



YEAR IN REVIEW



At Cities of Service, we know that real change is happening in cities across the world — on Main Street, in city council, and at neighborhood association meetings.

We also know that, more often than not, the secret to change is unity: beginning with the knowledge that it's not us versus them, but we the people, of the people, by the people, and for the people. All the people.

We work with mayors in cities across the U.S. and the U.K. to combat the us versus them epidemic by bringing leaders and citizens together to solve problems and build the one thing that's missing between us and them: trust.

2017 showed us that this approach works — whether reducing blight in Tulsa, increasing food security in Anchorage, decreasing home foreclosures in Detroit, or building resilience to natural disasters in Jersey City.

Thank you to our partners for helping us make the world a better place, one city at a time. We look forward to another year of action.

Sincerely,



Myung J. Lee
Executive Director
Cities of Service



Tom A. Bernstein
President
Cities of Service Board of Directors

2017



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LOVE YOUR BLOCK

Through Love Your Block, city leaders engage citizen volunteers to revitalize neighborhoods, one block at a time.

GRANTEE CITIES

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



Citizen volunteers paint a mural in Boston's Columbia Point neighborhood.

BOSTON, MA

Mayor Martin J. Walsh

In 2017, Love Your Block projects in Boston focused on healthy eating and preserving green spaces. At Curtis Guild Elementary, parents, teachers and students designed a new garden that will serve as an outdoor classroom to learn about gardening and healthy eating. Local residents enhanced an existing community garden at Eastie Farm by installing rain barrels, planting flowers bends and repairing downspouts.

"It's a two-way relationship. I don't feel like we're bugging the city; they're coming to us, as well, to create solutions directly related to services."

Love Your Block participant, Phoenix, Arizona

277

metric tons of
trash cleaned

481

blighted lots and
parks revitalized

151

mini-grants
awarded to
citizen volunteers

LANSING, MI

Mayor Virgil Bernero

In Lansing, city officials and citizen volunteers have expanded their capability to address the long-standing challenge of blighted properties. In 2017, neighborhood leaders built on the success of an earlier grant to revitalize the Holmes Street Community Garden. Based on their successes and the relationships they had built, they were able to enlist support from Lansing officials and made plans to expand neighborhood revitalization initiatives.

RICHMOND, CA

Mayor Tom Butt

Rancho Market, an important community gathering spot, is one of the only markets in North Richmond and often a target for graffiti. As part of the city's Love Your Block efforts, more than 30 volunteers came together to paint the market — 3,200 square feet — and cleaned up about 40 pounds of trash. As a result, citizen volunteers regained a sense of ownership over their neighborhood and strengthened relationships between residents, small businesses and local government.



Citizen volunteers in Richmond convert a grass lot into an accessible raceway for youth.



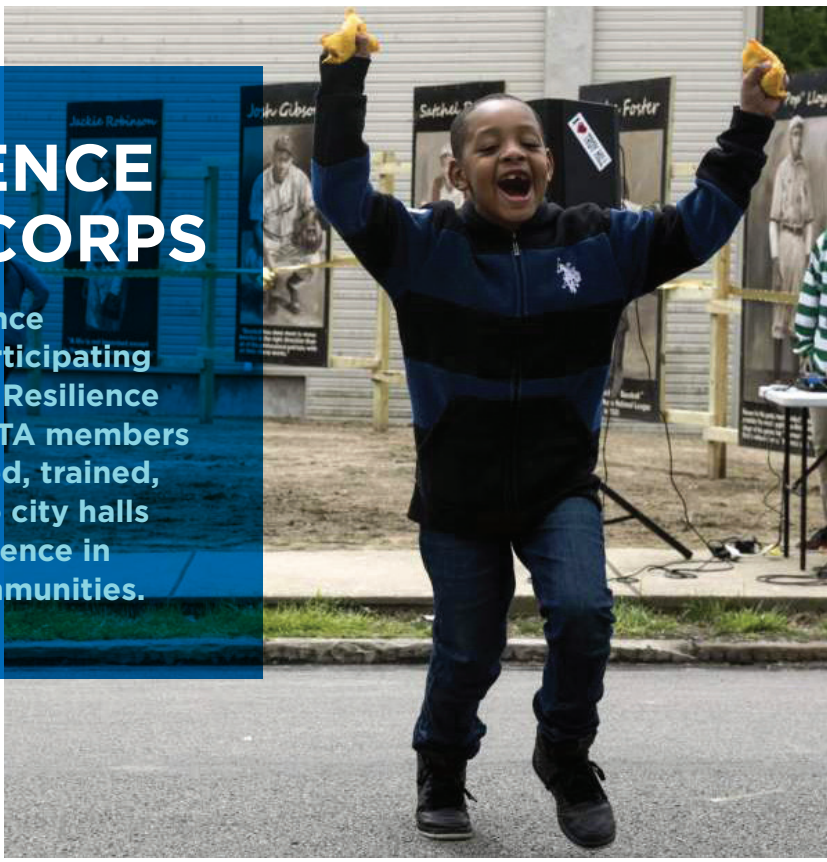
Citizen volunteers in Seattle maintain a community garden.

RESILIENCE AMERICORPS

Through Resilience AmeriCorps, participating cities work with Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA members who are recruited, trained, and deployed to city halls to improve resilience in low-income communities.

GRANTEE CITIES

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



Youth volunteer participates in a Love Your (Resilient) Block neighborhood revitalization project in Pittsburgh's Perry Hilltop neighborhood.

ANCHORAGE, AK Mayor Ethan Berkowitz

Focused on building a more food-secure Anchorage, citizen volunteers have been working with the city to increase opportunities for vulnerable neighborhoods to grow food locally. Replicating a 2016 greenhouse build at Mountain View Elementary School, volunteers built a greenhouse at Fairview Elementary School and installed raised beds and edible landscaping at Fairview Park. These areas serve as interactive learning labs where students and adults are learning how to grow food as a way to build resilience.

“The Cities of Service Impact Volunteering model is a very powerful device that helped us walk the walk for how the city wants to do community outreach and engagement. It allowed volunteers to work together with their neighbors to create meaningful impact.”

Greg Guibert, Chief Resilience Officer, Boulder, Colorado

626

community groups participated in resilience training or planning

2,683

volunteers committed their time to improving resilience

1,209

native plants and trees planted in Pittsburgh

36,925

pounds of trash cleaned up

EL PASO, TX Mayor Oscar Leeser

El Paso expanded on success in the first year of resilience work by launching a mini-grant program to help citizen volunteers build community gardens in food deserts throughout the city. Seven new gardens have produced over 100 pounds of fruits and vegetables, improving food access in low-income communities. In addition, 18 resident volunteers were trained in water and energy conservation as part of a Resilience Ambassadors program. They retrofitted five buildings in low-income communities with 200 energy-efficient light bulbs and 140 water-saving aerators.

NEW ORLEANS, LA Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu

Faced with an aging stormwater infrastructure and localized flooding, New Orleans developed and launched an Adopt-a-Catch-Basin program, which enables citizen volunteers to sign up to clean and maintain one of the city's 65,000 catch basins using an online tool. In the brief time since it launched in the fall, citizen volunteers have pledged to take care of 235 catch basins and keep them clear of debris to mitigate flooding risk throughout the city.



Citizen volunteers in Anchorage participate in the Fairview Park Fix It project to improve the park.

PREPARED TOGETHER

Through Prepared Together, city leaders engage citizen volunteers in initiatives that help cities better prepare for and respond to disasters.

GRANTEE CITIES

Daly City, CA
Hoboken, NJ
Jersey City, NJ
Newark, NJ
Oakland, CA
San José, CA
San Leandro, CA



Citizen volunteers in Jersey City plant trees as part of Make a Difference Day.

JERSEY CITY, NJ

Mayor Steven M. Fulop

In Jersey City, Prepared Together participants are mitigating flood risk and extreme heat by expanding the city's tree canopy and increasing the amount of porous surfaces throughout the city. On Make a Difference Day, the city kicked off its tree planting efforts at Marion Gardens Housing Authority and has successfully implemented additional resident-led projects since. Over the next year, Jersey City will engage with Curries Woods Housing Authority residents to develop a disaster preparedness action plan as well as provide mini-grant opportunities for community organizations.

"We're proud of how quickly our community came together (to respond to the flooding) — it really demonstrated the importance of our partnership with Cities of Service and the value of having that support community already in place."

Khanh Russo, Director of Strategic Partnerships, San José, California

1,592

volunteers committed their time to improving disaster preparedness

1,992

cubic yards of debris removed from 14 miles of waterways in San José

123

trees planted or maintained

866

individuals received training to become disaster first responders

SAN JOSÉ, CA

Mayor Sam Liccardo

When devastating floods hit San José in February 2017, the city was able to draw on its existing volunteer infrastructure and capitalize on the flood prevention work it did in the first year of Prepared Together to quickly respond and mitigate the impact. In just three days, they mobilized, communicated, and accommodated over 2,000 volunteers. These efforts helped residents return home four-and-a-half to five weeks earlier than they otherwise would have. In the second half of 2017, the city engaged nearly 1,500 volunteers to maintain the waterways and reduce localized flooding.

SAN LEANDRO, CA

Mayor Pauline Russo Cutter

Committed to creating more resilient neighborhoods and a stronger volunteer network in the face of extreme weather, the city expanded on its accomplishments in the first year of Prepared Together. Residents have adopted nearly 150 drains through the city's Adopt-a-Drain program, cleaning and maintaining them to reduce flooding risk and the need for weather-related emergency services. The city recently launched a mini-grant program to support community projects focused on stormwater capture and preparedness measures for extreme weather and other emergencies.



Citizen volunteers in Daly City maintain Project Green Space rain gardens as part of Make a Difference Day.



Prepared Together AmeriCorps VISTA member shares resilience planning document created with Oakland citizens.

CHIEF SERVICE OFFICER MODEL

A senior city staff member aligns cross-sector stakeholders with citizen volunteers to increase impact.

PARTICIPATING CITIES

At least 45
Cities of Service
cities currently
have a chief
service officer.



Community members, District 6 Manager, and AmeriCorps VISTA member board up vacant homes, pick up garbage, and clean lots in Detroit's Midwest Civic community

DETROIT, MI

Mayor Mike Duggan

The city's chief service officer, Victoria Kovari, brought citizen leaders and community partners together to create a unified service strategy that focused on reducing foreclosures as a key tactic for mitigating blight and boosting Detroit's population. Two hundred volunteers went door to door, providing crucial information to residents about how to avoid tax foreclosures and promoting foreclosure prevention workshops in the neighborhood. As a result, two thirds of the homes visited were diverted from foreclosure, saving 3,700 families from displacement.

“Developing a citywide strategy with corporate, nonprofit, and city partners was transformative. We amplified successful blight mitigation approaches, focused resources on the areas of greatest need, and built an infrastructure to support citizen engagement.”

Victoria Kovari, Chief Service Officer, Detroit, Michigan

70

percent reduction
in foreclosures
in Detroit

4,000

program
participants
in Phoenix

85

neighborhood art
displays produced
in Phoenix

47,000

tons of litter
gathered
in Phoenix

ORLANDO, FL

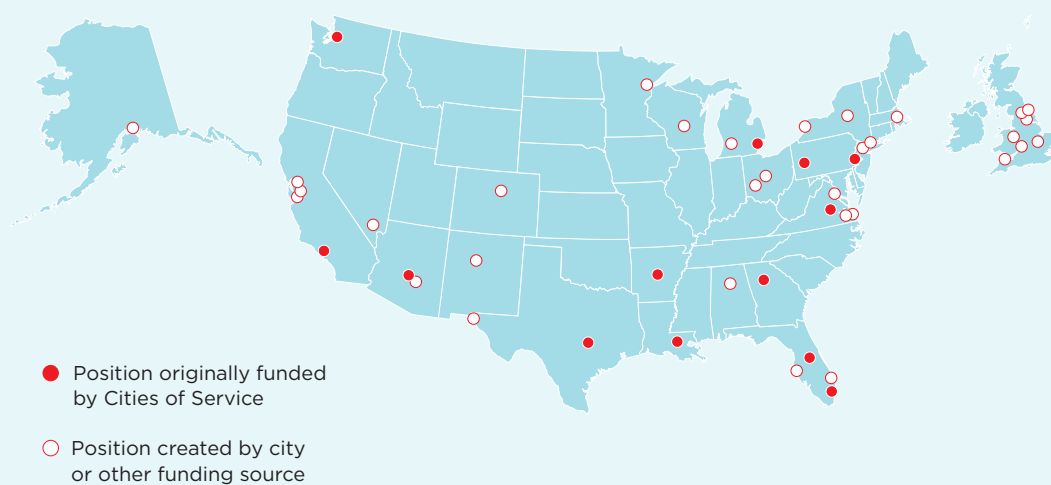
Mayor Buddy Dyer

When Marcia Hope Goodwin became Orlando's chief service officer, she engaged hundreds of community stakeholders and service experts from the public and private sectors, as well as individual citizens. This collaborative effort yielded Orlando Cares, a citywide volunteer strategy focused on supporting vulnerable children. Because of the comprehensive planning, programs like The Garden, which engages volunteers to teach youth about nutrition, environmental sustainability and the importance of exercise in wellness, continue to flourish and expand today.

PHOENIX, AZ

Mayor Greg Stanton

Before hiring a chief service officer, lack of coordination between parallel volunteer efforts undermined progress on the most pressing problems facing the city, hampering the efforts of more than 35,000 volunteers participating in 45 different programs. As chief service officer, Michael Hammett worked with diverse public and private partners to prioritize three core volunteer initiatives for the city: Love Your Block, Resilient PHX and Read on Phoenix, which address blight, extreme weather and literacy respectively.



At least 45 cities have a chief service officer or equivalent position.

ADDITIONAL CITY HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from a selection of our coalition cities that are solving problems in collaboration with their citizens



Citizen volunteers work at a donation distribution center in Austin to support Houston residents affected by Hurricane Harvey.

AUSTIN, TX

Mayor Steve Adler

A long-standing member of the Cities of Service coalition, the city of Austin partnered with Cities of Service and other coalition members to participate in 9/11 Day. Austin-based veterans groups worked with over 200 citizen volunteers to assemble more than 1,000 clean-up kits for Houston residents affected by Hurricane Harvey. The City of Austin continues to focus volunteer efforts on helping those displaced by the hurricane find long-term shelter.

“We’ve created more ways for community members to collaborate with city government. As a result, Seattle citizens now see and feel that we are listening.”

Kathy Nyland, Director, Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle, Washington

65

percent of Virginia Beach READS participants met or exceeded first-grade literacy benchmarks

3,575

missions completed by Runners in York, UK, as part of Good Gym, an initiative that connects runners to older individuals who need help

45

community partners engaged in impact volunteering initiatives in Orlando

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

Mayor Will Sessoms

Using the Cities of Service Third Grade Reads blueprint, Virginia Beach READS paired trained citizen volunteers with struggling first-grade readers to increase literacy skills. The tutors provide intensive, yet fun, literacy tutoring sessions twice per week for the entire school year. In 2017, the city expanded the program to serve students in five elementary schools, with 100 volunteers working with over 120 students.

YORK, UK

Councillor Ann Reid

York offers a broad range of volunteering opportunities to its citizens, from looking after green areas to mentoring fellow residents. An emerging leader on citizen engagement, York hosted city leaders from the U.S. and U.K. for the People Helping People conference. The event explored how cities in the U.K. can effectively implement and adapt the Cities of Service model to increase volunteerism and expand impact.



Cities of Service Executive Director Myung J. Lee visits with participants in the Ablaze program in Bristol, UK.

ENGAGED CITIES AWARD

The award shines a light on the best of the best, enabling cities around the world to learn from their peers and replicate the strategies in their own cities.



Cities, more than ever, are facing an array of public challenges. Many cities are tapping into the expertise and talent of citizens to tackle these challenges head on. That's why, on November 7, Cities of Service launched the Engaged Cities Award, a recognition program that finds and elevates the growing number of diverse and creative ways city leaders are harnessing the power of people to solve problems.



COMING IN 2018:

The Engaged Cities Award is in for an exciting year ahead. Ten finalists will be announced in early spring and three winners will be chosen in May. Cities of Service will host an Engaged Cities Award Dinner and Summit to coincide with our annual convening.

"People are a city's greatest resource, and the Engaged Cities Award highlights those leaders who are most effectively working together with their constituents to build stronger communities."

Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and three-term mayor of New York City



AWARDS AND MEDIA

Cities of Service spotlights stories of success and inspires others by sharing what's possible when local leaders and citizens work together.



Student participants, featured in Anchorage's Building Resilience story, make seed balls to plant in their school's greenhouse.

AWARDS



Forty Over 40

Nominated by Diahann Billings-Burford, the first chief service officer ever, Cities of Service Executive

Director Myung J. Lee was chosen as one of the 40 Women to Watch Over 40.



Voices for National Service

Nominated by Cities of Service, coalition members Mayors Ethan Berkowitz

of Anchorage, Alaska, and Sam Liccardo of San José, California, won the Voices for National Service's Local Leadership Award for leadership and innovation in leveraging national service to meet local needs.

FAST COMPANY PARTNERSHIP



As part of the Engage Cities Award, Cities of Service launched a storytelling series with Fast Company in November to highlight how

mayors across the world are working with citizens to solve public problems and build stronger cities.



ORIGINAL CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

Resilience Storytelling Videos/Articles

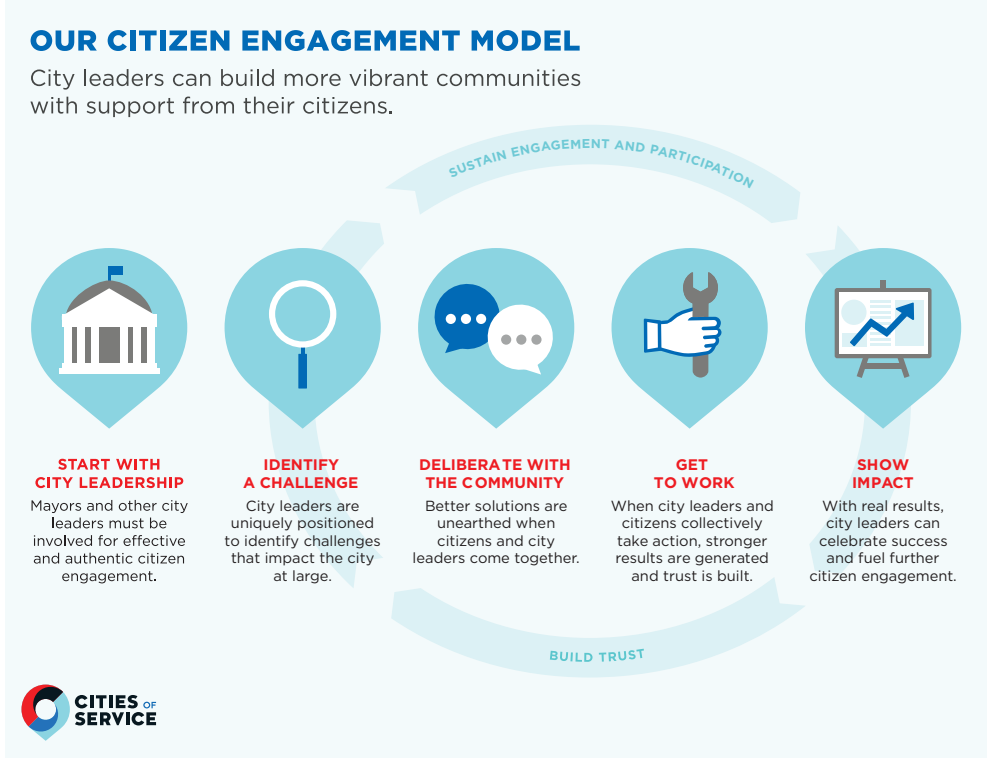
The Building Resilience storytelling series includes 11 written narratives and four short films that tell the story of citizen volunteers, city leaders, and Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA members working together to strengthen resilience in their cities.

Citizen Engagement Model Infographic/Video

Our citizen engagement model helps city leaders build more vibrant communities with support from their citizens. Throughout the process, city leaders and citizens develop trusting relationships that help to sustain engagement and participation. Download the infographic to see how this model comes to life.

Changing Perspectives Changes Lives Video

Cities of Service believes that cities that work together with their citizens have the most potential to make change and improve people's lives. We help city leaders collaborate with their citizens to solve problems and build stronger communities. Our new video illustrates how we're helping our cities make the world a better place one city at a time.



COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

From city leaders to citizen volunteers, everyone benefits from the expertise, resources, and camaraderie of our community.



ADVISORS

Cities of Service Advisors are innovators and influencers in a range of fields. Advisors provide expert insights and introductions that help Cities of Service increase its impact and reach.

Above: City leaders use interactive worksheets provided by a graphic facilitator to work through their city's challenges.

Below, top: Mayors Ethan Berkowitz (Anchorage), Karen Freeman-Wilson (Gary), Byron Brown (Buffalo), and Sam Liccardo (San José) with Cities of Service Executive Director Myung J. Lee for the very first Mayors Council meeting in December 2017.

Below, bottom: Cities of Service brings together the AmeriCorps VISTA members from across its programs for a convening in Denver, Colorado.

Richard J. Berry, 29th Mayor of Albuquerque, New Mexico

Beth Blauer, executive director of the Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University

Simone Brody, executive director of What Works Cities

Shirley Franklin, chairman of the board and CEO of Purpose Built Communities

Ben Hecht, president and CEO of Living Cities

Rachel Howald, founder, Invisible Man

Nigel Jacob, co-founder, Boston Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics

Peter Levine, Lincoln Filene Professor and Associate Dean for Research, Tufts University's Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service

Ben Wallerstein, CEO and co-founder of Whiteboard Advisors

MAYORS COUNCIL

The Cities of Service Mayors Council is comprised of sitting mayors who share our belief in the power of engaging citizens to achieve meaningful change in their cities. As members of the council, they advise Cities of Service on program development and organizational growth opportunities. They also serve as ambassadors for the organization through their existing networks.

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor of Anchorage, Alaska

Byron W. Brown, Mayor of Buffalo, New York

Pete Buttigieg, Mayor of South Bend, Indiana

Buddy Dyer, Mayor of Orlando, Florida

Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor of Gary, Indiana

John Giles, Mayor of Mesa, Arizona

Jim Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San José, California

Greg Stanton, Mayor of Phoenix, Arizona



CONVENINGS

Throughout the year, Cities of Service convenes city representatives from across the U.S. and U.K. to learn from others and share best practices with fellow coalition members. By convening city-based practitioners, we elevate and enrich a community of practice among city government leaders. In 2017, we held a Resilience Academy, a Chief Service Officer Convening, and an AmeriCorps VISTA Convening.



FOUNDING PARTNER

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