

Positive Action
Positive Change
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ServeMinnesota
MAKING MINNESOTA BETTER

Annual Report 2005



OUR MISSION

ServeMinnesota builds a stronger Minnesota through AmeriCorps and other volunteer-based programs. We help improve the quality of life in Minnesota communities by matching citizens committed to service and financial resources with critical local needs.

OUR VISION

All Minnesotans will engage in a call to service that strengthens the well-being of both self and community. This can be accomplished by embracing four values:

- Service is a public responsibility.
- Service builds community.
- Service creates positive social change.
- Service helps meet critical human needs.

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SERVEMINNESOTA —

POSITIVE ACTION, POSITIVE CHANGE

When it comes to tackling community issues, discussion and debate are essential. But positive change also requires positive action. That's where ServeMinnesota plays a role.

ServeMinnesota serves as a catalyst for organizations and individuals to address local needs through service to their communities. Our role as administrator of the federal AmeriCorps program in Minnesota places us in a unique position to bring leadership – as well as human and financial resources – to bear on issues. In the process, human needs are met effectively and cost-efficiently.

WE SPUR ACTION IN TWO WAYS:

Through grants to partnering organizations. ServeMinnesota provides grants that enable nonprofit organizations to extend their reach cost effectively – by recruiting, training and placing AmeriCorps members to work with their constituents. AmeriCorps members are individuals who dedicate one or two years to community service – and, as part of their service, recruit local volunteers to serve alongside them.

Through issue-specific initiatives. ServeMinnesota identifies issues of importance to communities across Minnesota, then provides leadership and resources to address them through community service. Our first initiative is the Minnesota Reading Corps, a program that provides trained tutors to Minnesota school children, age three to grade three, who need extra help with reading.

The launch of the Reading Corps initiative demonstrates ServeMinnesota's ability to lead in addressing important statewide issues by forming partnerships, directing resources and placing AmeriCorps members and volunteers to take action on the issue.

“I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter and healthier...”





Message to the Community

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Dear Friends:

Each year in Minnesota, hundreds of men and women choose to dedicate their lives to service under the AmeriCorps banner. And each year, their efforts help to strengthen the fabric of our communities in ways large and small.

We are pleased to report that, during the 2004-2005 program year, more than 550 AmeriCorps members joined in service to Minnesota communities. Working with local nonprofit organizations and government agencies to extend their reach, these members provided critical people power – the kind of power most needed (but often in the shortest supply) to address needs in education, early literacy, housing, human services and employment. We are proud of their accomplishments and grateful for their gift of service.

In 2004-2005, ServeMinnesota celebrated a major milestone in its initiative to direct the talents and resources of AmeriCorps to a critical state need: Helping children master the skills needed to become successful readers by the end of third grade. In the Fall of 2005, our Minnesota Reading Corps initiative “graduated” from pilot status and expanded to 65 schools and learning sites.

The launch of the Reading Corps is an exciting first step. But to achieve our vision – to provide a trained tutor to every Minnesota child age three to grade three who needs extra help with reading – much remains to be done.

With test scores showing that 21 percent of Minnesota third graders do not read at grade level, the need for innovative early literacy instruction is



significant. The Reading Corps aims to meet that need – and to do so cost efficiently. It places AmeriCorps members trained in proven early literacy instruction methods as tutors – and empowers them to enlist and train community volunteers to help children become successful readers. Evidence shows the Reading Corps model effective: Children in select pilot classrooms gained pre-reading skills faster than their counterparts in non-Reading Corps environments.

For the 2005-2006 school year, with 76 AmeriCorps members placed as Reading Corps tutors, some 1,900 students are being served. While this is an excellent first-year start, an estimated 75,000 young Minnesota readers could benefit from extra help. For the 2006-2007 school year, our goal is to place AmeriCorps members to serve 3,500 students. And by 2007-2008, we aim to increase the reach of Reading Corps to 7,500 students.

Realizing our goals will depend on partnerships with local funding sources, including state and local governments, businesses, foundations and individuals. A local investment of \$5,000 in Reading Corps enables us to leverage an additional \$20,000 in federal AmeriCorps funds – the amount needed to support one AmeriCorps member for a year. Going forward, we will focus on building support for an expanding, sustainable Reading Corps program.

The launch of the Reading Corps demonstrates the important role that ServeMinnesota can play as a catalyst for action. Through leadership, partnership and the ability to

bring considerable resources to bear on critical statewide issues, we are well situated to develop and launch entrepreneurial solutions that truly strengthen Minnesota communities.

The ultimate success of our efforts, however, depends on the organizations with which we partner, the energetic, dedicated AmeriCorps members who serve and the thousands of Minnesota citizens who volunteer to help make their communities a better place. To every one, we offer our deep appreciation.

Audrey Suker
Executive Director

Robert Rumpza
Board Chair



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES:

2004-2005 AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

ServeMinnesota may put the wheels in motion, but our success in making Minnesota a better place depends on our partners: Nonprofit organizations serving a range of communities across the state. The AmeriCorps grants we award and the technical assistance we provide enable our partner organizations to extend their reach through added people power.

For the 2004-2005 program year, ServeMinnesota awarded \$5.7 million in AmeriCorps grants to 15 nonprofit partners. In the prior year, AmeriCorps grants in the state totaled \$3.8 million. AmeriCorps grants combine federal funding with local support from public sources, such as the state

YouthWorks appropriation, and private contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals.

Grants to our partnering organizations are applied to one main purpose: Recruiting AmeriCorps members to provide extra people power. In 2004-2005, our partnering organizations recruited 565 AmeriCorps members. Collectively, the members provided nearly 1.2 million hours of community service, touching lives in countless ways. Among their contributions:

- Tutoring nearly 30,000 children from kindergarten through high school;
- Building 73 homes for families in need;
- Providing instruction in key early reading skills to 589 children age three to grade three.

As they served others, AmeriCorps members found themselves personally rewarded: Flarnnie Nonemaker, a City of Lakes AmeriCorps member, describes her experience this way, “[After AmeriCorps] I know more about what I want to do and it’s based on real-life skills. I’m a life-long volunteer now.”

For Flarnnie and many others who ascribe to the AmeriCorps pledge, apathy will be confronted — and banished.

Our 2004-2005 Partnering Organizations



Education and Academic Achievement

Supporting academic achievement was the primary focus of ServeMinnesota grants in 2004-2005. Some 49 percent of our grants supported AmeriCorps members who provided tutoring, mentoring and other youth development services. Grants targeting education-focused activities included:

- **Admission Possible**, the recipient of a \$284,541 AmeriCorps grant, placed 21 AmeriCorps members at Minneapolis and St. Paul high schools to help make college admission possible for talented, motivated and economically challenged students. In 2005, all students served by Admission Possible’s AmeriCorps members were accepted for admission to at least one college.
- With a grant to the **City of St. Paul** of \$135,500, the Capitol City

*“Faced with apathy,
I will take action...”*



Education Initiative placed 10 AmeriCorps members in St. Paul Public Schools as tutors.

- A \$271,000 grant to the **Duluth Area Family YMCA** supported the work of AmeriCorps True North. Forty-four AmeriCorps members provided in-school mentoring and tutoring, community-based mentoring and other academic support to children and youth.
- A grant of \$809,176 to the **Faribault Public Schools** supported the

Minnesota Alliance with Youth, which hosted 60 AmeriCorps members as “Promise Fellows” across the state. Members served with community partners to improve mentoring programs, out-of-school activities, youth volunteer programs, scholarship and job training programs and health education projects. Members increased the capacity of communities to deliver Five Promises: 1) Mentor 2) Protect 3) Nurture 4) Teach/Learn and 5) Serve.

- A grant of \$554,226 to the **Minneapolis Public Schools** supported the work of the City of Lakes AmeriCorps program. In 2004-2005, its 43 AmeriCorps members provided in-school tutoring and led after-school activities for low-income, at-risk children and youth. They also served as volunteer coordinators, engaging members of the community to join in helping young people succeed.

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THE MINNESOTA READING CORPS INITIATIVE:

HELPING YOUNG MINNESOTANS WHO STRUGGLE TO LEARN TO READ

In 2003, with Minnesota test scores showing nearly 25 percent of third graders not reading at grade level, the need was clear: The state's youngest students must have additional support if they were to become successful readers by third grade – a critical age. Starting in fourth grade, educators say, a child needs to be proficient in reading in order to read to learn.

ServeMinnesota recognized the need and took action: We began to focus a portion of AmeriCorps resources on early literacy development. Teaming with organizations, including Head Start, the St. Croix River Education District, the Minnesota Literacy Council and early childhood education experts at the University of Minnesota, we adopted a model tutoring program – one proven through research to be effective.

We also began training AmeriCorps members in the early literacy instruction methods. Working with Head Start, we assigned them to select classrooms and put them to work tutoring students.

First year results were positive. Student evaluations showed that Reading Corps students

gained pre-reading skills faster than the norm for other Head Start children.

In 2004-2005, we expanded the Reading Corps pilot initiative, adding schools in Perham, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Stillwater and extending the program to include children from age three to grade three. Second year results again showed that children taught using Reading Corps instruction methods gained key pre-reading skills faster than peers of similar backgrounds in other pre-school settings.

As school began in the fall of 2005, ServeMinnesota officially launched the Minnesota Reading Corps, placing AmeriCorps members (often referred to as Reading Corps members) in 65 schools and early learning centers across the state. The initiative's ultimate goal: Provide a trained tutor to every Minnesota child from age three through grade three who struggles with reading. Achieving the goal will require significant support from



OUR 2004-2005 PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS, *continued*

- A grant of \$142,939 to the **Minnesota Literacy Council** provided support for 82 AmeriCorps members participating in Teacher Corps. Teacher Corps recruited educational assistants (paraprofessionals) that integrated literacy and service-learning activities into their paraprofessional roles and provided additional literacy tutoring to K-3 children in after-school and community-based programs.
- A grant of \$408,103 to the **Minnesota Literacy Council** funded participation of 39 AmeriCorps members in the AmeriCorps Early Literacy Corps. Members worked in Head Start and other classrooms to help prepare three- and four-year-old students to read and teach their parents how to promote early literacy development at home.
- A grant of \$223,488 to the **Minnesota Literacy Council** supported 16 AmeriCorps members who served as trained tutors and volunteer coordinators in a pilot program of the Minnesota Reading Corps, an early literacy initiative led by ServeMinnesota. The Reading Corps aims to help children age three through grade three who struggle to learn to read.
- A grant of \$419,300 to **Neighborhood House** provided funding for 32 AmeriCorps members who extended the work of Multicultural Communities in Action (MCA). MCA serves schools

“I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter and healthier...”



public and private sources in Minnesota – support that ServeMinnesota can, in turn, use to attract \$4 in AmeriCorps support for every \$1 contributed locally.

Felicia Frelix, a Minneapolis Head Start teacher and an AmeriCorps member who applies Reading Corps techniques in her classes, says she has seen substantial progress among her three-to-five year-old students, 98 percent of whom are English language learners.

The culture of Felicia’s classroom promotes literacy: Her classes are filled with talking, reading and writing – all closely linked to early literacy development. Student progress is evident, she says. “I hear more rhyming in my classroom. I hear children sounding out letters. I see quiet children talking more – even the quietest ones ‘read’ to their classmates,” she says.

The progress she has seen locally was reflected broadly among Head Start students tutored with Reading Corps methods in 2004-2005:

- Picture naming fluency increased by 38.6%
- Rhyming fluency increased 33.9 %
- Alliteration fluency increased by 29.7 %
- Letter-naming fluency increased by 33%
- Letter-sound fluency increased by 29.71%

According to early literacy experts, achievement in these key literacy skills is highly correlated with reading success by third grade.

Meanwhile, as her students flourish, Felicia, too, is achieving new milestones. Now a second-year AmeriCorps member, she is taking advantage of her first-year AmeriCorps education award to earn an Associate in Applied Science degree in childhood development. “AmeriCorps is pushing me to grow professionally and to get involved with the community,” she says. “It’s a really great program.”

and community-based organizations in St. Paul’s West Side, East Side, Midway, Frogtown and West Seventh neighborhoods. AmeriCorps members provided tutoring, homework help and English instruction in after-school programs and through the St. Paul Public Schools.

- A grant of \$338,750 to the **Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians** supported 30 AmeriCorps members. They provided services through Partners in Service to America.

Members tutored students and led after-school activities. They also educated elementary school students on domestic violence and its prevention.

- A grant of \$379,397 to the **Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation** supported 30 AmeriCorps members. They were assigned as part of the AmeriCorps-Southern Minnesota program. Members provided literacy tutoring for K-5 students, served as mentors for at-risk youth, and provided basic

skills education and independent living assistance to new immigrants and other adults in need.

- A grant of \$271,000 to **St. Cloud State University** and its partner organizations – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, Stearns County Emergency Management and the United Way of Central Minnesota – supported 22 AmeriCorps members.

SERVE MINNESOTA'S INCLUSION INITIATIVE:

TAPPING THE TALENTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

If the goal is to tackle problems through the power of service, it is essential that we open doors and lower barriers so that all who want to serve are able.

ServeMinnesota's Inclusion Initiative, through which we purposely and actively recruit individuals with disabilities to become AmeriCorps members, aims to create opportunities for people of all abilities to serve their communities.

In 2004-2005, the number of AmeriCorps members with disabilities increased from 58 to 91. In fact, 80 percent of our partnering organizations that received AmeriCorps grants recruited and assigned members with disabilities.

The outcome of the Inclusion Initiative has proven doubly rewarding: Individuals with disabilities gain opportunities to serve their communities while honing career and personal skills. And through these opportunities, they provide a boost to others.

Consider Nancy Sager, Jeffrey Nurick and Elizabeth McClung, whose accomplishments as the I-Team garnered Presidential attention in Fall 2005.

Their focus: Helping people with disabilities who fall just outside the guidelines for receiving employment assistance through government-sponsored programs. Though the needs of these individuals may be significant, they may have nowhere to turn for help.

Jeffrey, Nancy and Elizabeth focused first on defining program protocols, working with employers to structure jobs for candidates with disabilities and ironing out the details of their service offering. Within a short time, they were helping job seekers write resumes, hone interview skills and select interview attire. And they worked with employers to structure jobs to accommodate employees with disabilities. Through the I-Team's work, a growing number of Hennepin County residents with disabilities are finding meaningful work – and employers are gaining committed employees.

OUR 2004-2005 PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS, continued

- The members provided a range of services: mentoring and youth development activities for at-risk youth, volunteer mobilization and service-learning opportunities. In addition, a number of AmeriCorps members recruited and trained Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers to assist with disaster preparedness and homeland security.
- A grant of \$230,349 to **Worthington Independent School District 518**

- supported the work of 36 AmeriCorps members through Reaching Our Communities' Kids (ROCK). The members provided academic tutoring, mentoring, safe after-school activities, youth development and other enrichment activities to children and youth in Worthington and Bemidji.
- A planning grant of \$40,000 to the **St. Croix River Education District** provided support for expanding its sponsorship of the Minnesota

Reading Corps to additional rural school districts.

Closing the Digital Divide

- A grant of \$338,750 to **St. Paul Neighborhood Network** supported 28 AmeriCorps members working as part of the Community Technology Empowerment Project. The project aims to bridge the "digital divide" in urban neighborhoods that are home to many recent immigrants. As part of the project, members helped expand



*“Faced with adversity,
I will persevere”*



During a visit to the Twin Cities, President George W. Bush offered his congratulations to Nancy, the I-Team’s representative, for the team’s accomplishments.

For Jeffrey, creating the I-Team and assisting others with employment has been the chief reward of his AmeriCorps experience. And Nancy describes her role on the I-Team as “a feather in my cap. I’m proud of the impact I’m making,” she says.

the capacity of community-based organizations and community technology centers and developed culturally appropriate outreach and training materials, including computer education, public service announcements (PSAs) and web site development.

Providing Affordable Housing

- With an AmeriCorps grant of \$406,449, **Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity**, in partnership with **Project for Pride in Living**, mobilized

30 AmeriCorps members to construct 73 homes for Twin Cities’ families. In addition, they made 1,928 housing repairs for low-income and elderly residents.

Employment Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities and Others Facing Barriers to Jobs

- A grant of \$541,760 to **Rise, Inc.**, provided support for 41 AmeriCorps members deployed through Work in Progress (WIP). WIP is a

collaboration of four partner organizations – AccessAbility, Lifetrack Resources, Opportunity Partners and Rise, Inc. – serving people with disabilities and others facing significant barriers to employment. Members provided one-on-one job search assistance, mobility or bus training, job coaching, supervised peer-to-peer support and instruction in self-dependency skills.

AMERICORPS MEMBERS:

FUELING ACTION, FORTIFYING COMMUNITIES



“I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.”

The men and women who dedicate a year or two to AmeriCorps are ServeMinnesota’s engine for action. In 2004-2005, 565 AmeriCorps members provided services to thousands of Minnesotans – and inspired 41,634 volunteers to also serve others.

AmeriCorps members in Minnesota represent a range of ages (anyone age 17 and older may participate), backgrounds and interests. But they have in common a strong desire to give back.

Bob Belamy is a case in point. Retired after 32 years in the U.S. Army and back in St. Cloud, Bob didn’t “want to sit home and eat potato chips. I wanted to get out and serve the community.” The opportunity to join AmeriCorps met his needs.

In August 2005, Bob completed his second term as the AmeriCorps Coordinator for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program in Benton and Stearns Counties. During his service, he trained hundreds of St. Cloud area residents — nuns, teachers, firefighters, city council members and others — in emergency response techniques. In fact, the number of enrolled volunteers in the CERT program nearly tripled from 100 to 288 people, ranging in age from 18 to 83.

Bob saw his work make an impact as the volunteers he trained participated in local disaster simulations, helped with flu clinics and even traveled to Florida to provide emergency assistance after devastating hurricanes.

At the end of his first AmeriCorps term, the City of St. Cloud recognized Bob for his contributions to community preparedness. But according to Bob, the credit, more properly belonged to his CERT colleagues. Those volunteers, serving with enthusiasm – and without compensation – to help the community were the real heroes.

AMERICORPS' TRANSFORMATIVE POWER

LIFE-DEFINING, LIFE-CHANGING

When AmeriCorps members talk about their experiences, you're likely to hear: "I was really the big recipient" or "I got back far more than I gave."

AmeriCorps service can be life-defining. Often, it opens unexplored pathways, presents new perspectives, suggests new directions. Because AmeriCorps members see firsthand that their actions can make a difference, they gain confidence in their ability to lead – to envision stronger, healthier communities and act on their vision.

Many members commit to making community service a part of their lives. Others set their sights on leading through service. In fact, AmeriCorps offers fertile training ground for developing leadership skills – and for thinking bigger.

In the sixth grade, Courtney Jordan set her mind on becoming a medical doctor. With college behind her and medical school just ahead, she was on track to achieve her dream. But before plunging into medical studies, Courtney took a year off for AmeriCorps service. She now calls it her "favorite year."

"I had always wanted to make my mark working one-on-one with patients," she says. "But my year in AmeriCorps helped me dream bigger."

As Courtney describes it, her AmeriCorps work with teen moms inspired a new desire: To be involved in helping to change systems in order to benefit more people. As she helped young mothers try to find housing for themselves and their children, she says she realized the "great stuff" that could be possible when resources are pooled.

"What made me most fulfilled in my AmeriCorps work was changing things on a larger scale," she says. That influenced Courtney to re-think – and broaden – her education. Today Courtney has completed medical school and will soon earn a Ph.D. in public health policy.

"I think one-on-one patient care will always be a part of my career, but for the most part my focus will be on the bigger picture," Courtney says, referring to her interest in policy and systemic change. "In the end, I think I'll be able to help more people that way. Before AmeriCorps, I hadn't given it a thought."



***"I am an
AmeriCorps
member, and I will
get things done"***

2004-2005 :

AMERICORPS ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Education

In addition to launching the Minnesota Reading Corps, AmeriCorps members:

- Tutored 29,084 students in grades 1-12
- Provided GED tutoring to 313 adults
- Coordinated recreational and academic after-school activities for 1,745 students
- Mentored 639 at-risk children
- Counseled 535 high school juniors and seniors in college preparation skills
- Conducted service learning and community education activities benefiting 11,209 students

Affordable Housing

- Constructed 73 housing units and performed an additional 1,928 housing repairs, benefiting a total of 889 Minnesotans

Human Service

- Conducted violence prevention and domestic abuse awareness training for 648 people
- Counseled 431 people in job development and placement
- Coordinated independent living assistance for 60 people

Closing the "Digital Divide"

- Provided 5,604 low-income individuals and English language learners with access to computer and technology resources and education

Homeland Security

- Provided 54 community volunteers with Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training

Promoting Community Service

- Coordinated community service days in Duluth, Worthington and southern Minnesota – and, in the process, benefited 3,063 people
- Trained and placed 28,770 community volunteers

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ServeMinnesota gratefully acknowledges generous support from the following businesses, corporations, foundations, individuals and government agencies during the 2004-2005 program year:

Business, Corporate and Foundation Contributors

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Frey Foundation
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H.B. Fuller
McKnight Foundation
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Government

Corporation for National and
Community Service
Minnesota Youth Works

Financial Statement

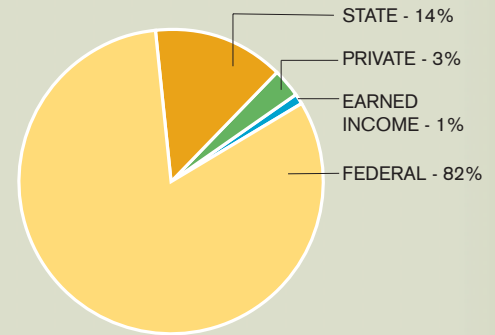
ServeMinnesota Statement of Financial Position August 31, 2005

ASSETS	2005	2004
<u>Current Assets:</u>		
Cash	200,745	162,651
Grants Receivable	712,446	746,597
Pledges Receivable	85,000	0
Total Current Assets	<u>998,191</u>	<u>909,248</u>
<u>Non-Current Assets:</u>		
Security Deposit	3,798	3,798
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>1,001,989</u>	<u>913,046</u>
 LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
<u>Current Liabilities:</u>		
Accounts Payable	18,569	8,639
Grants Payable	572,441	614,492
Total Current Liabilities	<u>591,010</u>	<u>623,131</u>
 <u>Net Assets:</u>		
Unrestricted		
Designated	150,000	0
Undesignated	112,446	233,915
Total Unrestricted	<u>262,446</u>	<u>233,915</u>
Temporarily Restricted	148,533	56,000
Total Net Assets	<u>410,979</u>	<u>289,915</u>
 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	 <u>1,001,989</u>	 <u>913,046</u>

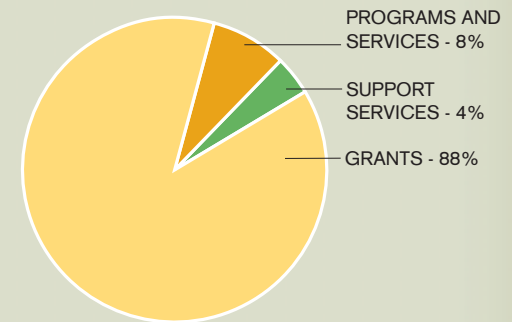
ServeMinnesota Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets For the Year ended August 31, 2005

	<u>UNRESTRICTED</u>	<u>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:			
Governmental Grants	6,138,908	0	6,138,908
Contributions	27,802	194,000	221,802
Interest Income	5,862	0	5,862
1% fee income	44,546	0	44,546
Net Assets Released from Restriction	101,467	(101,467)	0
Total Support & Revenue	<u>6,318,585</u>	<u>92,533</u>	<u>6,411,118</u>
 EXPENSE:			
<u>Program Services</u>			
AmeriCorps	4,704,509	0	4,704,509
Promise Fellows	59,731	0	59,731
Youth Works-AmeriCorps	702,386	0	702,386
Program Support	100,743	0	100,743
Training	102,734	0	102,734
Disability	123,986	0	123,986
ReadingCorps	225,288	0	225,288
Total Program Services	<u>6,019,377</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,019,377</u>
<u>Support Services:</u>			
Management and General	235,651	0	235,651
Fundraising	35,026	0	35,026
Total Support Services	<u>270,677</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>270,677</u>
TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>6,290,054</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,290,054</u>
 Change in Net Assets	 28,531	 92,533	 121,064
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	233,915	56,000	289,915
Net Assets - End of Year	<u>262,446</u>	<u>148,533</u>	<u>410,979</u>

REVENUE



EXPENSES





ServeMinnesota
MAKING MINNESOTA BETTER

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