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.

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

CITIES OF SERVICE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael R. Bloomberg, Honorary Chairman & Founder
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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

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 a previous 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 make 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.

BOSTON, MA
Mayor Marty 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, 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
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

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 Gulbert, Chief Resilience Officer, Boulder, Colorado

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 Mitch 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 255 catch basins and keep them clear of debris to mitigate flooding risk throughout the city.

Youth volunteer participates in a Love Your (Resilient) Block neighborhood revitalization project in Pittsburgh’s Perry-Hip-Hop neighborhood.

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

4,000 program participants in Phoenix

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 Hammatt 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.

85 neighborhood art displays produced in Phoenix

47,000 tons of litter gathered in Phoenix

Position originally funded by Cities of Service

Position created by city or other funding source
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

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, 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
SUSTAIN ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

DELIBERATE WITH THE COMMUNITY

Better solutions are unearthed when citizens and city leaders come together.

IDENTIFY A CHALLENGE

City leaders are uniquely positioned to identify challenges that impact the city at large.

SHOW IMPACT

With real results, city leaders can celebrate successes and fuel further citizen engagement.

GET TO WORK

When city leaders and citizens collectively take action, stronger results are generated and trust is built.

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.

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 include Mayors Ethan Berkowitz of Anchorage, Alaska, and Sam Liccardo of San Jose, California, won the Voices for National Service’s Local Leadership Award for leadership and innovation in leveraging national service to meet local needs.

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.

ORIGINAL CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS

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OUR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT MODEL

City leaders can build more vibrant communities with support from their citizens.

WITH SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

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.

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.

City leaders can build more vibrant communities with support from their citizens.

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

Changing Perspectives Changes Lives
Video
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YOUR CITY WORKING WITH RESIDENTS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?

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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 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.

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.

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 Tyndall College of Citizenship and Public Service
Ben Wallerstein, CEO and co-founder of Whiteboard Advisors

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.
Bloomberg Philanthropies

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

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

- The Rockefeller Foundation
- Walmart Foundation
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Sodexo
- Scholastic