



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nearly 15,000 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps Members Honored

National Service Opening Day

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Bruce Rauner is declaring October 17, 2018 National Service Opening Day. Almost 1,000 Illinoisans will pledge their continuing commitment to help their communities at the 24th Annual Illinois’ National Service Opening Day event on Wednesday, October 17, 2018. The event will be in Springfield at the Bank of Springfield (BOS) Convention Center at 10:30 a.m. and is open to the media. There will be a parade to the Old State Capitol at 12:15 p.m.

Prior to the parade, several of the national service members will receive awards. An AmeriCorps Member will serve as the keynote, and all military veterans will be honored for their continued service. The attendees will then parade to the Old State Capitol to be sworn in for their year of service. Throughout the event, Serve Illinois will be hosting a volunteer expo at the BOS Convention Center where Illinoisans can learn how to volunteer in their communities. The Central Illinois Blood Center will also be attending to collect donations.

At the Old State Capitol, the Members will take the AmeriCorps pledge, where they will proclaim their commitment to a year of service to Illinois and the nation. They will then return to the BOS Convention Center for several training sessions until 3:30 p.m.

“Illinois’ AmeriCorps Members and Senior Corps volunteers are working on the front lines to improve our communities,” McFarland said. “They dedicate millions of hours a year at more than 1,600 locations throughout Illinois. We are very proud of their service, and we are honored to recognize their dedication to our state and nation. In a time when there is plenty of negative news, we look to these men and women as symbols of the good that all volunteers can do.”

Approximately 2,400 current AmeriCorps Members have dedicated a year to help communities meet their unmet economic, education, health, public safety, or environmental needs. Members receive a modest living allowance, student loan deferment, and training. Since 1994, 41,000 Illinoisans have served more than 59 million hours totaling more than \$1.5 billion in impact and have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$140.8 million for college or to pay off student loans.

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Improving Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the State.





Senior Corps Members use their lifetime of experience to support communities through the RSVP, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companions programs. These 55-year-old and older volunteers serve as mentors, coaches, and companions to people in need. There are more than 12,600 Illinois seniors serving.

The Serve Illinois Commission is a 40 member (25 voting and 15 non-voting), bi-partisan board appointed by the Governor and administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Its mission is to improve Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the state. The Commission accomplishes this mission through the support of local community-based efforts to enhance volunteer opportunities and the administration of Illinois' AmeriCorps program. For more information on Serve Illinois, or to find one of more than 2,500 volunteer opportunities in the state, please visit www.Serve.Illinois.gov.

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