



AmeriCorps VISTA
250 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20525
NationalService.gov/VISTA

Dear VISTA Sponsors and Supervisors,

Greetings from the AmeriCorps VISTA Team!

All AmeriCorps VISTA members and Leaders are required to undergo a criminal history background investigation. This includes a search of the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public website and an FBI criminal history check, which requires members to submit fingerprints.

AmeriCorps VISTA members are required to get fingerprinted independently. Sponsors are asked to assist members in completing this requirement.

- Sponsors will receive fingerprint kits from State Offices and will distribute the kits to their members.
- Members must receive fingerprint kits **no later than the first day of service** and submit the completed fingerprint cards to AmeriCorps VISTA HQ.
- VISTA HQ must receive the completed cards by the **5th Friday of service**
- Members who do not submit fingerprints by the deadline will be **terminated from service**.

Fingerprint Kits include:

- Two fingerprint cards
- Instructions for obtaining fingerprinting services and completing the fingerprint cards
- Fingerprint Submission FAQ
- Criminal History Questionnaire
 - This form is a final opportunity for members to disclose criminal history, if it was not listed on the application. **Failure to disclose may result in the member's termination of service.**

Sponsors will receive pre-addressed/pre-paid UPS Next Day Air labels from their State Office.

- Members are directed to contact their supervisor for the labels.
- You will receive several UPS labels. Instead of giving each member a UPS label, you should batch and send completed fingerprint cards in one mailing (or as few mailings as possible).

A minor offense with no relation to member assignment will generally not bar members from service. Should the criminal history check process show that a member is not eligible to serve in the AmeriCorps VISTA program, or fails to disclose criminal history, the member may be terminated from service and all service benefits forfeited. Sponsors are encouraged to conduct their own criminal history checks, if/as appropriate.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions please email VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov.

Sincerely,

The AmeriCorps VISTA Team

Sponsor/Supervisor Fingerprint Submission FAQs

How do you suggest we go about distributing fingering cards? Any tips?

- Great question! We recommend handling the fingerprinting process in two ways:
 - **On site option:** On the first day of service, members receive fingerprint cards and get fingerprinted together as a group as part of their training during work hours (a fingerprint field trip). By close of business on the first day of service, the sponsor collects all fingerprint cards and sends them to AmeriCorps VISTA HQ.
 - **Off-site option:** Members receive fingerprint cards in advance of service and are responsible for getting fingerprinted on their own. Members arrive on the first day of service with fingerprint cards completed and the sponsor collects all fingerprint cards and sends them to AmeriCorps VISTA HQ by COB on the first day of service.

Who can I contact for more information?

- Email VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov

Where can I find the member instructions, forms and member FAQs?

- All materials are available on the VISTA campus: <http://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/criminal-history-checks-and-fingerprinting>

Can members request a fingerprint card deadline extension?

- Yes, if members are unable to submit the fingerprints by the deadline, they will need to send an email to VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov **and** copy their supervisor/sponsor no later than **the 3rd Friday of service** with the following information:
 - Name
 - NSPID
 - Service start date
 - Extension request reason
 - Date AmeriCorps VISTA HQ can expect the fingerprints
- Type “Fingerprint Extension Request_FirstAndLastName_ NSPID” in the subject line.

What is NSPID?

- It is an ID number assigned to each national service participant and can be found on the MyAmeriCorps member profile and in eGrants.

Will members be reimbursed for the cost of fingerprinting?

- All members, who have been sworn in, will receive a \$25 fingerprint subsidy in their first living allowance to offset the cost of fingerprinting. This is a onetime subsidy.

How can I order more UPS labels or fingerprint cards?

- Send an email to your State Office with the request and type “Fingerprint Kit Supply Request_Grant Number” in the subject line; be sure to include the number of kits needed.

What if my member did not turn in their fingerprint card by the deadline?

- Members will get multiple reminders to turn in their fingerprint cards. Members who disregard the reminders, do not request an extension and fail to turn in their fingerprint cards will be terminated from service.

How long does this process take?

- The criminal history check process should take no longer than eight weeks from submission of the completed cards to AmeriCorps VISTA HQ. An AmeriCorps VISTA representative may contact a member if clarification/follow up is needed. Otherwise, members may assume that no contact means that the member is cleared for service.

Will members who attend PSO in person be fingerprinted on site?

- No, however you will be notified if that changes.

Can I get access to the member's criminal history records?

- No. AmeriCorps VISTA is legally unable to share member criminal history records with sponsors.

What if a member discloses a criminal history and I am uncomfortable keeping the member on board?

- Contact your State Office.

What criminal history check requirements do grant-funded staff need to observe?

- Sponsors that receive operation/program grants or support grants (Supervision and Transportation (S&T)) to fund staff need to follow all statutory requirements (42 U.S.C. §12645g) and regulatory requirements (45 CFR §2540.200 through §2540.207). More resources can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check>