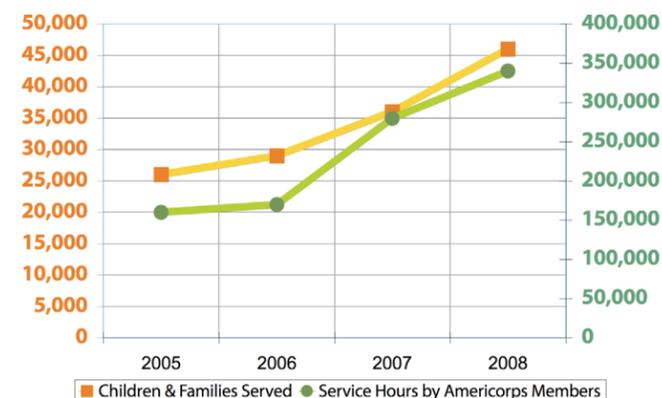


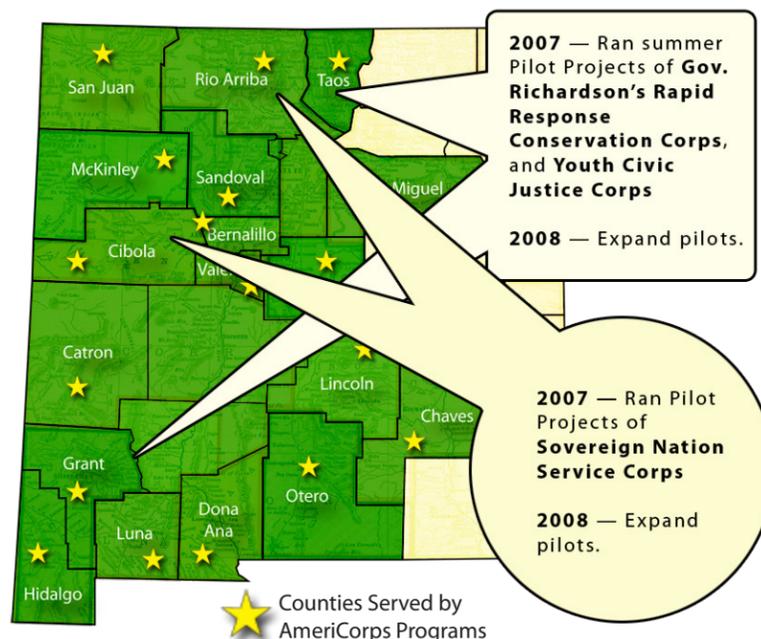
# New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement UPDATE 2008

## Service Hours & People Served Increase



*Civic Engagement Programs give students real world experiences, resulting in a better match between the skills they have and the skills the employer needs.*  
 – Gregory Webb, Executive Director

## Service Programs Pepper the State



*Teaching is the most important and vital work I have done. Using techniques they learned in my art class, students began painting, airbrushing and stenciling everything they could get their hands on. They returned to class actively creating, engaging and conversing in their own visual language. As an AmeriCorps artist/educator, nothing is more exciting than watching this fire began to blaze.*  
 – Teach for America member

**New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism**  
 NEWMEXSERVE.org

Lt. Governor Diane D. Denish, Co-Chair  
 Steve Rasmussen, Co-Chair

Greg Webb, Executive Director  
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*The Blueprint for Civic Engagement fulfills one of the five essential outcomes of the New Mexico Children's Cabinet -- that all children and youth be valued contributors to their communities. I applaud the ongoing commitment to this goal and look forward to even more progress in the future.*  
 – Diane D. Denish, Lieutenant Governor

### Members

- Kathy Abeles, Santa Fe
- Linda Barth, Albuquerque
- Mark Bentley, San Jose
- Brenda Brooks, Hobbs
- Anthony Casaus, Las Cruces
- Renee Chavez, Albuquerque
- Joel R. Hamilton, Alamogordo
- Mike Nuanes, Artesia
- Steve Patrick, Ex Officio
- Ernesto Ramos, Santa Fe
- Frances Ray, Albuquerque
- Maria Rita Sanchez, Bernalillo
- Angela Romero, Albuquerque
- Ron Solimon, Albuquerque
- Thomas F. Stewart, Alto



## 2007 Report Card

**Youth Corps Pilots** – Launched small pilot projects for Youth Civic Justice and Rapid Response Corps in Taos and The Wellness Coalition in the Southwest. At Ohkay Owingeh and Laguna Pueblo, Sovereign Nation Youth Corps Programs were initiated. **Partners** – Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD), Indian Affairs and Workforce Solutions.

**Service Learning** – Completed report in response to Senate Joint Memorial 51 and presented it to the Legislative Education Study Committee in December, 2007. **Partners** – CYFD, Public Education Department (PED), and New Mexico Forum for Youth and Community.

## 2008 Goals

**Youth Corps** – Expand Youth Civic Justice, Rapid Response and Sovereign Nation Service Corps pilot projects. **Partners** – CYFD, Indian Affairs (IAD), Workforce Solutions.

**Service Learning** – Implement recommendation of SJM51 work group and appoint a state-wide Service Learning Task Force to develop a service learning framework. Support increased funding by \$30,000 (from \$70,000 to \$100,000) to support Task Force work.

**Work Study** – Continue on-going discussions with the Higher Education Department (HED) and several New Mexico colleges and universities with the long-term goal of increasing to 50% the amount of federal and state higher education work study funds that are used in community based settings.

*As a veteran of higher education, it is clear that there is a positive correlation between work study students who are actively engaged in service learning and their success in college. Expanding work study programs will have a direct impact on the quality of life for these students and for all New Mexicans.*

– Dr. David J. Schmidly, President, University of New Mexico.

The New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement is the result of a charge from Governor Bill Richardson in 2006:

*To engage citizens of New Mexico of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service to address the state's human, educational, environmental, public safety, health, housing and other needs.*

The specific aim of the Blueprint is to increase opportunities for civic engagement (volunteerism, community service, service learning and civic participation) in New Mexico. It will do this by highlighting current successes, describing effective practices, and recommending new policies. For a copy of the entire Blueprint (published in late 2006), visit [www.newmexserve.org](http://www.newmexserve.org), then click on Check out the New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement.

# New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement UPDATE 2008

## CHECK THE BENEFITS OF SERVICE LEARNING

- ✔ Increases academic achievement,
- ✔ Reduces truancy,
- ✔ Reduces risk of negative behavior,
- ✔ Makes a positive impact on students,
- ✔ Enhances civic and citizenship skills,
- ✔ All of the above, and more

While the benefits of Service Learning are widely acknowledged, the question is how to provide them for more students and communities. Fortunately, the answer is now in sight.

*We know that service learning works. New Mexico has been creating nationally recognized, high quality service learning programs for more than a dozen years. What we need now is support to ensure that the best of these are a resource for every student and community in New Mexico.*

– Wendy Wintermute, PhD, New Mexico Forum for Youth and Community

## Background

In 2007, Senate Joint Memorial 51 asked for a study of the benefits of service learning that grants academic credit to high school students (including those entering from the eighth grade). In response, the NM Children, Youth and Families Department and the NM Public Education Department, working through the NM Commission for Community Volunteerism, conducted such a study.

The six-month long study found many successful service learning programs throughout the state. The study also found, however, that inconsistent funding and lack of infrastructure made it virtually impossible to measure results, recognize students, or replicate successes. These findings led to two simple recommendations.

## Simple Recommendations

The “Response to Senate Joint Memorial 51,” (presented to the Legislative Education Study Committee in December, 2007), made just two simple recommendations:

1. Appoint a state-wide Service Learning Task Force charged with developing a service learning framework for New Mexico, and
2. Add \$30,000 to the current funding of \$70,000 allocated through the Professional Development Funding to the PED for support of service learning. The additional \$30,000 will support the work of the Service Learning Task Force.

As a resource for the work of the proposed Service Learning Task Force, the “Response” also comprises a wealth of basic data and lines of research. Especially useful are some 25 guidelines, ranging from clarifying definitions to analyzing the cost of implementing a state-wide system. Visit [NewMexServe.org](http://NewMexServe.org) to download the full report.

## AMERICORPS IS ENGINE OF YOUTH CORPS PROGRAMS

Throughout the nation, AmeriCorps volunteers address such critical community needs as improving health services and building affordable housing. New Mexico is no different. Here, nearly 350 members across the state serve more than 23,000 children and families in such roles as tutors, mentors, and in helping communities respond to disasters.

### AmeriCorps programs in New Mexico include exciting new pilot programs:

- ✔ Governor Richardson’s Rapid Response Conservation Corps to respond to natural disasters and environmental needs;
- ✔ The Sovereign Nations Service Corps to create and invigorate new opportunities for tribal youth employment and development, and
- ✔ The Youth Civic Justice Corps to open up existing training and employment opportunities to young people who are “aging out” of foster care programs or who are transitioning from juvenile detention. Through one or two year paid terms of service, these young people have the opportunity to gain work experience, earn academic degrees, and earn life and leadership skills.

The request to the legislature in 2008 is for \$250,000 to expand the pilot tests to provide additional job training and placement.

*“I fully support the Sovereign Nations Service Corps Pilot Program. It’s providing our youth with an opportunity to give back to our community, become involved, acquire ownership and fulfill their educational dreams”*

– Johnny Abeyta, 1st Lieutenant Governor, Ohkay Owingeh.

## David’s Story

David arrived in Taos in shackles. Years of negative influence, risky behavior, and run-ins with the law had left this young man lost and on probation.

Despite his situation, David landed at Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) with a positive attitude and a willingness to fully participate in the opportunity he was offered with an AmeriCorps field crew. He signed on for an eleven-month term and worked hard, becoming a leader for his crew.

During the year, David slowly evolved from a guy with no dreams for a future to a young man with clear goals. He loved to work in the field, and he threw himself whole-heartedly into learning conflict resolution skills, exploring college, and preparing for a job, and soon had developed a plan for an exciting future.

With RMYC staff help, David applied for a wildfire crew position with the Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) and was quickly accepted. David left for Minnesota, not in shackles but in the car he had purchased with his stipends from RMYC. Now, halfway through his term of service with MCC, David has again become a leader for his crew and looks forward to returning to RMYC where he plans to “do something that makes a difference.”



## Tales from the Southwest – How Youth Civic Justice Corps works

The Wellness Coalition, a group that works to build community capacity among Catron, Grant, Hidalgo and Luna Counties, is partnering with Caesar Chavez Charter High School in Deming to launch a Youth Civic Justice Corps. The Corps comprises adjudicated youth who focus on attaining job skills, self-esteem, and civic engagement experience. Because of the service learning opportunities within the program, the members are also able to count their service hours as high school credit. Members will each complete 300 hours of paid work and earn a \$1,000 education award that can be used at any U.S. institution of higher learning that accepts federal financial aid.

*“The Youth Civic Justice Corps gives us a unique moment to set our most troubled youth on a healthy path.”*

– Judge M. Monica Zamora, Children’s Court, Albuquerque.

## WORK STUDY MEETS STUDENT, COMMUNITY NEEDS

Work Study Programs have been called “Debt Prevention Programs” for college students because students who are part of work study programs are more often able to “pay as they go,” graduating with significantly less debt than those students who do not work. Thus, they are not only free of crushing debt on graduation day, they are

also prepared for the work force and have the time and energy for civic participation in their communities.

Currently, work study funds go predominantly to jobs held by students working on campus, for the college they are attending. It has been recognized that they would get more “real world” experience if they worked at entities within the larger community. In addition, the community would benefit from this source of employees.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department and a number of colleges and universities have begun discussions intended to help implement the Blueprint for Civic Engagement recommendation that at least 50% of federal and state work study funds be used in community settings. This is a multi-year project that will gradually increase the amount available for positions in the community from the present 7%.