



VISTA Strong Communities Application

Please note that these questions are for preparation purposes only. Please submit your answers into the application form at <https://www.cnhed.org/training/cnhed-vista-application/>.

Thank you for applying to host a VISTA! You may want to write your answers in a word processing document and then copy them over to avoid losing your work.

If you need to come back to your application at a later date, please hit the “save and continue later” button found at the bottom of the page. Please fill out all questions before moving on to the next page.

Organization Name:

Full Street Address:

Head of Organization Name and Title:

Head of Organization Phone:

Head of Organization Email:

Application Contact Person Name and Title:

Application Contact Person Phone:

Application Contact Person Email:

My organization is a member of CNHED and is in good standing.*

**Members in good standing are individuals, corporate organizations or private organizations that are up-to-date in paying membership dues as of June 30, 2018. Please contact Felicia Fort at ffort@cnhed.org to check your membership status. Learn more about CNHED membership here: <https://www.cnhed.org/membership/>.*

About the AmeriCorps VISTA Program

The VISTA Program is a national anti-poverty service program funded by the federal government and managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). It

pairs people 18 and older with educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and state and local government agencies to help local communities develop lasting solutions to poverty. VISTA is distinct from other AmeriCorps national service programs because VISTAs commit to serving at one institution full-time for a full year, rather than for a set number of hours or as part of a travelling service corps.

My proposal aligns with VISTA's anti-poverty mission.

At their placement sites, VISTAs do grassroots work to build capacity and empower communities. VISTAs are not in direct service, nor are they an employee or intern. Instead, they mobilize local resources to expand the ability of low-income communities to build on their own resources, leaving programs and tools that will endure long after they leave. People of all ages and levels of experience serve as VISTAs; the only requirement to apply for a position is to be 18 years or older and a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. VISTAs can be recent college graduates, professionals in the middle of a career change, or even recent retirees looking for a meaningful way to spend their time. Potential sponsors are responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and training a potential VISTA, and are expected to provide reasonable accommodation to VISTA members with disabilities in accordance with federal policies.

I understand that a VISTA is a temporary asset to build capacity, not an employee or a volunteer in direct service.

I will enact an equitable hiring policy and make reasonable accommodations available for members with disabilities.

The AmeriCorps VISTA program provides a modest living stipend to its participants, as well as health care, training, and relocation expenses. Furthermore, upon completion of a year of service, VISTAs receive a Segal Education Award which can be used to pay for school or pay back existing loans. VISTAs who choose not to take this award receive a cash end-of-service award. As part of VISTA Strong Communities, members who apply are asked to contribute \$1000 per month (\$12,000 per year) per VISTA to offset the costs of housing in the DC area. This stipend will be paid directly to the VISTA's landlord on a monthly basis. VISTA Strong Communities focuses on the economic opportunity programming priority within VISTA's broader action plan. Therefore, proposals should focus on just and equitable improvement of economic opportunity for low-income DC residents, including housing opportunity. CNHED will provide new VISTAs with an initial orientation as well as opportunities for professional development, networking, and mentorship. CNHED will also help selected members with their individual recruitment and training efforts.

I understand the benefits that a VISTA receives and my organization agrees to contribute up to \$1000 per month towards the cost of each VISTA's housing.

Assessment

If your project is approved, you will need to provide a series of assessments to CNHED. After you are approved but before the beginning of your VISTA project, CNHED will provide you with a pre-service assessment to help both you and CNHED establish a baseline for your program. From then on, supervisors will be required to provide brief progress reports and program

feedback to CNHED on a monthly basis. After the completion of the project, members are asked to provide a final assessment and sustainability report.

I agree to complete all assessments in a timely and thorough manner.

Training

VISTAs are required to attend a pre-service orientation (PSO) prior to starting their term of service. CNCS covers all costs associated with this training. Site Supervisors are also required to attend a training no less than three months prior to the project start date; if supervisors need to travel for orientation, all costs will be covered by CNCS. In addition, CNHED will provide a training and orientation for all VISTAs placed at member sites, and provide regular professional development sessions, educational site visits, and networking opportunities throughout the duration of their term of service.

I understand that the Site Supervisor will be required to attend training by CNCS.

I understand that any VISTAs placed with my organization will receive additional training from CNHED prior to starting service, and that they will have periodic opportunities for professional development during their year of service.

Criteria for a successful VISTA proposal

Successful VISTA projects are ambitious but reasonable, addressing the needs of low-income communities and building organizational or community capacity to continue meeting those needs after the end of a VISTA's term of service. They include a way to assess the area of need before, during, and after the project, including clear goals and an assessment of self-sufficiency. Successful projects also include a plan for training, supervising, and supporting the VISTA to achieve these goals, and indicate an understanding of appropriate roles for a VISTA and skills that an ideal candidate would have. VISTA projects involve the beneficiary community in every step of the process, with the end goal of sustainable solutions to poverty. For the full criteria, see the AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper Instructions.

I understand the criteria by which my proposal will be assessed.

Proposal

Please describe the unmet community need(s) you propose to address. Be sure to identify the beneficiary community, including why the need is not being met right now. Provide data to support your intervention, and describe how it will lead to the final anti-poverty outcome. Indicate how you will measure your success. *(300-400 words)*

Describe how a VISTA will grow capacity and build long-term sustainability. Outline a timeline of your approach. Indicate how this project complements other efforts in your organization or in the community. *(300-400 words)*

Describe your organization's capacity to support a VISTA. Outline your organization's experience with similar programming and describe how you will manage the project, from recruitment to assessment. Describe what resources – including physical resources such as desk space, phone, computer, and an organization-specific email – your organization can commit to a potential VISTA. *(200 words)*

Successful VISTA host organizations provide direct supervision and support to their VISTA members throughout the process. Please outline your plan for supporting day-to-day activities and indicate what professional development opportunities you can make available to a VISTA member. *(200 words)*

Site Supervisor Name and Title:

Site Supervisor Phone:

Site Supervisor Email: