

Corporation for
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE 

*Kansas-Missouri Field
Office*

AmeriCorps*VISTA

Overview

Talking Points

1. Learn what AmeriCorps*VISTA is and what VISTA members do.
2. Hear examples of VISTA & Volunteer Center partnerships
3. Understand the basic VISTA project application process and sponsor responsibilities
4. Discuss next steps

Notes on VISTA Concept Paper components are included for your reference.

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a program of the
Corporation for National & Community Service

Very Brief History...

1964 – VISTA: Volunteers in Service to America is created by President Johnson through the Domestic Volunteer Service Act as part of the War on Poverty.

September 1993 - President Clinton signs the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National & Community Service. The legislation unites Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA and Learn and Serve America into one independent federal agency.

CNCS Programs



- **Senior Corps**: a network of programs that tap the rich experience, skills and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges.
- **AmeriCorps**: through its programs, AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans to make an ongoing, intensive commitment to service.
- **Learn and Serve America**: provides grants to schools, higher education institutions and community-based organizations that engage students, their teachers and others in service to meet community needs.

CNCS Organizational Chart

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Foster Grandparents
RSVP
Senior Companions



VISTA
National Civilian Community Corps
State
National Direct
Tribal Set-Aside



Community-Based
Higher Education
K-12
School-Based
Tribal Set-Aside

Strategic Initiatives: 2006-2010

1. Mobilizing More Volunteers
2. Ensuring a Brighter Future for America's Youth
3. Engaging Students in Communities
4. Harnessing Baby Boomers' Experience
5. Disaster Response

Critical Question: to what end?

What AmeriCorps*VISTA Does

1. Lifts people out of poverty (rather than making poverty more tolerable)
2. Places “VISTA members” in non-profit, tribal, government and other public agencies to create sustainable systems that build the agency’s capacity to meet local needs
3. Provides an opportunity for Americans 18 and older to serve their communities

VISTA Priority Areas for 2007-2008

- Financial Asset Development
- Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
- Prisoner Re-entry
- Rural Community Development
- Tribal Community Development
- Students in Service
- Disaster Response

Sustainability and Capacity Building

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

VISTA projects generally last three years. How will you institutionalize the systems, increased capacity, and other outcomes of the VISTA members' work so that you're not back at square one?

VISTA members' service builds capacity within the agencies where they are placed, and by extension in the communities the agencies serve and for the residents of those communities.

What VISTA Members* Do

*(6500+ each year)

1. Build volunteer management, leadership and training systems
2. Build development systems ~ and do development work
3. Create powerful partnerships with businesses, community leaders, and other stakeholders
4. Expand current programs ~ in demographic, geographic, and/or programmatic scope
5. Live at the level of the community they serve
6. It is largely up to you: you will recruit them!

What VISTA Members Do NOT Do

1. Direct service
2. Part-time service
3. Work, attend school, proselytize, or lobby
4. International work
5. Supervise employees or volunteers

Examples of VISTA Project Sponsors

- **Communities in Schools**
- **Kansas Public Health**
- **Catholic Charities**
- **Breakthrough Club**
- **Salina Regional Hospital**
- **Salina Council on Aging**
- **Washburn University**
- **Kansas Campus Compact**
- **Harvesters**
- **Goodwill**
- **Wichita Habitat for Humanity**
- **Pettis County Community Partnership**
- **South Grand SR Ministry**
- **St. Louis Marriage Coalition**
- **Veterans Affairs Medical Center**
- **Washington County Community Partnership**
- **YMCA**
- **Missouri State University**
- **Kansas Dept of Corrections**
- **Poplar Bluff's Promise**

What do you think VISTA members are doing?

What VISTA Members Are Doing

1. Fighting illiteracy
2. Improving health services
3. Reducing unemployment
4. Increasing housing opportunities
5. Bridging the digital divide
6. Mitigating effects of disaster
7. Raising academic achievement
8. Supporting independent living
9. Creating microenterprise
10. Sustaining natural resources

What anti-poverty needs do your agencies address?

Becoming a Sponsor

1. Dream, strategize & choose:
 - Which needs and which communities you want to affect... and how you'll measure progress
 - What your agency needs to have in place to get those results
 - Potential partners and resources
 - How many VISTA members you might need
2. Design and submit a Concept Paper
3. If approved, create and submit a full application
4. If awarded, send VISTA supervisor(s) to CNCS orientation and recruit members

Sponsor Responsibilities

1. Develop and implement Project Plan and performance measures
2. Identify a supervisor for the member(s)
3. Create an Advisory Council
4. Recruit and place VISTA members
5. Provide work space, equipment and supplies
6. Create two-week member On Site Orientation & Training
7. Assist VISTA members with community entry
8. Conduct member performance appraisals, track time and attendance, and perform other supervisory duties
9. Connect VISTA member with training and development opportunities
10. Document all project achievements and legacy through Project Progress Reports

Partnership

Sponsor is encouraged to accept only one Financial Obligation:

You are encouraged to pay the VISTA member living allowance:

\$9,996-\$10,380 annually per member this year (varies by county and depends on cost-of-living adjustments)

CNCS Financial Obligation

- **\$4725 Segal Education Award or \$1200 post-service stipend**
- **Health coverage**
- **Payroll services**
- **Training for members & supervisors**
- **Travel costs for that training**
- **Moving allowance for members relocating to serve**
- **Liability coverage for members**
- **Child care for income eligible members**
- **Assistance with member recruitment**
- **FICA**

Cost Share Partnership Results

- 1. Each dollar invested yields \$5.63 in effort and accomplishments**
- 2. VISTA Members have helped sponsoring agencies generate \$50 million annually (\$50,000 per project average)**
- 3. Annually, VISTA members recruit more than 200,000 volunteers, who contribute more than 6 million hours of service to their communities**

Concept Paper Elements

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Strengthening Communities**
3. **Program Management**
4. **Organizational Capacity**

Executive Summary

1. **Organization mission & history**
2. **Beneficiaries of organization's activities**
3. **Project activities VISTA members will perform**

Strengthening Communities

1. **Specific poverty-related need(s) VISTA project will address, citations as needed**
2. **How project will strengthen organization's capacity to address those needs**
3. **What the specific results will be**
4. **How you will achieve those results**
5. **How long it will take to achieve them**
6. **How you will measure your progress toward, and success in, achieving the results**

Program Management

1. **How long it will take to complete the project**
2. **How many VISTA members you estimate needing**
3. **Who will supervise members, and how**
4. **What training you will provide to members**

Organizational Capacity

- 1. Prior agency experience working with community volunteers and/or national service participants**
- 2. Organization and staff's previous work with VISTA members, as a sponsor or placement site**
- 3. How proposed activity/project differs from that previous work**
- 4. Other CNCS funding your agency currently receives by program type and number of members**
- 5. Partner organizations and other resources available to support the project**
- 6. How many members you can cost-share**

Consider...

1. **What changes will you measure in the agencies where VISTA members serve?**
2. **What changes will you measure in the communities and/or people those agencies serve?**
3. **How will you engage community members, particularly representatives from the low income community?**
4. **How will the VISTA members' work lift people out of poverty (as opposed to make poverty more tolerable)?**
5. **How will the systems members create be sustainable beyond the three-year project period?**
6. **How will you know you're making progress?**

Questions?

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