



AmeriCorps*VISTA

The mission of AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) has not changed since mandated by Congress in 1964, “*AmeriCorps*VISTA builds permanent infrastructure in non-profit organizations to help them more effectively bring individuals and communities out of poverty.*” For over 40 years members have actively served in low-income areas by mobilizing people, businesses and organizations with the goal of creating sustainable healthy communities.

AmeriCorps*VISTAs members leverage human, financial, and material resources to increase the capacity of thousands of low-income areas across the country to address challenges and improve their lives and communities.

Summer Associates Program Service

The VISTA Summer Associate program is a short-term service opportunity.

The Summer Associate program enhances an existing VISTA project by providing individuals that will participate for 8 to 10 weeks, alongside year-round VISTAs, in an intensive level of summer service. During service, Summer Associates are available to the community on a full-time basis which is described by Congress as “*24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*” This means that a Summer Associate should be available as deemed necessary by the sponsoring agency, for the project, without regard to standard working hours.

As a Summer Associate, your contributions will have an actual and credible impact on those being served. The Project Supervisor will provide Summer Associates with a work plan which will detail the specific project and contribution.

Overview of Benefits and Support

In addition to making a credible effort to help people and communities escape poverty, Summer Associates receive benefits and support during and after successful completion of summer service.

As a Summer Associate, you are eligible to receive:

- A \$1,194.71 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or a minimum of approximately \$250 cash stipend for 8 weeks of service
- On-site orientation and training
- A living allowance to cover necessities during service
- AmeriCorps eCommunity and Alumni Network participation

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

AmeriCorps*VISTA Summer Associates are eligible to receive a \$1,194.71 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. The non-transferable award may be used at a qualifying educational institution (Title IV schools) or used to repay federal government backed student loans. This award counts towards the total value of two full-time education awards, that by law, a person can receive for AmeriCorps service in a lifetime. For more information, please visit www.americorps.gov.

Finances

AmeriCorps*VISTA Summer Associate service is a short-term service opportunity; it is not employment. The Summer Associates receive a small subsistence allowance and should evaluate

their financial situation to ensure that they are able to complete the full summer term. The Associate cannot have a part-time job or be employed in any other paid position during the term of service.

Subsistence/Living Allowance

The Corporation for National and Community Services provides a living allowance to cover the cost of food, housing, and other basic necessities during service. The allowance is low because a Summer Associate is expected to live at approximately the same economic level as the people in which they serve.

Summer Associates receive the living allowance every two weeks. While federal taxes are deducted from this allowance, state and social security (FICA) taxes are not deducted and become the responsibility of the Summer Associate. The allowance is deposited directly into the Summer Associate's bank account.

Earned Income Credit

The earned income credit (EITC) is a tax credit for certain people who work and have low wages. If you are eligible for this credit, it would reduce the amount of tax you owe the Federal government. The EITC may also give you a refund even if you owe no tax. Refer to www.irs.gov for more information.

Income Exclusion

The living allowance of Summer Associates cannot be used in calculating benefits for public assistance programs if the Associate was eligible for and/or receiving benefits **prior** to joining AmeriCorps*VISTA.

Delinquent Federal Debt

The U.S. Treasury Department collects delinquent debt owed through The Treasury Offset Program. This program automatically reduces amounts of federal payments, including the subsistence/living allowance and travel reimbursements, made to individuals who have delinquent federal debt. The reduced payment offsets the debt. For more information, visit www.fms.treas.gov.

Other Allowances

Summer Associates do not receive childcare support, relocation allowances, health benefits, or life insurance.

Leave

Annual and Sick Leave

Due to the short-term nature of this opportunity, there is no paid annual or sick leave.

Emergency Leave

- Summer Associates are eligible for leave up to five workdays for a death or critical illness in the immediate family; additional time requires the approval of the State Program Director
- Summer Associates are subject to jury duty; if called, the time spent on jury duty will not be counted against the term of service or educational award

Prohibitions and Limitations of Service

Full and Part-Time Employment is Prohibited

Summer Associate service requires a full immersion in the project and community.

Educational Courses

As a VISTA you are allowed to attend class(es) as long as your studies do not interfere with your VISTA responsibilities. You and your supervisor will need to determine whether or not the class(es) will detract from your commitment to the VISTA project. Such enrollment in school requires approval from your supervisor.

Religious and Political Activities

Summer Associates may not use the VISTA title or authority while participating, influencing, or attending a political activity. A VISTA may not participate in political activities where she/he could be identified or apparently identified as an AmeriCorps*VISTA member.

Summer Associates may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any other religious activity as part of their AmeriCorps*VISTA duties that would be perceived as part of their duties by members of the community in which they serve.

Other Compensation

AmeriCorps*VISTA Summer Associates and project sponsors are prohibited from requesting or receiving any compensation for the services of members.

Termination

Only the Corporation State Office can terminate or suspend a Summer Associate. Supervisors can request that an associate be removed from their project. There are different types of termination.

Early Termination for Cause

Service can be terminated for a variety of reasons to include: conviction of a criminal offense, failure or refusal to perform prescribed project duties, and involvement in activities that substantially interfere with the performance of project duties.

Medical Termination

If a Summer Associate is unable to resume project duties because of a medical condition, or if it reasonably appears that they are not able to resume project duties, they are subject to medical termination. The Associate will be given the opportunity to resign from service in lieu of termination.

Injuries While Performing Service

In the event that a Summer Associate is injured while performing AmeriCorps*VISTA duties, they should;

- Notify the state office and sponsoring agency immediately
- Obtain the CA-1 (Notice of Traumatic Injury) or CA-2 (Notice of Occupational Disease or Illness) from the state office and complete the form
- Return the form to the state office
- Use your personal health plan for immediate care

For More Information

The AmeriCorps*VISTA website, www.americorps.gov, offers a wealth of information and contacts to support Summer Associates before, during and after your service.

For a comprehensive source of information about all Corporation for National and Community Service programs visit www.nationalservice.org.

For information specific to a project or state, contact the Corporation State Office (contact information can be found on the AmeriCorps*VISTA website.)