



VOLUNTEER LOUISIANA *INSIDER*

WELCOME

2024 has kicked off with a flurry of activity, and Volunteer Louisiana is eagerly anticipating the year ahead. We're gearing up to commemorate the 30th anniversary of AmeriCorps in Louisiana and nationwide, honoring Louisiana's Champion of Service, and bolstering emergency preparedness capabilities across the state. National service and volunteerism are vital for community resilience, and we're honored to champion these initiatives in Louisiana.

~Judd Jeansonne
Executive Director



AMERICORPS



In March, we are celebrating both AmeriCorps Week the AmeriCorps 30th anniversary. **The theme, AmeriCorps is not a moment, it's a movement,** recognizes the AmeriCorps members and over one million AmeriCorps

alumni, who have been get things done for America over the past three decades.

We will reflect back on 30 years of strengthening Louisiana communities. We will recognize amazing AmeriCorps members and alumni, including the 2024 AmeriCorps Champion of Service recipient. And, we will celebrate the contributions of our AmeriCorps Louisiana programs on *Day of the A* (Thursday, March 14). So follow Volunteer Louisiana social media accounts as we celebrate AmeriCorps Week and the AmeriCorps 30th Anniversary all week long.

As we prepare for this celebration, we want to hear your stories! Are you an alumnus whose AmeriCorps service led you to other incredible service experiences? Did it prepare you well for your career and/or leadership roles? Are you a community member who has witnessed firsthand the positive impacts that AmeriCorps members and programs made in your area?

Let us know by sharing your story or experiences with AmeriCorps Louisiana.

[Share Now!](#)

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT



Jennifer Rogers
AmeriCorps Member
Program: ShreveCorps



"It's important to me to give back to the earth and to teach the youth how to be self-sufficient. I was excited to find a job that does both. During the food shortages with COVID, it opened my eyes to how unprepared the population was. Children shouldn't become adults without knowing how to feed themselves. And, if they can respect where their food comes from, they can respect themselves. My main goal is to buy land and start building my farm and a community botanical garden featuring sculptures by local artists."

VOLUNTEER & DISASTER SERVICES

Volunteer Louisiana FEMA

Region 6 Higher Education Collaboration Presentation
Amanda Smith and Heather Mazeitis-Fontenot, Disaster Services Specialists at Volunteer Louisiana will present at the FEMA Region 6 Higher Education Collaboration Summit at Texas Southern University, held Feb. 21-22, 2024.



Their presentation will spotlight a comprehensive training initiative undertaken in April 2023, involving the instruction of 160 medical students in FEMA's CERT curriculum at the Edward Via Osteopathic College of Medicine (VCOM) in Monroe, Louisiana.

The presentation aims to highlight the pivotal role of higher education institutions as a force multiplier for first responders during times of disaster.

Want to attend the conference virtually? Register for free at this link:
<https://www.tsu.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/bjml-school-public-affairs/departments/political-science/degrees/region-vi-higher-education-registration>

National Volunteer Week

Volunteer Louisiana will celebrate **National Volunteer Week, April 21-27, 2024**. This is a time to honor volunteers and the remarkable ways they address pressing social issues, affect transformative change, and strengthen communities throughout our state. This annual event occurs in April, coinciding with Global Volunteer Month.

During this special week, Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser and Volunteer Louisiana recognize outstanding individuals and groups from across the state through our annual Champions of Service Awards. Join us in recognizing individuals in your community by sharing photos and stories of service on social media using Louisiana's official hashtag for volunteerism, #geauxserveLA

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Keep Louisiana Beautiful: Love the Boot Week

Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser and Keep Louisiana Beautiful will host Love the Boot Week April 20-28, 2024 during National Volunteer Week. Individuals and groups across the state can sign up to participate in Louisiana's largest litter cleanup and beautification event. In 2023, 12,777 individuals volunteered a total of 61,493 hours, removing 313 tons of litter in all 64 parishes.

[Register](#)

Louisiana CASA

Louisiana's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) mission is to build, support, and advocate for a statewide network of Court-Appointed trained volunteers to speak for abused and neglected children. 18 local CASA programs are serving all 64 parishes in Louisiana. The CASA volunteer continues until the case is permanently resolved. One of the primary benefits of the CASA program is that, unlike other court principals who often rotate cases, the CASA volunteer is a consistent figure in the proceedings and provides continuity for the child.



Data shows that children who are assigned a CASA volunteer advocate are more likely to:

- Find a safe, permanent home
- Spend less time in foster care
- Have fewer moves between foster placements
- Do better in school
- Receive the services they need
- Avoid re-entry into foster care

[Become a CASA Volunteer](#)



Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

Volunteers play an important role in the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana's mission to rebuild our state's coast. Individual volunteers, groups, and corporate partners can get involved in coastal restoration efforts through service opportunities.

Take the first step in learning about upcoming volunteer opportunities by signing up for their volunteer email list or reaching out to volunteers@crcl.org

to inquire about group or corporate volunteering opportunities.

Types of volunteer opportunities at CRCL

- Helping prepare oyster shells by shoveling them into marine-grade bags so they can be dropped into the water.
- Planting trees or marsh grasses, combined with an airboat trip through the swamp.
- Joining staff on an oyster boat and helping them deploy a reef



- Since the 1930s, more than 2,000 square miles of coastal wetlands in Louisiana have disappeared. (They have been converted into open water.) This has had catastrophic effects on our communities, our culture, our industries and our fisheries. Wetlands also provide natural hurricane protection to inland communities; when we have fewer wetlands, we have less protection. There are many factors behind coastal land loss.
- CRCL was founded in 1988 as the first statewide nonprofit in Louisiana that was dedicated to confronting coastal land loss.
- Since 2007, CRCL has planted more than 1 million trees other plants. We planted 12,000 plugs of dune grasses and nearly 3,000 bald cypress trees in 2023 alone. As part of the Central Wetlands Reforestation Collective, CRCL and its partner organizations will be planting more than 30,000 bald cypress (the state tree!) in the next few years.
- We recycled 830 tons of oyster shell in 2023, built our fifth oyster reef and engaged more than 1,700 volunteers just through our Oyster Shell Recycling Program.

Join the Email List

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

Inquire about Volunteer Louisiana CERT Trainings by emailing
volunteerlouisiana@crt.la.gov



Louisiana Volunteer Service Awards were presented to West Monroe Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) at the City Council Meeting held on February 6, 2024. The collective efforts of the CERT team amounted to nearly 500 hours of volunteer service during 2023.

[Click here for the full story](#)

Louisiana Volunteer Service Awards are signed by the Lieutenant Governor and provided as a free resource for non-profits and community groups to recognize outstanding volunteer service. [Learn how to request an award.](#)

[Visit our Website](#)



Volunteer Louisiana | 701 North 4th Street, Library Loading Dock, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5345

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