
14,845 Minnesota Senior Corps volunteers provided more than 2,389,447 hours of service in 2013

Senior Corps Programs across Minnesota

Senior Corps is a federally authorized and funded network of National Service Programs that provide older Americans with the opportunity to apply their life experiences to meeting community needs. Senior Corps is comprised of the Foster Grandparent Program, RSVP and the Senior Companion Program. In Minnesota, 14,845 older adults are serving in most counties through a network of 4 Foster Grandparent Projects, 16 RSVP Projects and 2 Senior Companion Projects.

Foster Grandparents in Minnesota

Foster Grandparents provide one-on-one attention to children most at risk in schools, shelters, correctional facilities and early childhood centers. Volunteers help improve reading and math skills, behavior, and the well being of children in their care. In 2013, 891 Foster Grandparents provided 617,481 hours of service assisting 13,562 children with academic, behavioral and emotional growth. Foster Grandparents commit to 15 to 20 hours a week of service and receive a tax-free stipend of $2.65 per hour and mileage reimbursement.

RSVP in Minnesota

RSVP connects volunteers with service opportunities that promote positive change and meet critical needs in their communities. RSVP volunteers help build capacity and improve sustainability in organizations where they serve; working with food shelves or delivering meals on wheels, tax assistance, disaster relief, healthy initiatives and so much more. In 2013, over 13,526 volunteers served 1.5 million hours, meeting critical needs in 1,893 public and non-profit agencies across Minnesota.

Senior Companions in Minnesota

Senior Companions provide assistance and friendship to frail individuals who wish to remain living in their own homes. Senior Companions often provide essential non-medical assistance, respite support, and transportation that allow individuals to avoid more costly long term care placements. In 2013, 428 Senior Companions provided 262,159 hours of service to 2,566 frail elders. Senior Companions commit to 15-20 hours a week of service and receive a tax-free stipend of $2.65 per hour.

2013 FUNDING: The federal and state governments support Senior Corps. However, local public and private support is critical to engaging the growing number of eligible seniors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster Grandparent Program</td>
<td>$ 2,317,190</td>
<td>$ 820,207</td>
<td>$ 251,112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired and Senior Volunteer Program</td>
<td>$ 1,303,122</td>
<td>$ 522,103</td>
<td>$ 925,776</td>
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<td>Senior Companion Program</td>
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<td>$ 539,690</td>
<td>$ 742,814</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$ 1,882,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 1,919,702</strong></td>
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<td>Grand Total (federal, state, and local)</td>
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According to the American Educational Research Association, a student who can't read at grade level by 3rd grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently by that time. Principal Maria Erlandson sees first-hand the impact the Foster Grandparents are making to give each child the best opportunity to graduate. To ensure students’ success, second and third graders at Foley Elementary School spend part of their days working in the Reading Lab. Foster Grandparents Sharon Beehler and Pat Smelter volunteer in the Reading Lab every day and are a consistent presence among the students. “We see a significant increase through the year in our oral reading fluency scores and much of the credit goes to the work the students do in the reading lab,” she said. “Last year, 64% of second graders began the year at the benchmark level and that increased to 70% of the students by the end of the year.”

Spending about twenty-five minutes per day in the lab, the students work on their “Reading Naturally” curriculum. Each non-fiction story requires a combination of reading a story out loud to an adult and out loud along with a tape, as well as answering questions about the story and summarizing the story in the student’s own words. Readings are timed and progress is charted by words per minute. As a student improves, they move up a level in the curriculum, which has thirteen reading levels ranging from 0.5 – 8.0.

The Foster Grandparents work with students individually, listening to them read out loud, correcting words, answering questions and ensuring that students are staying on task. Through their work, Grandma Pat and Grandma Sharon have seen students’ reading abilities grow by leaps and bounds. “Last year, we had a boy who started at a 0.8,” said Grandma Pat. “He couldn’t read ‘the’ or ‘and’. Now he is in third grade and reading at a 3.5, which is right on track.”

Both Grandma Pat and Grandma Sharon emphasized the importance of charting a student’s progress from week to week, and the difference it can make in their self-esteem and sense of accomplishment when they see their reading improve. “When it comes to impact, it is clear to see that students really respond positively to our Foster Grandparents,” said Principal Erlandson. “They enjoy their time in the reading lab and look forward to it. The relationship also has such a positive impact on our grandparents as well – it is so awesome to see the pride they take in student growth!”

As students at Foley Elementary improve their reading skills, the effects will be long-lasting. Grandma Sharon and Grandma Pat are doing work that increases a student’s chance of graduating high school, one paragraph at a time.
Bob brought key people from the city, engineering firms, HV/AC enterprises and even grocery stores in to assist with their areas of expertise of this warehouse expansion. Recently, Bob’s artistic creativity inspired him to spearhead a mural project for the back side of the warehouse wall, which faces out towards passing Riverfront Drive motorists. Now, students and faculty from the local community college are painting a mural on the block wall, depicting what Echo Food Shelf is about: fruits, vegetables and general sustenance.

Overall, the add-on warehouse project would have cost Echo Food Shelf well over $350,000, but with Bob’s work and ingenuity, only cost $11,000. He works alongside many other dedicated volunteers at Echo Food Shelf who share his passion. His persistence in getting donations, finding the appropriate resources and the amazing amounts of labor has allowed the food shelf to begin to accept frozen food and meat and refrigerator items they could not have stored in the past. “It’s already getting full,” Bob said. He realizes he will always have more to do to provide the food shelf with the space and facility conditions they need to help others. “There’s a lot of good people there; and a lot of good people who have been down the same road I have,” said Bob.

Along with many other dedicated Common Good RSVP volunteers at the Echo Food Shelf, support for Bob’s projects and other ventures continue. These volunteer efforts support Mankato’s citizens in need and continue to make their community a more fulfilling place to live.

**Senior Companions**

*Make Independence a Reality*

Lana Glover decided to become a Senior Companion volunteer in July of 2013, just one month after arriving in Minnesota from South Carolina, where she retired after 25 years of teaching, more than 13 years of work as a librarian, and 7 years as a nanny. Despite a very full and accomplished career, Lana decided to spend her time in retirement serving older adults in her community, because according to Lana, “I know how lonely people can become as they get older, I’d love to share time with them.”

Part of that time is shared with 69 year old client Juliette, who Lana visits every week for 3 to 4 hours at a time. Lana is counted upon for her weekly visit to Juliette, every Friday, where she not only provides a warm and caring face, but a friend to spend time with, and someone Juliette knows she can rely upon for support in the home as well as a link from her home to the community. The value of this weekly visit and friendship in Lana was made apparent by a letter sent to the Senior Companion Program from Juliette, as a way to express her thanks for the Program. It reads:

*A Life Change*

*Often, people don’t stop to think about older persons, with or without disabilities, unless or until they’re in the same boat. I certainly didn’t.*

*I’m totally blind, live by myself and despite the fact that I take advantage of our paratransit system, the Senior Companion Program is enabling me to continue staying in my home, feel less isolated, and connect to the community at large. How do they do it? Volunteers are paired with us based on our and their interests, temperaments, time availability and neighborhood proximity. With the right match, this can change someone’s life. For myself, far more than helping me shop, taking me to medical appointments or sharing a good meal, I look forward to seeing my “friend” to talk about our shared values, politics, funny and/or heartbreaking stories either read about or in our own lives and just to know that I can count on this wonderful person sharing her life with me once a week. There is never a lack of things to talk about; I am so blessed to have this person in my life and thanks to the Senior Companion Program, this was made possible for me.*

*I’m sure there are many other testimonials like mine. I hope these will inspire and encourage you to volunteer and share your precious time and lives with us.*

Like Juliette, the 2,565 other clients who received a weekly visit from a Senior Companion volunteer last year share similar thanks and praise for the much needed support and friendship. In part, that weekly visitor enables them to remain living independently in their home, which is where they want to be. In 2013, the 428 Senior Companion volunteers serving across the state of Minnesota drove more than 1.3 million miles for the clients they served providing a much needed service in the community for a very deserving population.

*“My being able to help others is a keen reminder that there are so many ways to fill in the holes in one’s soul.”* Mary, Senior Corps volunteer
## Foster Grandparent Program
Catholic Charities Bureau—Diocese of Superior, Wisconsin FGP of Northeast Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin
Serving St. Louis, Cook, Lake, Carlton, & Pine counties in Minnesota
Jennifer Jubenville
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Catholic Charities Central Minnesota FGP
Serving Benton, Douglas, Grant, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Sherburne, Stearns, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, & Wilkin counties
Stacy Lund
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Email: slund@ccstcloud.org

Lutheran Social Service of MN FGP
Serving 56 counties, including the Twin Cities Metro Area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott) and counties not covered by other FGPs
John Bringewatt
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Email: John.Bringewatt@lssmn.org

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. FGP of Northwest Minnesota
Serving Becker, Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
Heidi Simmons
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### RSVP
Anoka County RSVP
Serving Anoka county
Tricia Lehti
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Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc.—Arrowhead RSVP
Serving Cook, Lake, & St. Louis counties
Bonnie Ebnet
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Email: bonnie.ebnet@aeoa.org

Common Good RSVP—Catholic Charities, Diocese of Winona
Serving Blue Earth, Brown, Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, LeSueur, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan & Winona counties
Jennifer Halberg
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Ecumen RSVP
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ElderCircle RSVP
Serving Itasca & Koochiching counties
Valerie Cromell
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Greater St. Cloud Area RSVP—City of St. Cloud
Serving Benton, Sherburne, & Stearns counties
Lisa J. Braun
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Horizon Health, Inc. RSVP
Serving Beltrami, Cass, Lake of the Woods, & Morrison counties
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Email: tjopp@horizonhealthservices.com

Mahube—Otwa RSVP
Serving Becker, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomen, Otter Tail, Todd, Wadena, & Wilkin counties
Karen Lenius
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RSVP / A.C.E. of Southwest Minnesota
Serving Cottonwood, Lincoln, Murray, Nobles, Redwood, & Rock counties
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RSVP Volunteer Services—Crow Wing County
Serving Crow Wing County
Mike Koecheler
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Southern Tri-County RSVP
Serving Freeborn, Martin, & Faribault counties
Carrie Paulson
Phone: 507.377.7433
Email: carrie@rsfelocal.org

University of Minnesota Crookston—RSVP of Red River Valley
Serving Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
Tammy Sykes
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Email: tsykes@umn.edu

Volunteers of America—RSVP Greater Twin Cities and East Central Minnesota
Serving Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Isanti, Hennepin, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine, Ramsey, Scott, & Washington counties
Kelly O’Brien
Phone: 952.945.4160
Email: kobrien@voamn.org

West Central Minnesota Communities Action RSVP
Serving Beltrami, Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
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Mahube—Otwa RNPS
Serving Becker, Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norma, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
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RSVP Volunteer Services—CROW WING COUNTY
Serving Crow Wing County
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### Senior Companion Program
Lutheran Social Service of MN SCP
Serving 76 counties, including the Twin Cities Metro Area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott) and counties not covered by other SCPs
John Bringewatt
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Email: John.Bringewatt@lssmn.org

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. SCP of Northwest Minnesota
Serving Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
Heidi Simmons
Phone: 218.281.5832
Email: heidi@tvoc.org

### Minnesota Senior Corps Projects — 2014
www.mnseniorcorps.org

**“It makes my day to get up in the morning and know I’m going to be able to help somebody.”**
Freda, Senior Corps volunteer