (please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5 Service Statistics and provide an update on number of clients served from July 1 to date):**

- 158 Partner agencies have accounts in the VCSC online referral system. 30 of the 31 ASSET agencies have a new account. Staff will be working with Wings of Refuge in 2021 to set up an account so all ASSET-agencies will be represented.
- 271 volunteers responded to volunteer opportunities during this time with VCSC partner agencies (ASSET and non-ASSET funded).
- The VCSC coordinated volunteers for 9/11 Day of Remembrance projects, supported ISU Campus Service Day project coordination (benefitting the community, ASSET-funded, and non-ASSET agencies), and launched the Story County Winter Wrap Up Clothing

Drive in place of the Winter Weatherization Blitz for Make-A-Difference Day, Family Volunteer Day and Giving Tuesday days of service.

- An additional 266 volunteers were mobilized for ISU Campus Service Day, and 21 were mobilized for 9/11 Day and Veteran's Day.

**7. Have you had to turn any clients away that desire to participate in this program? If so, why? If so, how many? If so, when?**

No one is turned away from volunteering with the VCSC or through the VCSC. We strive to make finding opportunities accessible and adjust our activities according to registrations received. We are constrained in the scale of our volunteer projects and scope of programming due to more limited and restricted funding instead of by our capacity to engage.

**8. Comments:**



## **MID-YEAR REPORT FOR OUTCOME PROGRESS**

***Reporting for: July 1 – November 30, 2020***

**Agency Name: Volunteer Center of Story County**

**Program Name: Youth Engagement**

### **Brief Description of Program:**

The Volunteer Center of Story County has made a conscious commitment to supporting the efforts of young people (under age 25) interested in building a strong community through volunteering in all of our programs, services and events. Volunteering is a learned behavior and research shows that the earlier individuals start in life, the more likely they are to continue to volunteer throughout their lives.

As a youth volunteer, young people learn firsthand what they are capable of, develop critical thinking and communication skills, and develop a greater understanding about their community and the needs and issues, impacting our area. The opportunity to be part of the solution for improvement is a key part of advocacy efforts.

Our program efforts include:

- Family-friendly and youth specific events (Family Volunteer Day, Nevada High School Day of Service, ISU Greek Week Project Day, and ISU Campus Service Days);
- Recognition of service through the Youth Volunteer Awards and provision of resources to schools, partner agencies and young individuals to create, find and complete volunteer opportunities in our community.
- Devoting organization resources (staff time, expertise, connections, and knowledge) to help the 163 partner agencies develop their own capacity to engage youth volunteer effectively to achieve the goals of their programs.
- Specifically recruit and place youth volunteers in key roles within the VCSC with the responsibility for program development to meet community needs and support our partner's efforts.

In 2019, we launched the Engaged Faculty Institute in partnership with ISU CELT (Center for Excellence and Leadership in Teaching), with support from Iowa Minnesota Campus Compact. A cohort of 10 faculty members and local agencies received training and support to build purposeful, strategic, and relevant service into coursework and community impact through strategic partnerships and agreed upon outcomes.

In addition, the support from IA/MN Campus Compact also allowed the VCSC to host an AmeriCorps ISU Volunteer Manager for the school year. This member worked with the Students Activities Center to support student service projects, raise awareness of the VCSC among the student body, and facilitate greater partnerships and collaboration among large student organizations and the community. An anticipated additional 500 youth volunteers were expected to be engaged in VCSC activities prior to cancellations due to the pandemic.

For FY20 and 21 -- Plans for continuing support for the Engaged Faculty Institute and collaborative efforts developed by the AmeriCorps position are in place with VCSC staff support (paid and volunteer), even though ISU is no longer part of IA/MN Campus Compact

1. **Program/ Service Outcome (Change/ Benefit to Clients/ Community) – please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on program/ service outcome from July 1 to date:**

Instead of presentations to large groups at volunteer events or classes, information about volunteering benefits, impact and the need for volunteers in our community has taken place on a much smaller scale with specific projects. VCSC staff efforts have focused on the experience youth volunteers have who are specifically serving with the VCSC. These volunteers include the VCSC webmaster, DMACC SCALE Communications and Technology student group, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Philanthropy Chair, and Future Forward Program Manager who facilitated focus group conversations for the VCSC.

As part of each of these volunteers' experiences, they have learned about the volunteer management process, the importance and impact of engaging volunteers, and been empowered to develop skills, knowledge and an attitude that will foster future volunteering endeavors.

2. **Measurement Used (How Often, Tools Used) – please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on measurement used from July 1 to date:**

All evaluation and gathering of feedback happens through individual interviews, meetings and regular supervision of these youth volunteers. As part of the supervision process, volunteers are asked to reflect on what they have learned and how they see themselves applying those lessons going forward.

3. **Measurement Update (Please provide update on measurement data collected based on the ABF 5(O) from July 1 to date):**

VCSC staff meet with volunteers every other week, every month, or at the beginning, mid-point and the end of projects or consultations to evaluate progress and program outcomes.

4. **Outcomes Achieved (Result to Clients/ Community) – please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on the outcomes achieved from July 1 to date:**

All eight volunteers working on VCSC projects or utilizing VCSC consultation support report learning about the Volunteer Management Process, and the value of engaging volunteers.

All VCSC Volunteers also all report being willing to implement the lessons they have learned about engaging volunteers in meaningful experiences going forward (confident in using the skills/knowledge gained).

**5. Barriers Encountered (please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5(O) and provide an update on the barriers encountered from July 1 to date):**

COVID-19 continues to be the largest barrier to executing the activities associated with the VCSC Youth Engagement programs, services, and events. Due to the pandemic, large group activities are not happening, presentations have not been made, and many partner agencies have cancelled volunteer opportunities, and/or are slow to create virtual, remote, and do-it-yourself opportunities for volunteers, especially those for youth volunteers.

For the remainder of FY21, VCSC staff and volunteers are working to create a video/virtual series of on-demand videos to replace presentations that have been cancelled due to the pandemic.

**6. Clients Served (please refer back to the corresponding ABF 5 Service Statistics and provide an update on number of clients served from July 1 to date):**

Opportunities continue to be flagged as youth-friendly/appropriate in the VCSC online referral system when applicable.

Seven young volunteers (under the age of 25) have served or continue to serve with the VCSC to date during this reporting period. They are the organization's webmaster, program manager, and communications team.

**7. Have you had to turn any clients away that desire to participate in this program? If so, why? If so, how many? If so, when?**

No volunteers have been turned away from serving with the VCSC. Volunteers have been denied the opportunity to serve with partner agencies if those programs were suspended or postponed due to the pandemic, derecho, or other capacity limiting occurrence.

The VCSC remains committed to always creating opportunities and supporting the efforts of young people who want to volunteer their time, talents, and knowledge to build a strong community with their service.

**8. Comments:**

**Staff Use Only:**

Change/ Benefits demonstrated for client/ community?	Yes	No
Quantifiable Outcome Measures?	Yes	No
Outcomes Reported?	Yes	No