



Welcome to

Navigating Your Year of Service

Corporation for
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE 



Dial:

Passcode:

Today's Hosts



Jessica Burch
Training Coordinator
AmeriCorps VISTA



Ericc Powell
Training Coordinator
AmeriCorps VISTA

Where Are You Serving?



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-
-
- Aa
-
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-
-
-



Poll: What benefits do you want to learn more about?

Choose all that apply:

- Healthcare
- Living Allowance
- Education Award
- Loan Forbearance/Deferment
- Other? Post in Chat Panel



Session Outcomes

- By the end of the session, you will be able to:
 - Identify the VISTA benefits that will help you serve successfully
 - Find information and contact details for your VISTA benefits
 - Describe key terms and conditions of VISTA service

Online Support

vistacampus.gov



AmeriCorps AmeriCorps VISTA AmeriCorps NCCC

The 2014 tax forms will be mailed by 1/31/2015.

CNCS recommends that you use Internet Explorer version 7 or above when accessing My AmeriCorps. Other browsers have been shown to cause issues for users.

my.americorps.gov



VISTA *Campus*

LOG IN

ABOUT VISTA

LIFE AS A VISTA

THE WORK

CONNECT & LEARN

LEADERS

SUPERVISORS

Life as a VISTA

- Pre-Service
- In Service
- After VISTA
- Alumni

- Benefits
- Member Handbook
- Managing Your Year
- Finding Help
- Impact App



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The Work

- Working with Volunteers
- Communication & Marketing
- VISTA Program Area Resources
 - Poverty in America
 - Workplace & Service Site
 - Building Partnerships
 - Community Development
 - Project Management
- Fundraising
- Other



VISTA *Campus*

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Connect & Learn

- Forums
- VISTA Blend
- Webinars
- VISTA Map
- Events Calendar

Webinars for VISTAs

VISTACampus.gov

- Planning Your Professional Development
 - November 30th
- Monthly webinars on
 - Life as a VISTA
 - The Work
- Events Calendar

VISTA Webinars

Upcoming VISTA Webinars

When you register for a webinar, you will receive a confirmation email. Please keep this information to sign in at the time of the webinar. If you have not used Adobe Connect before, you can [test your connection here](#).

Have Questions? We're here to help. Email us at VISTAwebinars@cns.gov

Webinars on Life as a VISTA

[Living on the Living Allowance](#)

Gain strategies for saving money and managing a tight budget.

[Using the Education Award and Managing Student Loans](#)

Learn about the ways the Segal Education Award can be used, and gain strategies for minimizing tax liability. Get answers to your questions about managing student loans.

[Understanding Your Healthcare Options](#)

This webinar explores options now available to you through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the AmeriCorps Healthcare Benefit (commonly known as Seven Corners) coverage.

[Resume Writing: How Your Service Experience Can Land You a Job](#)

Discover what gets noticed on a resume and how to translate what you've done as a VISTA.

The VISTA Blend

The VISTA Blend: Online Courses for College Credit



Learn more, serve better

The VISTA Blend is a series of online courses designed specifically for VISTAs in service. Offerings include **Volunteer Mobilization** and **Resource Development: Fundraising and Grant Writing** — each presented at different times of the year.



Resource Development: Fundraising and Grant Writing

Course dates: February 2 - April 12, 2015
Application period: January 5 - January 25, 2015

Strengthen your site's ability to raise money by learning donor communications, grant writing, and event planning skills. Students receive a free one-month subscription to a national grants database.

Apply Now!



Volunteer Mobilization

Course dates: February 2 - April 12, 2015
Application period: January 5 - January 25, 2015

Develop strategies and tools for recruiting, screening, and training volunteers to help build a robust volunteer program at your site. For those developing a program from scratch or working with volunteers for the first time, this course is for you.

Apply Now!



Course offerings rotate during the year, and **college credit is available**. However, you may only take one course at a time.

Questions? [Find your answers here.](#)

To contact the VISTA Blend registrar, email: VISTAblend@educationnorthwest.org.

For information about future course offerings and schedules, [sign up for email notification here.](#)

The Member Handbook

Chapter 1: Background & Purpose

VISTA Member Handbook

Chapter 1: Background & Purpose

Overview of Roles

Chapter 2: Overview of Your Year in AmeriCorps VISTA

Chapter 3: Working at Your Project

Chapter 4: Training & Technical Assistance

Chapter 5: Financial Support

Chapter 6: Education Benefits

Chapter 7: Travel & Transportation Support

Chapter 8: Health Benefit and Health Care Support

Chapter 9: Leave Benefits

Chapter 10: AmeriCorps VISTA Leader

Chapter 11: End of Service

Chapter 12: Administrative Policies

Chapter 13: Other Terms & Conditions of Service

Chapter 14: Basic Laws & Federal Regulations

Appendices

Image Gallery

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Authorized originally in 1964 by the Economic Opportunity Act, the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program provides full-time volunteers to support the efforts of nonprofit organizations and public agencies working to fight poverty in low-income communities. Through the years, more than 180,000 individuals have served in VISTA on thousands of local projects, committing at least one year of full-time service to poor communities in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

In July 1971, the VISTA program was transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to ACTION, a newly created federal volunteer agency. Other volunteer programs administered by ACTION included the Foster Grandparent Program, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), and the Senior Companion Program. With the enactment of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service was established, and all ACTION programs were transferred to the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Corporation oversees a wide range of national service initiatives, including Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, and AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that annually engages more than 70,000 Americans in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. In 1994, VISTA joined this network and became AmeriCorps VISTA. The purpose of VISTA, as authorized in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) of 1973, as amended, is:

To strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate and alleviate poverty ... in the United States by encouraging and enabling persons from all walks of life, all geographic areas, and all age groups, including low-income individuals ... to perform meaningful and constructive volunteer service in agencies, institutions, and situations where the application of human talent and dedication may assist in the solution of poverty and poverty related problems.

The Domestic Volunteer Service Act describes three specific objectives of the program to achieve this purpose:

1. To strengthen local agencies and organizations to carry out the purpose of the program
2. To encourage volunteer service at the local level
3. To generate the commitment of private sector resources

The AmeriCorps VISTA program endorses three basic assumptions:



Benefits of Service

Benefits of Service



Your
VISTA
Benefits

Living Allowance | End-of-Service Award | Life Insurance | Health Coverage | Child Care | Travel | Reduction of Education Costs | Leave | Professional
Development | Leaders Program | Alumni Network

Show Summer Associate Benefits Only

Living Allowance

- Your first payment will be on **Friday, 11/18/16**
- You are paid every two weeks (bi-weekly)
- Federal taxes are withheld from your pay, state taxes are not
- Go to your My.AmeriCorps.gov account to:
 - Check your living allowance statements
 - Under “My Living Allowance” tab

Living Allowance

Information Resources

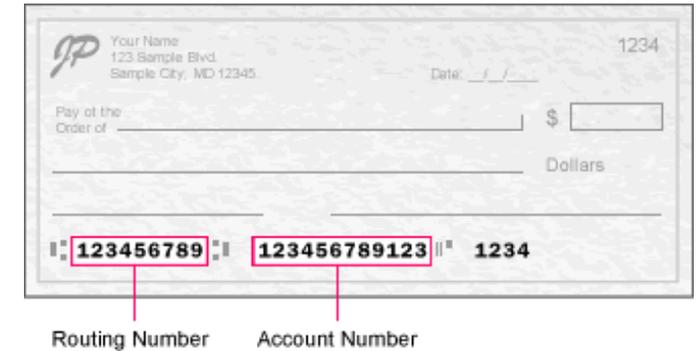
Resources

For more information on the living allowance and suggestions for living on a limited budget, explore these useful resources:

- [Resources for Living on the Living Allowance](#)
- [Saving Money on Health Care](#)
- [Budget Calculator](#)
- [Living Allowance Calendar and Sample Statement](#)
- [VISTA Living Allowance Rates](#)
- [Living on the Living Allowance \(Course\)](#)
- [Living on the Living Allowance \(Webinar for VISTAs\)](#) - includes tips generated by VISTA members during the session.
- [Living Allowance" in Chapter 5 of Member Handbook](#)

Direct Deposit

- Incorrect bank info will result in a 2-week delay in getting paid
- Get routing and account numbers from your checks or online account
- Call your bank to confirm



→ →
NOT your account
or routing number.



Public Assistance Protection

- For public assistance in place prior to VISTA enrollment
 - benefits remain the same
- For new benefits, VISTA living allowance
 - is not factored in for most public assistance
 - is factored in for SNAP eligibility
- When applying for assistance, print service letters from my.americorps.gov

Living Allowance Q&A

- To ask a question verbally, press *1
- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask “All Panelists”

The screenshot shows a user interface with three main sections: 'Participants (2)', 'Chat', and 'Q&A'. The 'Q&A' section is expanded, showing a dropdown menu with 'All (0)' selected. At the bottom, there is a text input field with a dropdown menu set to 'All Panelists' and a 'Send' button. Red circles highlight the 'Q&A' menu item and the 'All Panelists' dropdown.

VISTA & Affordable Care Act

- The ACA pertains to everyone, including VISTAs
- You are required to have insurance unless you are legally exempt
- VISTA offers a safety net health benefit



VISTA Healthcare Benefit

If you're **insured**, VISTA reimburses up to **\$6,850 for out-of-pocket expenses**

If you're **legally exempt**, VISTA provides a **health plan**

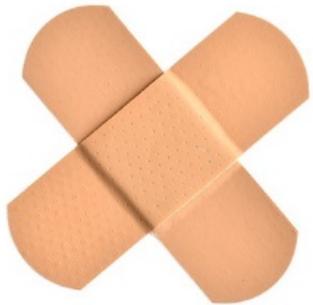
Both the allowance and the plan are administered by

International Medical Group (IMG)

americorpsvista.imglobal.com

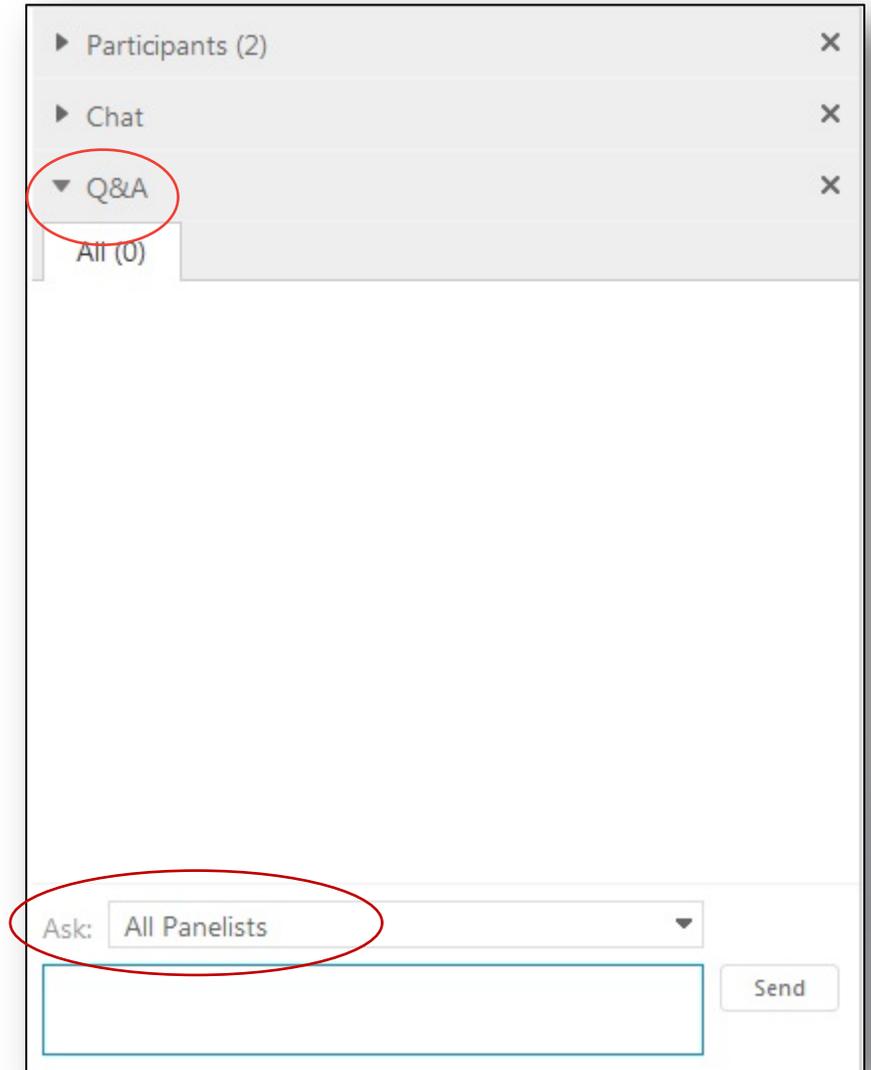
www.healthcare.gov

www.vistacampus.gov/healthcare



Healthcare Q&A

- To ask a question verbally, press *1
- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask “All Panelists”



End-of-Service Benefit

Upon completing your service term:



Education Award (\$5,815)

(Education Award Match, visit www.nationalservice.gov , Search “Matching Institutions”)

OR

Cash stipend (\$1,500)



****Remember:** If you selected the Education Award now and want to change to the cash stipend you can at anytime prior to your 10th month of service. If you have selected the cash stipend, you are unable to change your selection**

Loan Forbearance & Deferment

If you select the Education Award:

- **Loan Forbearance**

- Temporary postponement of principal federally backed loan payments
- Interest accrues, but Trust pays at completion

If you select the End-of-Service Stipend:

- **Loan Deferment**

- Postponement of monthly loan payments
- Set up directly with lender

More Student Loan Help

- Income-Based Repayment
 - Adjusts monthly payments based on income
 - Payments could be as low as \$0
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)
 - Work in public service jobs for 10 years
 - Make 120 qualified on-time loan payments during that time
 - At completion, federal loan balance is forgiven



Education Award

More info:

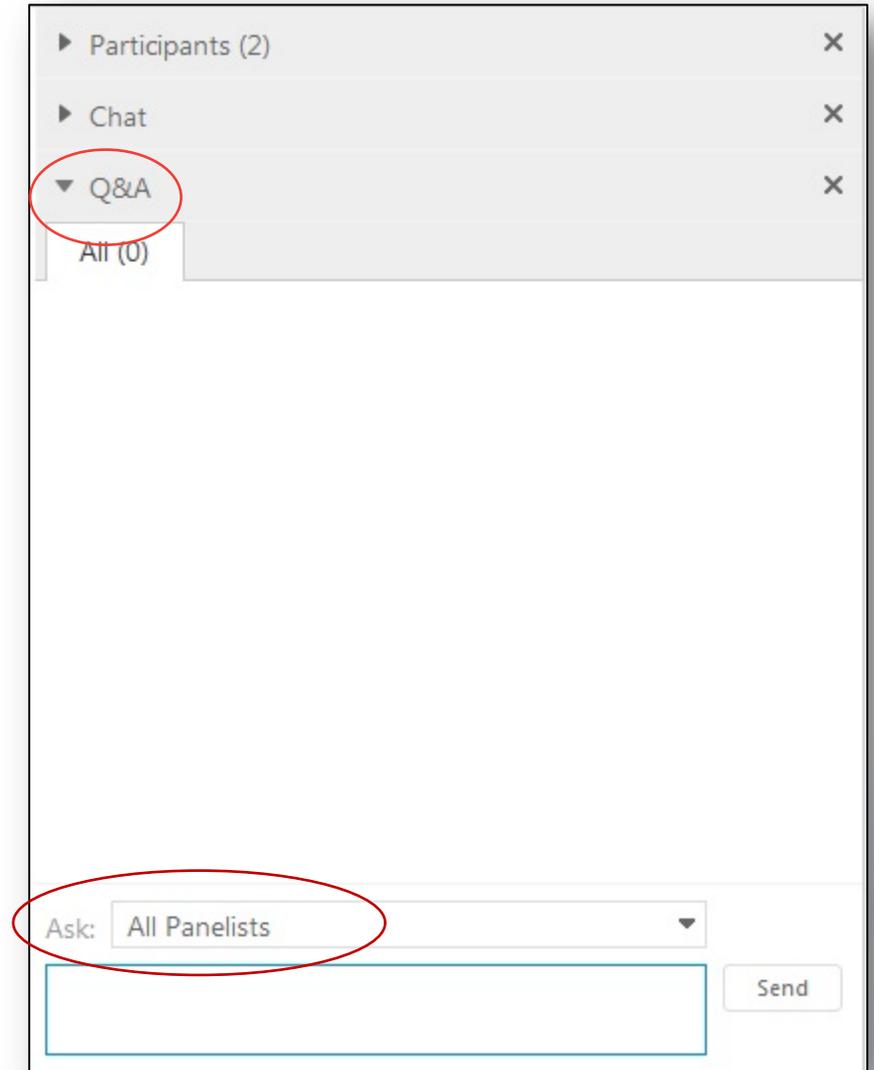
nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward

Forbearance requests:

my.americorps.gov

Education and Loan Q&A

- To ask a question verbally, press *1
- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask “All Panelists”





HOME

My AmeriCorps

- Applicant Home
- My Living Allowance
- My Tax Statements
- My In-Service Benefits
- My Service Letter
- My Trainee Registration Profile
- End of Service Benefit Selection
- Events
- Search Events
- My Resources
- Contact My AmeriCorps

Edit

- Applicant Home
- My Living Allowance
- My Tax Statements
- My In-Service Benefits
- My Service Letter
- My Trainee Registration Profile
- End of Service Benefit Selection
- Events
- Search Events
- My Resources
- Contact My AmeriCorps

VISTA

Volunteers In Service To America

ss:

er:
ne Number:

[Change Password](#)
[Edit My Contact Information](#)

	<u>Service Start</u>	<u>Service End</u>
CA	11/13/2010	11/12/2011

More VISTA Benefits Questions?

Contact the VMSU via the
National Service Hotline

800-942-2677

or

questions.nationalservice.gov

Terms and Conditions

VISTA Terms and Conditions

Welcome to VISTA Terms and Conditions

As a VISTA member, you'll gain experience, a wide range of benefits, such as a living allowance, health care, financial help with school or student loans, and a lot more. You'll also have to adhere to a few terms and conditions while you serve.

This course will help you make sense of the requirements. Once you've completed it, you can print a copy of *the Terms and Conditions Acceptance Form* to bring to Pre-Service Orientation (PSO).

Please note that you must be logged in to the Campus for your completion of this required course to be recorded.



Q: I can voice my political opinion using social media where I am identified as an AmeriCorps VISTA member.

Yes

No

Q: I can voice my political opinion using social media where I am identified as an AmeriCorps VISTA member.

Yes, but not while serving at your site or using any equipment at your site.

You cannot represent yourself as a spokesperson for AmeriCorps, VISTA, CNCS, or your sponsor.

Q: I can demonstrate in a political rally

Yes

No

Q: I can demonstrate in a political rally

Yes, as long as you are not identified as a VISTA or perceived to be a VISTA.

Q: I can ask people to donate money to a partisan political candidate, as long as it's on my own time and I'm not identified as a VISTA.

Yes

No

Q: I can ask people to donate money to a partisan political candidate, as long as it's on my own time and I'm not identified as a VISTA.

No, you cannot raise money on behalf of a partisan candidate at any time during your VISTA year.

Q: I can join my colleagues in prayer at my service site.

Yes

No

Q: I can join my colleagues in prayer at my service site.

Yes, you can. But you can't proselytize or ask people to pray with you.

Also, while your VAD cannot ask you to pray, you can practice your religion.

Q: I can have outside employment and/or earn additional income while serving as a VISTA member

Yes

No

Q: I can have outside employment and/or earn additional income while serving as a VISTA member

Yes as long as:

- It does not conflict with your VISTA service
- You are not employed by your sponsor
- Your Supervisor approves

www.vistacampus.gov/resources/outside-employment-policy

Need a Refresher?

- VISTA Campus
 - Terms and Conditions Course
 - VISTA Member Handbook
 - Chapter 14: Basic Laws & Federal Regulations



Rights & Responsibilities

Red flags:

- Discrimination
- Harassment

CNCS Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness

Phone: 202-606-7503

Email: eo@cns.gov

Rights & Responsibilities

Red flags:

- Replacing staff or serving as administrative assistant
- Assignments unrelated to the VAD
- Direct service

CNCS Office of Inspector General

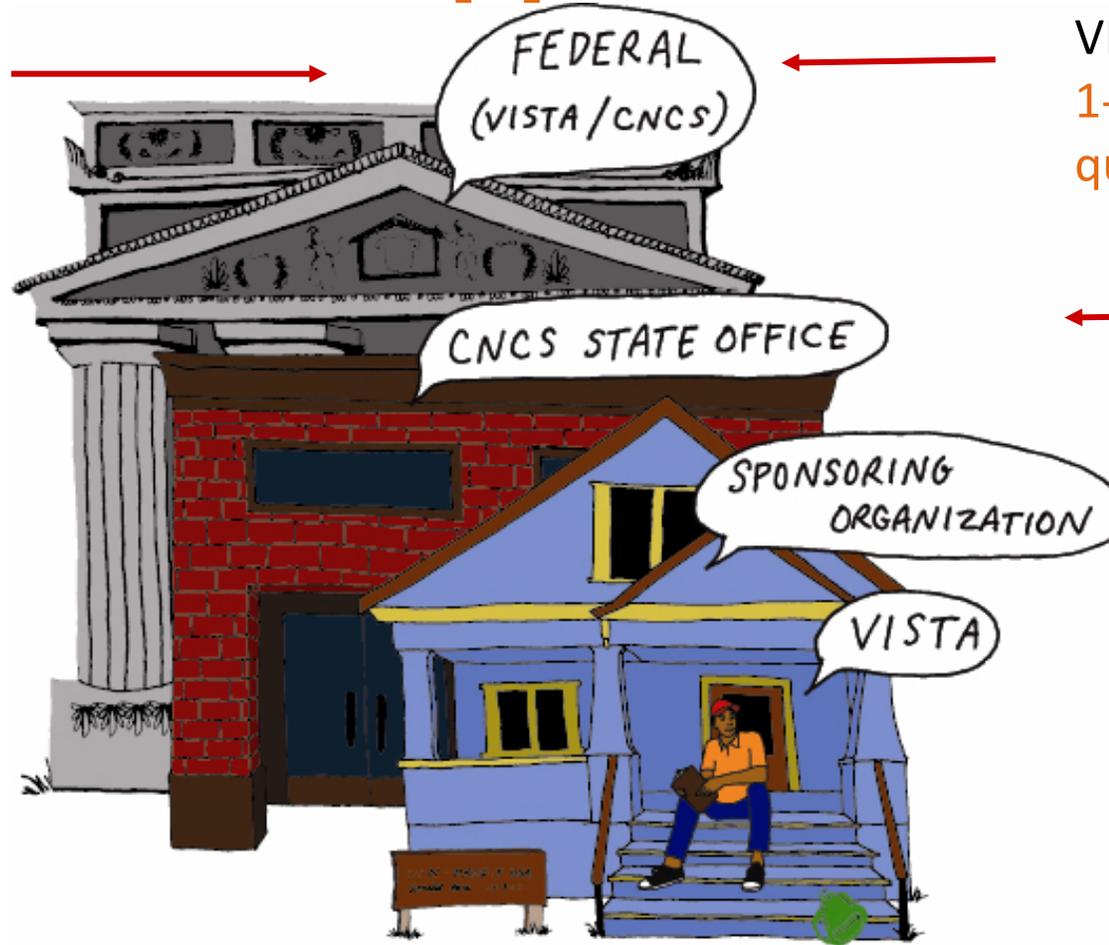
Phone: 800-452-8210

Email: hotline@cncsoig.gov

Website: www.cncsoig.gov

Where to Get Support

vistacampus.gov
and
my.americorps.gov



VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) –
[1-800-942-2677](tel:1-800-942-2677) or
questions.nationalservice.gov

State Office –
List of contacts at cns.gov

Supervisor or VISTA leader
(if you have one)

Show Your VISTA Pride

- Add the VISTA logo to your business cards and signature
- Decorate your space with VISTA gear
- Share your VISTA photos and stories on social media
- Get in touch with local alumni
- Attend or arrange a VISTA MeetUp
- Wear your VISTA Polo when out in your community



Order Your VISTA Polo!

VISTA polo and lapel pin

- Watch for email with ordering instructions
- Items need to be sent to your project site
 - No P.O. Boxes
- Polos are men's cut
 - Polos tend to run a little big
 - Please take this into account when ordering



Reminders and Next Steps

- Log in to your online classroom
- Review your benefits
- Make a Healthcare benefit selection
- Get fingerprinted
 - And submit criminal history questionnaire (if applicable)

What's next

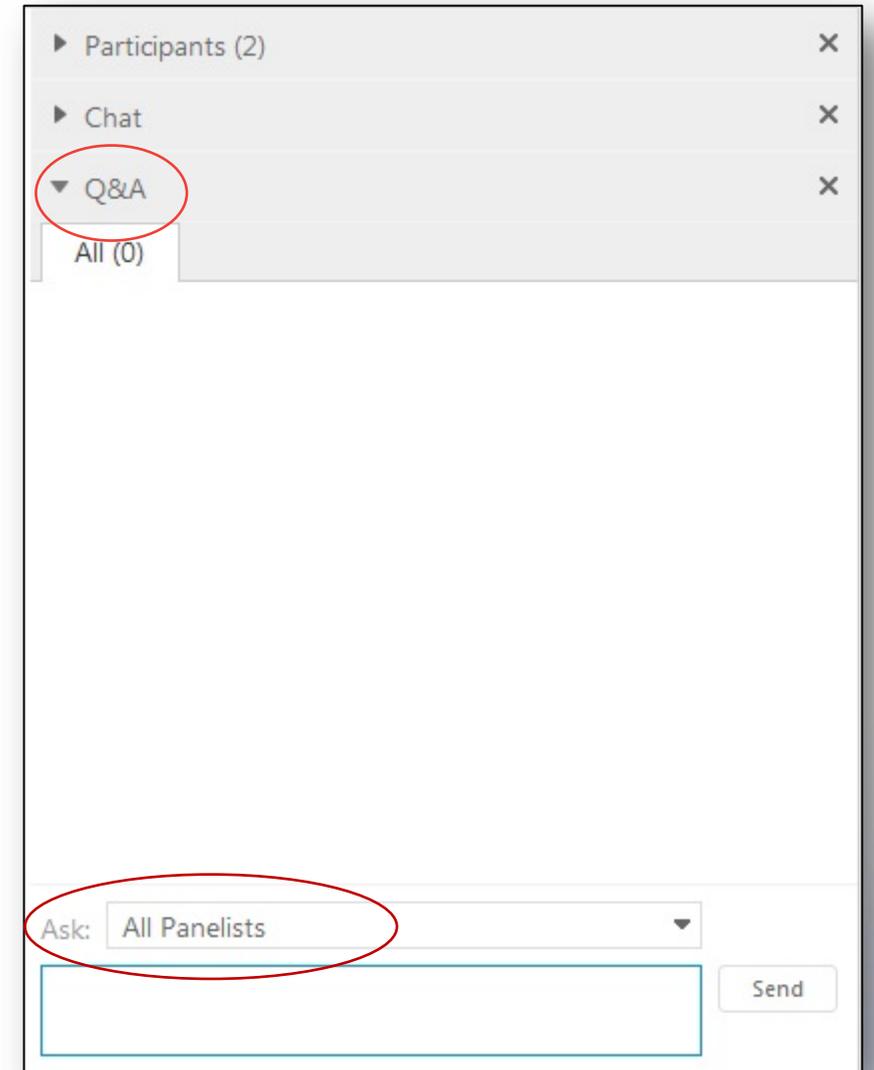
- Sunday, November 6th – Minute Intro, How Poverty Is Measured, and VAD Worksheet due
- Wednesday, November 9th, 3pm ET – Virtual Meet-Up 1
- Sunday, November 13th – OSOT Inventory due

Evaluation

- Please take a few moments to share your feedback through the quick poll on the right side of the screen.
- How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?

Q&A

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“Your pay will be low; the conditions of your labor will often be difficult. But you will have the satisfaction of leading a great national effort, and you will have the ultimate reward which comes to those who serve their nation and who serve their fellow man.”

-Lyndon Johnson, December 12, 1964

