



**YEAR  
IN REVIEW  
2016**



**Cities of Service strongly believes in giving cities the power to engage their communities to solve pressing challenges in the ways that work best for them.** No matter how they do it, success in our cities can always be traced back to the power of partnerships. Our work would not be possible without strong partnerships between mayors and city managers, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community volunteers — from those who help drive months-long projects to those who pitch in for an hour.

2016 has been an exciting year for Cities of Service. We launched Chief Service Officer Leadership Initiatives in Detroit, Miami, and Phoenix, where we will harness the power of senior government staff to drive citizen engagement projects throughout their respective cities. Our Bay Area Impact Volunteering program is focused on achieving lasting impact with disaster preparedness efforts. Serious work is also under way through our Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA program, focused on neighborhood revitalization, and our Resilience AmeriCorps program.

Thank you for partnering with us to make our cities work better for everyone. We look forward to another year of action.



**Myung J. Lee**  
Executive Director  
Cities of Service



**Tom A. Bernstein**  
President  
Cities of Service Board of Directors







**A national nonprofit organization, Cities of Service helps mayors and city leaders tap the knowledge, creativity, and service of citizens to solve public problems and create vibrant cities. As of December 2016, the Cities of Service coalition had 228 member cities in the U.S. and U.K., representing nearly 55 million people in 45 states and more than 10 million people in the U.K.**

**Opposite:** Volunteers paint a mural as part of Love Your Block in Las Vegas, NV.

**Above left:** Volunteers revitalize a park as part of Love Your Block in Phoenix, AZ.

**Above right:** Volunteers gather for a park cleanup as part of Love Your Block in Phoenix, AZ.

## **CITIES OF SERVICE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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# LOVE YOUR BLOCK AMERICORPS VISTA

Revitalizing  
neighborhoods,  
one block  
at a time

## GRANTEE CITIES

Birmingham, AL  
Boston, MA  
Lansing, MI  
Las Vegas, NV  
Phoenix, AZ  
Richmond, CA  
Seattle, WA



Volunteers clean brush from a canal in Phoenix, AZ.



A community garden in Lansing, MI.

**269,635**

**Pounds of litter removed  
across the grantee cities**

**7,973**

**People participating in  
Love Your Block programming**

**124**

**Lots cleaned across  
the grantee cities**

**143**

**Mini-grants awarded  
for local neighborhood  
revitalization projects**



**LANSING, MI**

Mayor Virgil Bernero

The Old Oakland Neighborhood Association leveraged a \$5,000 Cities of Service mini-grant to build the first portion of the trail as part of the revitalization of West Side and Dunnebacke Parks. They raised an additional \$50,000 from individuals, city, state, and federal sources to greatly expand the initial plan. Cities of Service Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTAs helped volunteers install signage, crosswalks, and artwork, transforming the parks into a gateway to Lansing.

**LAS VEGAS, NV**

Mayor Carolyn

G. Goodman

City Manager

Elizabeth N. Fretwell

Matt Kelly Elementary School — located in a neighborhood plagued by high poverty and unemployment rates — was identified by the Office of Community Services and the Cities of Service Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTAs as a critical site for community engagement. Citizen volunteers and city hall staff revitalized the schoolyard with vibrant murals, bright benches, and a community garden, which is now integrated into the school's curriculum.

**SEATTLE, WA**

Mayor Edward

B. Murray

As part of its Find It, Fix It Community Walks program, the mayor's office partnered with the Department of Transportation and citizen volunteers to address an overgrown trail that had become an eyesore and a hazard for residents of the Aurora Licton neighborhood. The team cleared 5,620 square feet of space and collected 100 cubic feet of debris to restore the area as a safe, clean community space.

**Right:** A volunteer paints a mural in Las Vegas, NV.



# RESILIENCE AMERICORPS

Helping cities  
improve resilience  
in low-income  
neighborhoods

## GRANTEE CITIES

Anchorage, AK  
Boulder, CO  
Chicago, IL  
El Paso, TX  
Minot, ND  
New Orleans, LA  
Norfolk, VA  
Phoenix, AZ  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Tulsa, OK



Volunteers remove debris  
from the Souris River in Minot, ND.



Volunteers fertilize the Chamizal Community Garden in El Paso, TX.

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15

**Tons of debris removed  
from the Souris River in Minot**

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208

**Businesses surveyed about  
their current level of disaster  
preparedness in New Orleans**

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10

**Miles of creek-side trail  
cleared of trash in Anchorage**

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22

**Agencies and nonprofits  
assembled for the first  
Pittsburgh Resilience Fair**



## **BOULDER, CO**

Mayor Suzanne Jones

City Manager

Jane S. Brautigam

Leading a movement to increase water conservation, Cities of Service Resilience AmeriCorps VISTAs acquired 100 rain barrels for low-income residents and trained volunteer technicians to assist the residents with installation at their homes. The city is now developing an online system for additional low-income residents to request a free rain barrel and connect with trained volunteers for free installation service.

## **EL PASO, TX**

Mayor Oscar Leeser

City Manager

Tommy Gonzalez

Cities of Service Resilience AmeriCorps VISTAs are tackling public health and food insecurity by teaching community members how to grow their own produce. Residents have learned to prepare soil, plant vegetables, and compost waste through hands-on demonstrations at the Chamizal Garden. In addition, volunteer master gardeners and experts from Texas A&M Agrilife Extension taught budding gardeners everything from pest control to irrigation at several Gardening 101 workshops.

## **MINOT, ND**

Mayor Chuck Barney

City Manager

Thomas Barry

Cities of Service Resilience AmeriCorps VISTAs and city hall teamed up with Minot Alderman Shannon Straight to empower 200 city residents to remove more than 15 tons of trash and debris from the Souris River, which had been neglected since massive flooding in 2011. Their ongoing efforts are a cornerstone of the city's broader resilience and recovery plan and have been nationally recognized for their success.

**Right:** Volunteers plant a rain garden in Norfolk, VA.



# BAY AREA RESILIENCE

Addressing  
local disaster  
preparedness  
and response  
through Impact  
Volunteering

## GRANTEE CITIES

Daly City, CA  
Oakland, CA  
Richmond, CA  
San Jose, CA  
San Leandro, CA



A community garden in Richmond, CA, a Love Your Block and Bay Area Resilience grantee city.



A rain garden, part of Project Green Space in Daly City, CA.

5+

Tons of debris removed  
from the Guadalupe River  
in San Jose

22

Drains adopted in first week  
of Adopt-a-Drain program  
in San Leandro

75

Trees will be planted and  
adopted by Daly City residents  
by June 2017

24

Community Emergency Response  
Team (CERT) volunteers trained  
to provide outreach to disabled  
Richmond residents



### **DALY CITY, CA**

Mayor  
Gonzalo Torres  
City Manager  
Patricia E. Martel

Project Green Space leverages community volunteers to plant drought-tolerant tree species and replace impervious surfaces with rain gardens, diverting rainwater from storm drains to help alleviate flooding and coastal erosion. To ensure success, residents “adopt” and care for the newly planted trees.

### **SAN JOSE, CA**

Mayor Sam Liccardo  
City Manager  
Norberto Dueñas

San Jose’s Team 222 is developing a network of citizens committed to cleaning and restoring the Guadalupe River to increase the city’s ability to mitigate flooding from intense rain events. Since partnering with Cities of Service, Team 222 has facilitated cleanups along a half-mile section of the river with employees from Google, Hitachi Chemical, and Iron Construction removing a total of 5.15 metric tons of debris and trash.

### **SAN LEANDRO, CA**

Mayor Pauline  
Russo Cutter  
City Manager  
Chris Zapata

Through Prepare San Leandro, the city created an Adopt-a-Drain program that recruits volunteers to help keep storm drains clear of leaves and trash. Reducing the number of clogged storm inlets alleviates dangerous flooding to roads, homes, and businesses. City agencies collaborated to produce an easy-to-use website for residents to select a drain to adopt.

**Right:** The Adopt-a-Drain program in San Leandro, CA encourages citizens to strengthen citywide resilience.



# CHIEF SERVICE OFFICER LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

## Elevating and structuring city-wide volunteer efforts

This initiative supports a senior city staff member in aligning citizen volunteers and cross-sector stakeholders to advance mayoral priorities.

### GRANTEE CITIES

Detroit, MI  
Miami, FL  
Phoenix, AZ



Volunteers removed nearly 3,700 gallons of debris and 35 garbage bags of litter from the Herman Kiefer Health Complex in Detroit, MI during the AmeriCorps VISTA 2016 Convening.

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**June 2016**

Chief Service Officers  
begin in city hall

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**25**

Cross-sector stakeholders engaged  
as partners in service to-date

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**3**

City-wide service plans  
in development

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**7**

Impact Volunteering  
initiatives planned



**DETROIT, MI**  
Mayor Mike Duggan

A key element of the Chief Service Officer Leadership Initiative is the development of cross-sector **partners in service** to make larger and more meaningful impact on a city's most pressing challenges. In Detroit, partners including JPMorgan Chase, General Motors, DTE Energy, St. Vincent DePaul, United Way of Southeast Michigan, Rock Ventures, and Comerica Bank are working with city hall to determine appropriate high-impact service projects around shared priorities: financial stability, blight elimination, and volunteer infrastructure.

**MIAMI, FL**  
Mayor Tomás  
Pedro Regalado  
City Manager  
Daniel J. Alfonso

Miami is prioritizing the development of a quality workforce and strong labor market while supporting individuals and families in achieving educational success. The chief service officer is facilitating the implementation of an **Impact Volunteering** program through which city staff and citizen volunteers mentor students to help increase high school graduation rates in partnership with established mentoring organizations.

**PHOENIX, AZ**  
Mayor Greg Stanton  
City Manager  
Ed Zuercher

The **chief service officer** manages city-led volunteer initiatives to meet the priorities of the mayor, including developing a more resilient economy and urban core, improving schools, and better engaging veterans. Phoenix City Hall is partnering with nonprofits, higher education, corporations, foundations, and a stakeholder advisory group to improve collaboration with residents on addressing city problems.

**Right:** Michael Hammett, chief service officer in Phoenix, AZ, plants trees as part of a Resilience AmeriCorps project.



# ADDITIONAL U.S. CITY HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from  
a few of our  
coalition cities  
that are doing  
amazing work  
without Cities of  
Service funding



Mayor Byron W. Brown joins citizen volunteers to remove graffiti in Buffalo, NY.

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**150+**

Volunteers tutored struggling  
first graders twice a week  
for an entire school year  
in Virginia Beach, VA

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**90**

Percent of event waste  
diverted by volunteers at the  
2015 Philadelphia Marathon

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**155**

Blocks revitalized through  
Buffalo's Operation Clean Sweep  
program in 2016





A volunteer reads with a student as part of the Virginia Beach Reads program in Virginia Beach, VA.

## 512%

**Annual return on investment  
for Operation Clean Sweep  
in Buffalo, NY**

**BUFFALO, NY**  
Mayor Byron  
W. Brown

Buffalo's Operation Clean Sweep is a collaborative program that brings together partners and volunteers to board up abandoned structures, remove graffiti and debris, clear overgrown lots, repair lights and signs, fill potholes, and offer services in the neighborhoods that need them most. A recent study determined that the program has a 512 percent annual return on investment, the equivalent of \$2.4 million in savings.

**VIRGINIA  
BEACH, VA**  
Mayor Will Sessoms  
City Manager  
Dave L. Hansen

Virginia Beach Reads paired 165 struggling first graders in three elementary schools with more than 150 volunteer tutors who provided intensive and fun reading lessons twice a week to help children read on-level by the third grade. Because of its ability to engage volunteers from different communities, the successful program is expanding to two additional elementary schools this year.

**PHILADELPHIA, PA**  
Mayor Jim Kenney

Hiring a chief service officer and expanding Philadelphia's Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service was one of Mayor Kenney's first priorities when he took office. Twenty-one full-time staff support resident participation in initiatives such as Serve our Schools, Homework Diner, Love Your Block, and the Civic Engagement Academy, which has resulted in more than 600 civic engagement hours and 5,000 volunteer service hours within the mayor's first 11 months in office.

# U.K. CITY HIGHLIGHTS

Cities of Service UK launched in 2013 as a partnership with the Cabinet Office and Nesta's Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund

## GRANTEE CITIES

Barnsley, UK  
Bristol, UK  
Kirklees, UK  
London, UK  
Monmouthshire, UK  
Plymouth, UK  
Portsmouth, UK  
Swindon, UK  
Telford and Wrekin, UK



Volunteers in the city of Barnsley, UK participate in the Let's Grow program.

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**10,000+**

**Volunteers mobilized  
through Cities of Service UK**

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**23,000**

**Parcels of fruit and vegetables  
grown and distributed to families  
in need in Plymouth, UK**

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**4,000**

**Bags of litter collected by  
volunteers in Barnsley, UK**





UK citizen volunteers plant a community garden.

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## 210

**Children benefited from volunteer reading coaching in Bristol, UK**

**BARNSELY**  
Councillor  
Sir Steve Houghton

Barnsley's Love Where You Live initiative took inspiration from the Love Your Block blueprint and existing local initiatives. The city provided grants of up to £10,000 (\$12,500) to community groups for neighborhood improvement projects. More than 11,500 volunteers participated after helping to identify the problems they wanted to tackle. Ninety percent of those surveyed afterward reported an increased sense of pride in their community.

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**BRISTOL**  
Mayor Marvin Rees

Bristol's Reading Partners program paired 110 volunteers with 210 elementary school children to improve their reading skills. More than half of participating children improved their reading age by six months or more within three months. With the convening power of the chief service officer, the city has been able to recruit and train volunteers in neighborhoods that had historically been challenging to reach, enabling the program to expand to serve more children.

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**PLYMOUTH**  
Councillor  
Chris Penberthy

Through Plymouth's Cities of Service Energy Champion program, 53 trained volunteers taught 2,800 of their fellow residents how to reduce energy and costs, resulting in an average savings of £234 (\$290) for those who switched energy providers and £145 (\$180) for those who implemented energy saving measures in their homes. Energy Champions is now a key project for Thrive Plymouth, the city's ten-year strategy to improve public health.

# CONFERENCES

Bringing our cities together to collaborate, learn, and share best practices



JAN  
16

## RESILIENCE AMERICORPS ACADEMY

Washington, DC

In January, the first cohort of Resilience AmeriCorps VISTAs came together to prepare for their year of service in city halls across the country. They heard expert presentations on citizen engagement, preparedness, and recovery; discussed unique challenges in their respective cities; and developed ideas to begin to address them. The trip included a special visit to the White House, where the VISTA members forged bonds that fostered support for each other throughout the year.

JUN  
16

## ANNUAL MAYOR & CITY LEAD CONVENING

New York, NY

Cities of Service hosted its annual convening in June, bringing together mayors and city leads from across the country to discuss how citizen engagement makes cities stronger. Mayors shared strategies that their cities have used to involve citizens in municipal government and explored opportunities for deeper engagement. Participants discussed how Cities of Service might further support coalition members to help strengthen the bonds between city halls and communities.

**Above left:** Executive Director Myung J. Lee speaks at the Resilience AmeriCorps Academy in Washington, DC in January 2016.

**Above right:** In June, Mayor Byron W. Brown of Buffalo, NY speaks at the Cities of Service 2016 Annual Convening in New York City.



JUL  
16

### AMERICORPS VISTA CONVENING

Detroit, MI

Thirty-four Cities of Service AmeriCorps VISTA members came together in July for a three-day training to strengthen their skills in user-centered design, storytelling, program development, and professional relationship management. The VISTAs — who work on resilience and neighborhood revitalization initiatives in their respective cities — met with city staff from Detroit and Lansing and participated in a major neighborhood revitalization project in the heart of the city.

SEP  
16

### CITY MANAGER DINNER

Kansas City, MO

In September, Cities of Service hosted a reception and dinner for city managers from nearly 25 cities that were gathered for the 2016 International City/County Management Association annual conference. Several city managers had conversations with attendees about their work as part of the Cities of Service coalition and how they are successfully applying our Impact Volunteering model, engaging residents, and solving pressing problems in their cities.

**Above left:** Volunteers repaint a jungle gym in Detroit, MI during the AmeriCorps VISTA 2016 Convening.

**Above right:** City managers converse in Kansas City, MO at a dinner hosted by Cities of Service.

# MEDIA & AWARDS



## Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION Review

Written by Myung J. Lee, executive director of Cities of Service, and Cities of Service Advisor Peter Levine, associate dean for Research and Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship & Public Affairs at Tufts University's Jonathan Tisch College of Civic Life, "A New Model for Citizen Engagement" was a featured article in the Fall 2016 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. The article spotlights Cities of Service's Impact Volunteering model as an effective pathway to improve the quantity and quality of civic engagement.

## ROUTE FIFTY

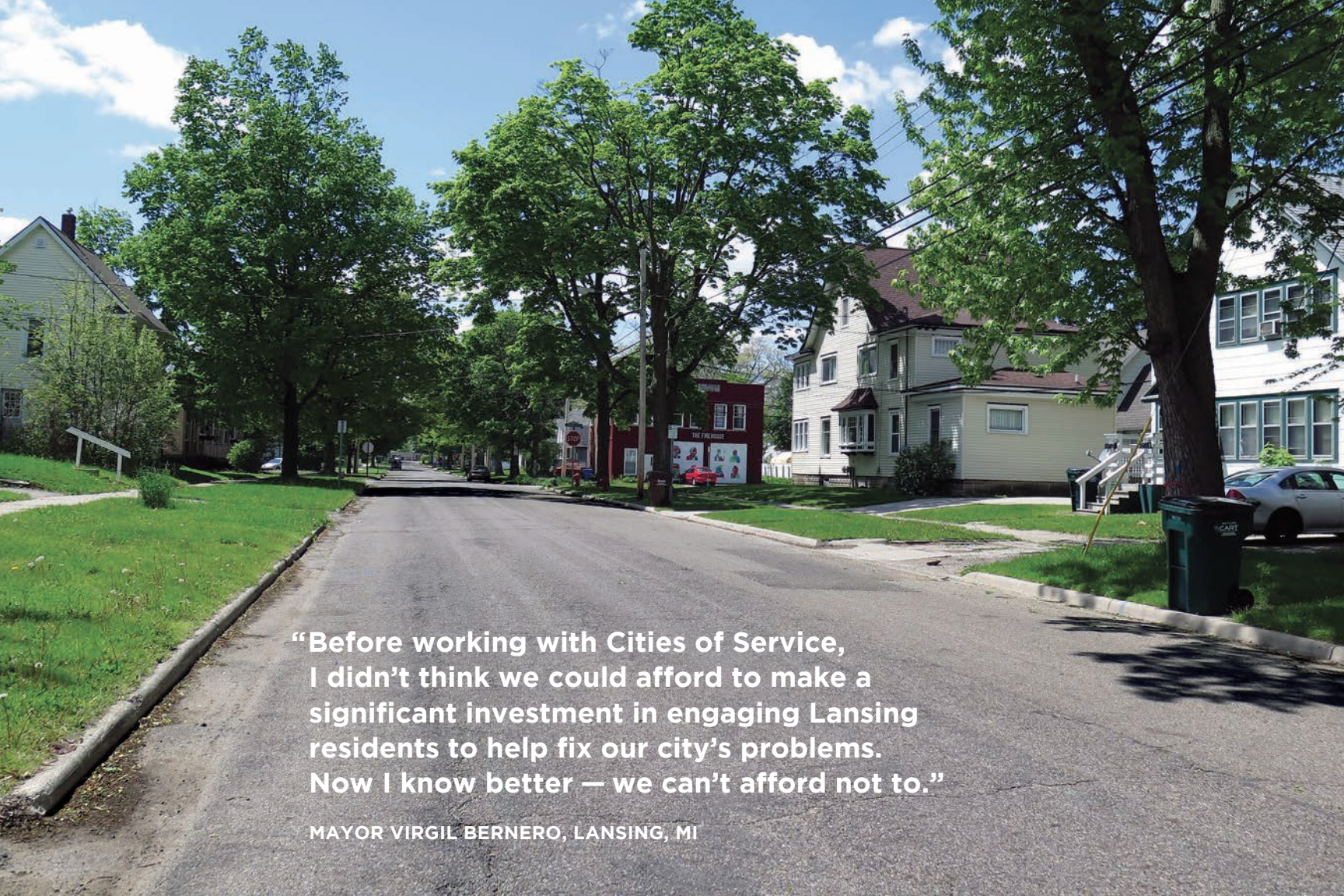
Three Cities of Service cities were chosen as finalists in the Route Fifty Navigator Awards. Buffalo, NY's Mayor Byron W. Brown, Chief Service Officer Oswaldo Mestre Jr., and their team were recognized for their innovative Operation Clean Sweep program. Alderman Shannon Straight — community activist, former AmeriCorps VISTA, and lifelong resident of Minot, ND — was highlighted for his leadership in the ongoing cleanup and restoration of the city's Souris River. Cities of Service Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTAs Hayley Steele and Helen Stoddard were featured for their efforts to create a Love Your Block Toolkit for residents in Phoenix, AZ.

**Above left:** Cities of Service shoots *Building Resilience* short film in Resilience AmeriCorps city Boulder, CO.

**Above right:** Michael Hammett, chief service officer in Phoenix, AZ, discusses Cities of Service on Arizona's local PBS affiliate.

**Opposite:** A neighborhood in Lansing, MI, a Love Your Block grantee city.





**“Before working with Cities of Service,  
I didn’t think we could afford to make a  
significant investment in engaging Lansing  
residents to help fix our city’s problems.  
Now I know better — we can’t afford not to.”**

**MAYOR VIRGIL BERNERO, LANSING, MI**

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FOUNDING PARTNER

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# Bloomberg Philanthropies

Cities of Service's work is made possible with  
generous funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

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THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

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