



AmeriCorps VISTA Information Session

Texas State Office – tx@cns.gov



Objectives



- Learn what AmeriCorps VISTA is and what VISTA members do
- Understand the basic VISTA project application process and sponsor responsibilities

AmeriCorps VISTA is administered by the Corporation of National and Community Service

A 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 and Community Service and uniting Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and VISTA into one independent federal agency.

April 2009 – President Obama signs the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which reauthorizes CNCS and expands its programs

Organizational Chart

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 



**Foster Grandparents
RSVP
Senior Companions**



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

Focus Areas



- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families
- Disaster Services
- Environmental Stewardship

AmeriCorps VISTA Core Principles

- Anti-Poverty Focus
- Capacity Building
- Community Empowerment
- Sustainable Solutions

What AmeriCorps VISTA Does

- Lifts people out of poverty (rather than making poverty more tolerable)
- 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
- Provides an opportunity for Americans 18 and older to serve their communities

Who AmeriCorps VISTA Members Are

- U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents age 18 and older
- People willing to make a full time, one year commitment
- Individuals who have the specific skills or experience to successfully complete their assignment
- Local or national recruits

What VISTA Members Do

- Build volunteer management, leadership and training systems
- Build development systems ~ and do development work
- Create powerful partnerships with businesses, community leaders, and other stakeholders
- Expand current programs ~ in demographic, geographic, and/or programmatic scope
- Live at the level of the community they serve

What VISTA Members Do NOT Do

- Direct service
- Part-time service
- Proselytize or lobby
- International work
- Displace paid staff at the sponsoring organization
- Supervise employees or volunteers

Benefits AmeriCorps VISTA Members Receive

Type of Benefit	Amount Received	Purpose	Notes
Living Allowance	\$12,312 annually—paid out biweekly	Housing, utilities, food, etc.	Federal taxes withheld
Relocation Allowance	Not to exceed \$550 For members who are relocating more than 50 miles from current location	One-time payment for settling-in expenses	Federal taxes withheld
Health Benefits Program	Coverage begins once VISTA member is sworn in	Coverage for health issues related to illness or injury	Coverage is only for the member, not family. Telehealth services for mental health also available

Benefits AmeriCorps VISTA Members Receive

Type of Benefit	Amount Received	Purpose	Notes
Segal AmeriCorps Education Award	\$5,920 after successfully completing 12 months of service	Payment of student loans and/or tuition and other expenses related to higher education	Federal taxes withheld in the year used Valid for 7 years after service
End of Service Stipend	\$1,500 after successfully completing 12 months of service	Additional allowance for members who did not elect to receive the Education Award	Federal taxes and FICA withheld

Current projects in Texas: a snapshot

Big Country Area Health Ed. Center Abilene, TX	10 member VISTA project focused on meeting health care needs in West Texas, with a focus on rural communities.
Feeding Texas Statewide	Large, intermediary VISTA project focused on increasing the capacity of local food banks. VISTA members are placed in over 20 food banks in rural and urban communities across the state.
Literacy Coalition of Central Texas Statewide	Intermediary VISTA project with a focus of reducing illiteracy across the state.
City of Austin Austin, TX	City-sponsored project focused on increasing economic opportunity for all Austinites and ending veterans' homelessness

Becoming a Sponsor



- Strategize and decide:
 - Which needs in 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
- Submit a Concept Paper to the CNCS Texas State Office
- If approved, create and submit a full application
- If awarded, send VISTA supervisor to CNCS orientation and recruit members

Sponsor Responsibilities



- Develop and implement Action Plan and performance measures
- Identify a supervisor for the member(s)
- Create an Advisory Council comprised of at least 51% project beneficiaries
- Recruit and place VISTA members
- Provide work space, equipment and supplies to VISTA members

Sponsor Responsibilities, cont.

- Conduct On Site Orientation & Training
- Assist VISTA members with community entry
- Conduct member performance appraisals, track time and attendance, and perform other supervisory duties
- Connect VISTA member with training and development opportunities
- Document project achievements through Project Progress Reports

Questions?



TX@cns.gov

Corporation for National & Community Service

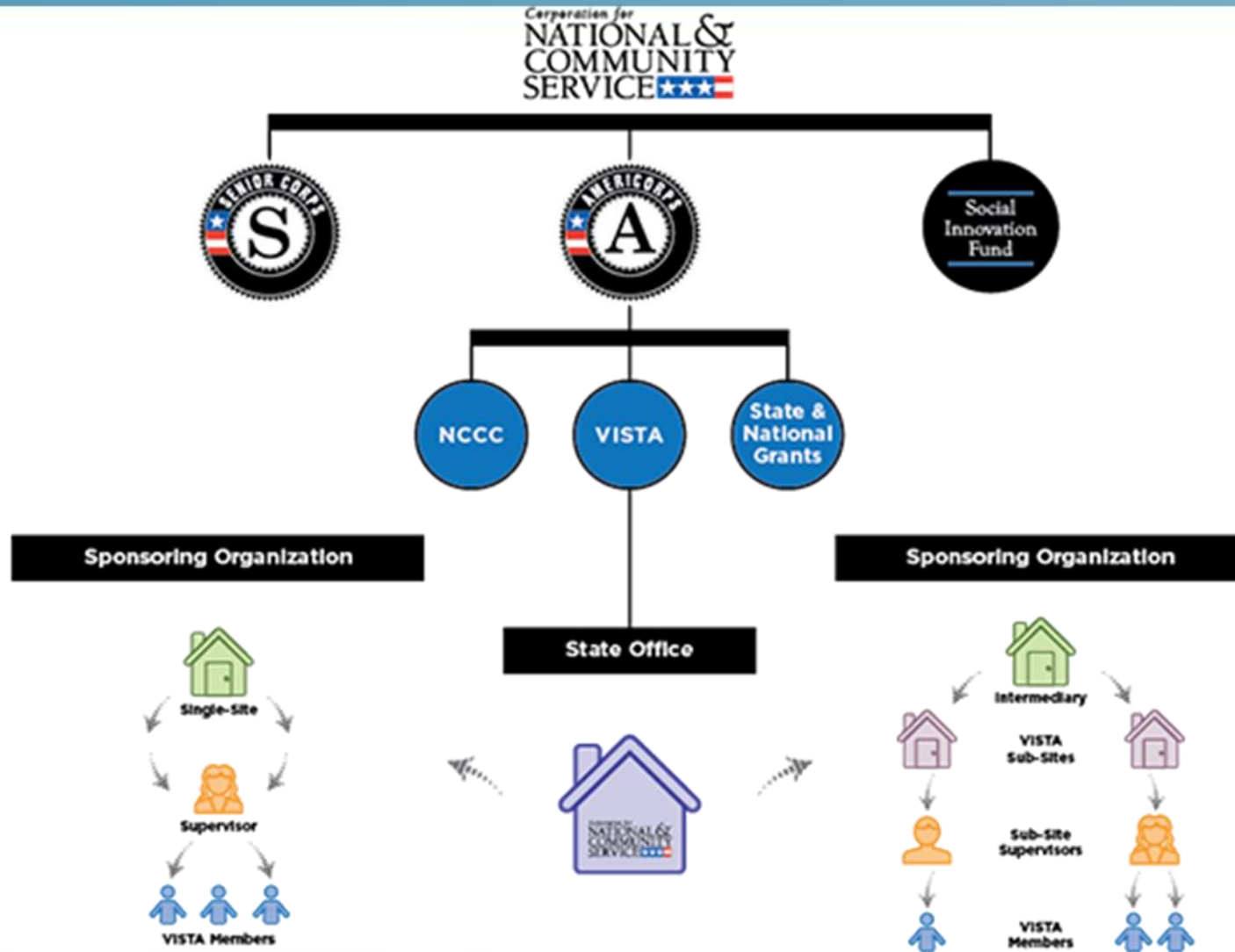
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Follow us on Twitter: @TX_CNCS



- Statewide
- Partner with Nonprofits and Government Agencies on Anti-Poverty, Capacity Building Projects
- Spans CNCS Focus Areas
 - Education
 - Economic Opportunity
 - Healthy Futures
 - Veterans and Military Families
 - Disaster Services*

What You Contribute:

- Your community contribution - \$8,700 per Member to the OneStar Foundation VISTA Project.
- Office space and equipment (desk, computer, internet, phone, and related resources)
- On-site supervision
- Position-specific training

What You Receive:

- Full-time Member(s) to serve with your organization for 40-45 hours/week for 12 months
- VISTA members receive a “living allowance” ranging between \$12,300 - \$13,300 during the year of service
- Additional VISTA Benefits (health care benefit, Education Award, Relocation Allowance, Noncompetitive Eligibility)
- Liability coverage for all members, under the federal employees compensation act and the federal torts claims act.
- Additional volunteers, grant revenue, and/or cash or in-kind donations that your VISTA Members generate for your organization.

How OneStar Supports:

- Assistance with recruiting and on-boarding VISTA Members
- Flexibility and accelerated timeline –
 - Project sponsors may apply for as few as one VISTA per year.
 - Project sponsors may be eligible to place VISTAs through OneStar within 3-5 months
- In person and virtual training in project management and leadership for members and site supervisor
- Payroll services: Members receive their paychecks directly from OneStar
- Assistance with grant reporting, oversight, and management to reduce risk to your organization

Estimated Total Value: \$25,000

How to apply:

- Schedule a call with OneStar to determine fit
- Complete application
- Submit any required clarifications
- 3-5 month timeline

Questions about AmeriCorps VISTA?

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AMERICORPS NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS (NCCC)

- 4 NCCC Campuses Nationally
- Southwest Region (Denver) Campus serves Texas and 7 other states.
- 10 month program
- Deployed in Teams (9-12 members)
- Deployed for **short-term periods of time (7-12 weeks)**



Corps Members



- All Members are 18 to 24 years old
- Apply nationally and hail from across the U.S.
- Have diverse backgrounds, skills, abilities, and interests
- Various education levels
- Interest in service, but are “generalists”
- A background check is completed for every member





The Team Leader

Each team has a Team Leader that works and lives with the team. Team leaders supervise the basic operations of the team:

- Administrative responsibilities and logistics
- Overall accountability
- Personnel issues
- Reporting requirements
- Team Leaders are not technical supervisors
- Heart and Soul of our program!



Service Projects



- ▶ Tutoring and/or mentoring youth in school or in after-school programs
- ▶ Prepping community gardens, educating youth & supporting food security initiatives
- ▶ Building and renovating homes or community centers
- ▶ Disaster Recovery Work (debris removal, drywall, flooring, insulation, etc).



Sponsoring Organization



Applicants who are awarded a team must provide:

- Orientation and training
- Detailed work plan (including inclement weather)
- Minimum of 40 hours of meaningful service (40-45 is preferable) for 6-12 weeks of service.
- Ongoing supervision and communication
- Materials and Tools
- Housing



**Reference the Request for Proposal for the application process.*



AMERICORPS NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS

Request For Proposals

2017-2018

AmeriCorps NCCC Southwest Region is requesting proposals for team-based, community service projects in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, focusing on five main program areas: Natural and Other Disasters, Infrastructure Improvement, Environmental Stewardship and Conservation, Energy Conservation, and Urban and Rural Development. Teams are available to support community and faith-based organizations, nonprofits, schools, local municipalities, federal and state entities, and Indian tribes; projects typically last 7-13 weeks.



THE AMERICORPS NCCC TEAM

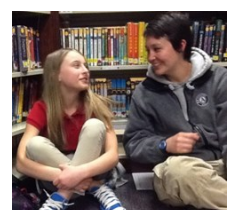
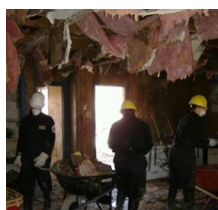
Members are young adults, 18 to 24 years old, who serve a full-time, ten month term, and represent a wide variety of socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, and educational backgrounds. They range from members with bachelor's degrees to those who are working on their high school equivalency diplomas. Team sizes vary throughout the service year and can range from 6-12 Corps Members; Corps Members are supervised by a NCCC Team Leader (TL). Each team has a Unit Leader overseeing the TL's work and project performance. Each team is provided one 15 passenger van; fuel covered by AmeriCorps NCCC. All Corps members are fully insured by Federal Tort Claims Act & Federal Employees Coverage Act.

SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS

- On-site support including technical oversight and direction, training, supplies, equipment, and a minimum of 15-20 hours of supervision.
- Housing for the team during the course of the project including bathroom and kitchen facilities and parking for one van.
- Service-learning support to help the team understand the community's needs and organization's work.
- NCCC project criteria includes additional sponsor requirements necessary to be granted a team as well as information on how to make your project application more competitive; ask your state's Assistant Program Director (APD) for more information (see p.2 for contact information).

HOUSING OPTIONS

Sponsors arrange for adequate housing or camping sites at locations such as: youth hostels, YMCA/YWCA facilities, church halls and community centers, vacant apartments in public housing facilities, college campuses, military facilities, Veterans Administration hospitals or other federal government facilities, campgrounds (weather and climate permitting), rescue missions, national, state and local parks.



HOW TO REQUEST AN AMERICORPS NCCC TEAM

1. Submit a completed NCCC Project Concept Form*, a two-page document that seeks a brief overview of the applying organization and its tentative project plan.
***ALL applicants must submit a Project Concept Form.**
2. Upon review of this document, NCCC will invite the organization to submit a full application or request additional information.
3. The completed Project Application may be e-mailed to the appropriate Assistant Program Director (APD) for your state (contact information listed below).
4. Proposals are accepted, reviewed, and approved with consideration for compelling need, geographic distribution, availability of teams, and costs related to team deployment.

2017-2018: SERVICE TIMELINE			
Service Dates	Concept Form Deadline	Application Deadline	Notification
Nov. 3 – Dec. 19, 2017	Jul. 14, 2017	Aug. 25, 2017	Week of Sept. 25, 2017
Jan. 5 – Mar. 31, 2018*	Sep. 15, 2017	Oct. 27, 2017	Week of Nov. 27, 2017
Feb. 14 – Mar. 31, 2018*			
Apr. 7 – July 7, 2018*	Dec. 19, 2017	Jan. 30, 2018	Week of Mar. 5, 2018
July 21 – Oct. 13, 2018*	Apr. 2, 2018	May 14, 2018	Week of June 18, 2018

**NCCC may accommodate team requests for a shorter time period.*

Please direct concept forms and applications to the APD responsible for project development in your state; the APD for your state will support you with questions and guide you through the application process.

ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado

Geoffrey Hickox: (202) 815-5783, ghickox@cns.gov

Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico

Sarah Lyke: (202) 355-2198, slyke@cns.gov

Oklahoma, Texas

Chris Neukom: (202) 391-1031, cneukom@cns.gov

Applications may be submitted electronically to the email address above or by mail.