



Governor's Commission on Community Service

Office of Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien



The 2008 AmeriCorps State Service Conference

Post-Conference Review

"Building a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in Colorado."



Bill Ritter, Jr
Governor of Colorado



Barbara O'Brien
Lt. Governor of Colorado

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Community Service
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Introduction

In accordance with the Commission's charge to provide program development and training for AmeriCorps members serving in the State of Colorado, the Governor's Commission on Community Service hosts an annual State Service Conference. The objectives of the conference are assist members in the following:

- Learn skills that increase effectiveness during term of service and beyond.
- Energize personal and program service goals.
- Learn more about national service and its accomplishments.
- Explore the intricacies of serving communities.
- Connect with the network of people who have made a commitment to service.

This year, the GCCS presented the 14th State Service Conference, *Civic Engagement: Knowledge is Power*. The theme this year was Civic Engagement. The Conference goal was to overcoming information barriers and equipping AmeriCorps members with the knowledge to better engage and impact Colorado communities.

The 2008 State Service Conference took place at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO, October 6-7. In total 306 attended the conference. The Conference provided 28 sessions and workshops. Evening networking activities were also offered.

2008 AmeriCorps State Programs

- CARENET AmeriCorps
Commerce City, CO
720.322.8113
- Colorado HIPPY AmeriCorps
Statewide
303.860.6000
- Colorado Youth Corps Assoc.
Statewide
303.863.0600
- Community Building Partnerships
for Youth in Transition
Denver, CO
720.944.1006
- Healthy Lifestyles Mentoring,
Steamboat Springs, CO
970.879.2135
- Mesa College AmeriCorps Program
Grand Junction, CO
970.248.1874
- Mile High Youth Corps
Statewide
303.433.1206
- Operation Jump Start
Denver, CO
303.308.1420, Ext. 123
- Saguache United Methodist
Church AmeriCorps Program
Center, CO
719.256.4662
- Weld County Youth Conservation Corps
Greeley, CO
970.353.8300, Ext. 3400

Dear Partners in Service ,

On behalf of the Commissioners, it is a pleasure to share with you this Review of the 2008 State Service Conference. This year's conference exceeded our expectations in attendance, organization, and quality of workshops.

The goal of the Service Conference each year has been to help promote and build the AmeriCorps national identity among our serving members. Our goal is also to provide AmeriCorps Members serving in the state with training and development that will not only assist them in their streams of service, but in their professional careers. The Commissioners and I are honored that we could be a part of this important undertaking at the 14th annual conference.

The Governor's Commission on Community Service would like to thank the staff, presenters, and volunteers that work so hard to make this year's conference such a memorable and productive event.

My special thanks to all of you,



Christine Benero
Chair, Governor's Commission on Community Service



Christine Benero
Chair

Dear Volunteers and Community Partners:

I am very pleased to present you with the 2008 Post-Conference Review of the Colorado AmeriCorps State Service Conference. The Annual State Service Conference has been one of the Commission's premier events and this year's conference was no exception.

The 2008 State Service Conference offered AmeriCorps Members a complex array of course trainings and activities. Participants left this year's conference with an enjoyable learning experience. I am more than confident that they will apply the knowledge they received here to their daily service roles and beyond!

As we conclude this year's event, we look forward to next year's conference, which will be October 12-13, 2009. Planning is already underway and I would like to extend an invitation to those interested in joining the planning committee, to contact us.

My personal gratitude and thanks goes to all of those who helped make this year's conference a tremendous success!

With Sincere Appreciation,



Toya M. Nelson
Executive Director, Governor's Commission on Community Service



Toya M. Nelson
Executive Director

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Registration & Attendance

Conference registration opened August 18, 2008. This year 306 participants registered. Of those, 303 attended the conference.

In order to address the high no show rate from the 2007 State Service conference, the 2008 Conference Planning Committee instituted a new Cancellation Policy. The No Show rate dropped from 17% in 2007 to 1% in 2008.

<u>Streams of Service</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
AmeriCorps*State=	153 (50.33%)	173
AmeriCorps*National=	56 (18.42%)	55
AmeriCorps*NCCC=	0 (0.00%)	32
AmeriCorps*VISTA=	69 (22.7%)	37
Senior Corps=	1 (0.33%)	28
Learn and Serve=	0 (0.00%)	12
<u>Other (GCCS Staff, Speakers) =</u>	<u>27 (8.88%)</u>	<u>25</u>
Total Registered=	306	362
No Shows =	3	62
Total Attended =	303	300

There were three major changes in the Check in process this year:

1. Check in was moved back from 3pm to 5pm, after the second session. This was to allow the staff to have more preparation time and discourage people from going to their rooms instead of attending the second session.
2. Larger Programs were checked in by their Program Manager rather individually. This reduced lines and wait time.
3. Participant room keys were placed in pre-printed envelopes with their name, room number, program and roommate on them. This made for faster check in and express check out.



Opening & Closing Sessions

Evaluations from last year showed that participants felt the Opening and Closing Sessions were too policy driven and did not relate to the daily activities of the members. A key change this year was reducing the length of the Opening and Closing Sessions from 2 hours to 90 minutes. In addition, speaker selection was refocused to make the subject matter of the Opening and Closing Sessions more relevant to AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps Alum Nathan Torti, hosted both sessions. Nathan was selected because of both his great presentation skills and his ability to relate to the members in being an alum himself.



The Opening Session included:

- Welcome from Toya M. Nelson, Executive Director, GCCS.
- An AmeriCorps member slideshow.
- 45-minute Keynote Address from Mark Wilensky, current 5th grade teacher, author, and former HIPPIY Corps parent.
- Short Remarks from the Alexandra Lee, President, AmeriCorps Alums Denver Chapter.

The Closing Session included:

- One hour Keynote Address on keeping a positive and enjoyable outlook on the service work performed by the members from Robert Wells and Dave Johnson of the World Humor Organization.
- Closing address from Commissioner Lindsay Morgan Tracy.

Opening and Closing Session Evaluations:

	Outstanding(4)	Good(3)	Fair(2)	Poor(1)	Unacceptable(0)	AVG	CHG From '07
Opening Session:	22	57	35	3	0	2.84	+17%
Opening Speaker:	34	59	20	3	0	3.07	N/A
Closing Session:	36	44	7	0	0	2.99	+38%
Closing Speaker:	86	18	4	0	0	3.76	N/A



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Tracks & Workshops

As a part of the registration process, members were asked which three workshop subjects would they be most interested in attending. Based on their results, workshops were divided into nine specific tracks based on both the most popular themes and themes that would be directly related to the National AmeriCorps areas of service.

The Nine Tracks were:

1. Be Prepared! (Disaster Preparedness for Communities and Personal lives)
2. Civic Engagement
3. Community Building
4. Disability Inclusion and Awareness
5. Leadership Development
6. Members Staying Connected (Preparing for after term of service)
7. Personal/Professional Development
8. Program Management (Designed for current and prospective program managers)
9. Working with Families and Children (in Spanish)

In 2007 there were 19 Workshops and 14 Discussion Groups. Evaluations from last year indicated that members wanted more workshop sessions, as they were only able to attend two courses.

2008 State Service Conference Workshop and Training Schedule at a Glance

Track	Civic Engagement:	Members Staying Connected	Be Prepared!	Disability Inclusion and Awareness:	Leadership Development:	Personal/Professional Development:	Program Manager:	Working with Families and Children (in Spanish):	Community Building:
Location	<u>Wind River A</u>	<u>Wind River B</u>	<u>Wind River C</u>	<u>WGR Bilheimer & Dodge</u>	<u>WGR Main Auditorium</u>	<u>WGR Sweet</u>	<u>WGR Hobbs</u>	<u>Mt Ypsilon Tower 2</u>	<u>Mt Ypsilon Tower 3</u>
Session 1: Monday 12:45pm-2:45pm	Engaging Colorado Youth to Address Community Issues	AmeriSpan --Using Your Ed Award to Learn a Language or Travel Abroad	Introduction to The Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services (4-hour workshop)	Introduction to Disabilities: A Film Festival (4-hour workshop)	Present! Hone Your Public Speaking Skills	It Takes a Village to Leave No Child Behind	--AmeriCorps* State Grant Application Review --How Your Program Can Sponsor an AmeriCorps* VISTA	Working with Migrant Families	Virtual Citizen: Using the 'Net to Engage
	<u>Hannah Hanford</u>	<u>Sharon Rhode</u>			<u>Ellen Winiarczyk</u>	<u>Jayson Haberkorn</u>	<u>Mark Skinner</u> <u>Dan Dunlap</u>		
Session 2: Monday 3:00pm-5:00pm	Colorado King Challenge	Living on A Stipend			What I Learned about Leadership While White Water Rafting	Grant Writing Skills in Your Skills Portfolio	Program Sustainability	Language & Literacy Development for Young Children	Connecting to Your Local Volunteer Center
	<u>Theresa Cusimano</u>	<u>Alexandra Lee</u>	<u>Gerald Koch</u>	<u>Joe Lewis</u>	<u>Bruce Cline</u>	<u>Heidi Baker</u>	<u>Ellen Winiarczyk</u>	<u>Betty C. de Baca</u>	<u>Adam Molzer</u>
Session 3: Tuesday 8:30am-10:15am	Issue Advocacy	Life After AmeriCorps	Prepare! Get Out of Debt and Start Saving for Your Future.	How Inclusive are you?	Multicultural Excellence	How to Collect & Analyze Data for Program Improvement	Community Needs Assessment Report	"Ready, Set, Go!" Getting Ready for Kindergarten	Self-Interest and Relational Meetings
	<u>Adrian Miller</u>	<u>Nathan Torti</u>	<u>George Shoemaker</u>	<u>Joe Lewis</u>	<u>Ellen Winiarczyk</u>	<u>William Kistler</u>	<u>Janet Mickish</u>	<u>Olga Gonzalez-Robinson</u>	<u>Sarah McCauley</u>

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Given this information, this year's conference offered 26 workshops. Discussion topics were placed on tables during dinner and breakfast in order to supplement the Track/Workshop structure.



Workshops that were listed as the most valuable by conference participants were (listed from highest to lowest responses):

<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
It Takes a Village to Leave No Child Left Behind	Jayson Haberkorn
Issue Advocacy	Adrian Miller
Prepare! Get out of Debt and Start Saving for your Future	George Shoemaker
Multicultural Excellence	Ellen Winiarczyk
Life After AmeriCorps	Nathan Torti
Grant Writing Skills in Your Portfolio	Heidi Baker
Self-Interest and Relational Meetings	Sarah McCauley
Engaging Colorado Youth to Address Community Needs	Hannah Hanford/Gina Meyers
How to Collect and Analyze Data for Program Improvement	William Kistler
How Inclusive are You?	Joe Lewis
Introduction to Disabilities: A Film Festival	Joe Lewis
Living on a Stipend	Alexandra Lee
Program Sustainability	Ellen Winiarczyk
What I Learned about Leadership While White Water...	Bruce Cline
Working With Migrant Families	Mary Loretta
AmeriCorps*State Grant Application Review	Mark Skinner
AmeriSpan – Using Your Ed Award to Learn a Language...	Sharon Rhode
Virtual Citizen: Using the Net to Engage	Heidi Baker
Language & Literacy Development for Young Children	Betty C. de Baca
Community Needs Assessment Report	Janet Mickish
Connecting to Your Local Volunteer Center	Adam Molzer



Evening Activities

A number of evening activities were available for participants to encourage networking among members, build national identity, and provide entertainment.

1. Open Mic Night, hosted by the AmeriCorps Alums. There were 12 performances and approximately 100-125 people in attendance.
2. Campfire with S'mores. 30-40 people in attendance through out the night.
3. Roller Skating. 40-50 people in attendance though out the night.
4. Board Games.
5. Movie and Popcorn featuring *Pay It Forward*. 75-100 people in attendance.



Disability Awareness and Inclusion

From the initial planning stages, it was a goal of this year's conference to both increase disability awareness goals for programs throughout the state, as well as take steps to make the conference itself more accessible and inclusive.

1. In selecting the location of the conference, the YMCA was selected because of its accessibility amenities.
2. Alternative Registration was provided for those unable to utilize the Online Registration.
3. Large font types were used in the online registration form to assist blind and visually impaired members.
4. Accessible Rooms were provided.
5. Hearing Devices were made available.
6. Special room, food and beverage accommodations were made for participants with medical needs.
7. An entire track was dedicated to Disability Awareness that included workshops on understanding disability etiquette and needs, as well as evaluating inclusion within current programs and developing strategies to overcoming barriers.

Overall Conference Evaluations

Overall evaluations were taken after the Closing Session. The evaluations indicated an overall improvement over the 2007 conference.

	Outstanding(4)	Good(3)	Fair(2)	Poor(1)	Unacceptable(0)	AVG	CHG From '07
Conf. Overall:	22	71	19	5	0	2.94	+ 6%
Two-Day Design:	27	68	20	3	0	3.01	+ 8%
YMCA:	46	54	15	3	0	3.21	- 5%

Conference Planning Committee:

Bruce Cline
 - Corporation for National & Community Service
 Lisa Dalby
 - CARENET AmeriCorps
 Dan Dunlap
 - Corporation for National & Community Service
 Sara Farmer
 - Mile High Youth Corps
 Christy Gallese
 - Mile High Youth Corps
 Calley Grace
 - Colorado Legends and Legacy Youth Corps
 Kathryn Gray
 - CARENET AmeriCorps
 Brooke Herrmann
 - CARENET AmeriCorps
 Amelia Iaderosa
 - Colorado Youth Corps Association
 Terri Jutzi
 - Governor's Commission on Community Service
 Mara McGuin
 - Colorado Youth Corps Association
 Jovan Melton
 - Governor's Commission on Community Service
 Toya Nelson
 - Governor's Commission on Community Service
 Erica Severson
 - HIPPIY Corps/AmeriCorps Alums
 Kaiman Triplett
 - CARENET AmeriCorps

Participants were asked what should be changed for next year's conference. Below is a list of the items that were most mentioned (from highest to lowest mentions).

Item

Shorter Workshops
 More Advanced Workshops
 More interaction between programs
 More Relevant Workshops
 More Workshops to be offered
 More Animated/Interactive Presenters
 Better Food
 Better Workshop Descriptions
 Cleaner Restrooms
 Later Check Out
 More Evening Activities
 Shorter Conference (1 day)
 Longer Workshops
 More time Outside/Add Outdoor Activities
 Workshops Poorly Organized
 Better Rooms
 More Water



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