

Request for Proposal <<Insert year>> Program Year

Application Due Date

<<Insert deadline>>

<<Insert program & VISTA logo>>

<<Insert contact info>>

Timeline <<Adapt to your own schedule>>

- <<Insert date>> Request for Proposal (RFP) available to interested applicants.
- <<Insert date(s)>> Information Session(s) (optional)
- <<Insert date>> **Application materials due by 5:00 p.m.**
- <<Insert date>> Award notification to applicants (by email)
- <<Insert date(s)>> Mandatory VISTA site supervisor training (attend one of these dates)
- <<Insert date>> VISTA member recruited
- <<Insert date>> Mandatory VISTA site supervisor training
- <<Insert date(s)>> Pre-Service Orientation for VISTA member
- <<Insert date>> VISTA member starts at placement sites

Program Overview

<<Insert program specific information, including mission and region>>

What is AmeriCorps*VISTA? <<Check to make sure below info is current>>

The AmeriCorps*VISTA program has been addressing the needs of impoverished communities since 1965. VISTA members work with local and national nonprofit groups, faith based organizations and public agencies. Their goal is to develop permanent infrastructure that strengthens programs which are focused on helping communities out of poverty.

Mission: VISTA builds capacity in non-profit organizations and communities to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

Core Principles:

- **Anti-Poverty Focus** – Any non-profit organization, educational institution, tribal or public agency with a program that is poverty-related in scope can apply to sponsor a VISTA project. The project's goal addresses helping individuals and communities out of poverty, not simply making it more sustainable.
- **Capacity Building** – VISTA members do not provide direct service to low-income individuals, but rather work to increase the capacity of organizations. Through activities such as fundraising, developing community volunteer systems, outreach and grant writing, VISTA members mobilize local resources to achieve lasting solutions.
- **Sustainable Solutions** – VISTA members are a short-term resource to help sponsoring organizations address a new or existing program area related to their mission. VISTA's help build the capacity of an organization with the intention of creating a sustainable program over time, allowing the host site to no longer depend upon the use of VISTA resources.

Who are AmeriCorps*VISTA members? <<Adapt to fit your program, update information>>

VISTA members who serve with us come from across the region, state and country. They serve full time (40 hours per week) for one full year (365 days). Most are college graduates and some have advanced degrees. Experience levels range from a recent college grad to a retired professional. VISTA members are different ages, genders, races, cultures and come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, yet all of them share the dedication and commitment of giving something back to the community and the mission of "getting things done."

VISTA members are expected to live in the communities that they serve and they receive a monthly living allowance <<insert current amounts>>), which is 105% of the Federal Poverty Level. In addition to the living allowance, they also receive healthcare benefits, loan forbearance and childcare (if eligible). Upon successful completion of their year of service, VISTA members can choose to receive either a cash stipend of <<insert current amount>> or an Education Award of <<insert current amount>>. All VISTA's also receive ongoing training and development as well as the satisfaction of "getting things done" in their community.

What Can VISTA Members Do?

In determining whether VISTA is the right match for a given organization's needs, think about the kinds of activities members will be expected to perform. The role of the VISTA member is primarily to build the capacity and sustainability of the project and community, with a focus on reducing and alleviating poverty. **INDIRECT service is the focus of VISTA.** Below are some examples of the types of service performed by a VISTA.

Indirect Service	Capacity Building	Sustainable Endeavors
Recruit volunteers	Develop forms, volunteer assignments, trainings	Development of Volunteer Policy and Procedure Handbook
Train direct service providers	Write training curriculum or manual; train trainers	Develop training manual and train the trainer curriculum
Coordinate projects	Develop procedures and systems	Develop volunteer management system and procedural guide
Public speaking	Develop speakers' bureau	Develop community partnerships
Write press releases	Develop press kits, media database	Secure media partners
Organize fundraising events	Grant writing; develop database	Secure project staffing and diverse revenue streams
Organize task forces/coalitions	Develop leadership structure of task force/coalition	Create infrastructure
Conduct outreach	Design brochures, posters	Create mechanism for project evaluation

Note: Adapted from *Step-By-Step: A Guide to Partnering with AmeriCorps*VISTA*

Is VISTA Right for My Organization?

The following is a list of questions to think about before applying for an AmeriCorps*VISTA member:

- Is there a poverty related project my organization would like to start or expand? Are the project's goals to help move people and communities out of poverty?
- Does my organization have the infrastructure in place to support a VISTA member? (Think staff time for supervision, a work space with computer and phone access etc)
- Has my organization utilized VISTA or AmeriCorps resources in the past? If so, how will this be different?
- Is anyone at the organization (staff or volunteer) currently involved in a project like the one I would like the VISTA member to work on? Please note that VISTA members cannot replace staff positions.
- How will we sustain the project after the VISTA member completes the year of service and how will we measure the project's impact?

Placement Site Eligibility Requirements <<Adapt to fit your program>>

To host a VISTA an organization must be one of the following:

- Faith based or nonprofit organizations with a 501(c) designation
- School Districts & Educational Service Districts
- Government agencies: city, county, regional, state, tribal or federal

VISTA Program Requirements <<Adapt to fit your program>>

- Members must be placed in a capacity building role for the entire term of service.
- Activities cannot duplicate routine functions of or displace paid employees.
- The project may not include direct service or administrative duties that support general organizational goals such as clerical or janitorial responsibilities, lunch or recess duty or data entry.
- Placement sites must have a Drug Free Work Place Policy and a Non-Discrimination Policy.
- Placement sites must be able to effectively recruit, train, support and supervise the member(s).
- Placement Sites are eligible to have a VISTA member serve with their organization, in the same position, for up to three years. Each year is meant to build on the previous year: Year 1 – member establishes and creates a program or project, Year 2 – member continues to create program and begins to create structure for program to be sustainable, Year 3 – member should focus mostly on making the program sustainable.

Share of Costs <<Adapt to fit your program>>

Our program requires a cash match from each sponsoring organization for each VISTA member awarded. The cash match is used to pay for sponsored trainings and travel, and to administer the program. The **cash match for organizations that are entering their first, second, or third year utilizing VISTA resources is <<insert match amount>>**.

Additional Costs to Consider <<Adapt to fit your program>>

Each project has different budgetary needs. Some projects will have more travel required where another will need more funding for training. Planning a budget before applying to be a VISTA host site can eliminate potential problems in the future. Please plan for the following expenses:

- Recruitment costs (advertising, printing, interview time, etc)
- VISTA on-site supervisor time
- Project related training for VISTA
- Mileage reimbursement for project related travel
- Office supplies and equipment (computer, paper, software, desk, etc)
- Postage
- Telephone and long distance
- Additional project related expenses (web-hosting, publishing materials, professional dues, etc)

Placement Site Responsibilities <<Adapt to fit your program>>

Our program feels that the following requirements enable both VISTA's and sponsors to maximize the benefits of a one-year placement.

Supervision and Mentoring

- Provide the VISTA with an immediate and available supervisor for the full term of service that is able to meet with the VISTA for a minimum of one hour each week in addition to providing an on-site orientation and training for the member upon arrival at the site.
- Assist the VISTA in identifying opportunities to meet professional development goals through their service and support the VISTA's participation in our program's meetings and training.
- If your organization is accepted, the designated Site Supervisors will be required to attend ONE of the AmeriCorps*VISTA Supervisor training dates that will take place on **<insert date(s)>>**.

Project Support

- Provide adequate office space, office equipment, tools and materials for the VISTA to perform service.
- Provide a comprehensive on-site orientation and dedicate at least \$300 for training and development for each VISTA on site.
- Provide transportation or mileage reimbursement for VISTA members during established service hours in accordance with the policies of the placement site.

- Support VISTA participation in trainings led by our program, national service day activities, and other required activities.

Outreach

- Conduct outreach within the sponsoring organization and the community to increase awareness of the service our program's VISTA members provide the community.

Risk Management

- Establish safety guidelines and rules that ensure the well-being of the VISTA members and participants in the sponsoring organization's program.

Reporting

- Complete progress reporting at least two times during the service year.
- Participate in site visits with staff from our program.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES <<Adapt to fit your program>>

- All application materials must be received **by <<insert date>>**.
- Submit original application plus 2 additional hard copies (3 total) of the entire proposal (cover sheet, narratives and addendums) via snail mail to:

<<Insert mailing address>>
- Submit via email an electronic copy of the proposal narratives, position description and VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) by 5 p.m. on <<insert date>> to <<insert email address>>.
- Applications emailed or faxed by the deadline will be accepted, but the original hard copy must be received in the mail within one week
- No late submissions will be accepted

Request for Proposal <<Adapt to fit your program>>

Please include this page as the cover of your proposal and initial below.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

- Read and understand the VISTA Prohibited Activities (See Appendix A)

Initials _____

- Complete the Face Sheet (including appropriate signatures)

Initials _____

- Complete the narratives for each position requested

Initials _____

- Complete a VISTA Assignment Description for each position requested (See Appendix B)

Initials _____

- Complete a VISTA Position Description for each position requested (See Appendix C)

Initials _____

- Submit hard copies of the following documents:

1. Organizational Chart
2. Letter of Commitment from Board of Director's
3. Copy of VISTA Site Supervisor Resume
4. Copy of VISTA Site Supervisor Position Description
5. Tax-Exempt Status Form

Initials _____

FACE SHEET <<Adapt to fit your program>>

Legal applicant information:

Legal applicant/sponsoring agency: _____
(Organization responsible for the contract e.g. Pine School District)

Address: _____

Main project contact: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Alternative address (mailing or physical address if different than above): _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Contact information for on-site supervisor: (if different from legal applicant):

Site organization: _____
(Organization where the member will serve, e.g., Harriet Elementary)

Address: _____

On-site supervisor: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web site: _____

Contact information for individual responsible for signing legal contracts:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Contact information for individual who should receive billing:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

1. How many members are you applying for?

- One Two Other _____

In regard to this particular position: if your organization is applying for more than one member and the positions vary (even slightly), submit separate cover sheets and proposals for each position.

2. Transportation requirements for member service activities:

- An organizational vehicle is available for service business. *Member must be covered by organization's vehicle insurance policy.*
- Personal vehicle is necessary and mileage reimbursement (at organization's employee reimbursement rate) is approved. *Member may not transport clients or youth in their personal vehicles.*

3. The project site is wheelchair accessible? Yes No

4. In what county/counties will the service be conducted?

5. If applicable, have you discussed the placement with your union representative?

- Yes No N/A

6. Cash Match Description: Our program requires a cash match for all organizations.

<<Insert match amount>> - Non-profits, schools, faith-based and government organizations who are entering their first, second or third year as a VISTA host site.

a. Is your cash match: (check one) Pending Secured Not available

b. If pending, when will you receive confirmation of funds? _____

c. Source of funding:

Acknowledgements

We understand that the <<insert the name of your program>> designates certain service days and hours to program-sponsored member development and service activities. We support the <<insert the name of your program>> in its effort to provide members with development and leadership opportunities and will accommodate occasional absences of the member (with advance notice, when possible) for this purpose.

Certifications

Drug Free Workplace

I certify that _____ has an active Drug Free Work Place Policy.
(Legal Applicant)

Non-Discrimination Policy

I certify that _____ has an active Non-Discrimination Policy.
(Legal Applicant)

Assurances

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that the applicant:

- Has the legal authority to apply for federal assistance, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the local cash match) required to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
- Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this program.
- Will keep such records and provide such information to <<insert the name of your program>> or to the Federal government with respect to the program as may be required for fiscal audits and program evaluation, including documentation of in-kind match.
- Will comply with the non-displacement rules found in section 1777(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.). Specifically, an employer shall not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the employer using an AmeriCorps*VISTA member; a service opportunity shall not be created that will infringe on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual; an AmeriCorps participant shall not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that (1) would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the employee's assigned duties, (2) will supplant the hiring of employed workers, (3) are services or duties with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures, or (4) have been performed by or were assigned to any presently employed worker, an employee who recently resigned or was discharged, an employee who is on leave, an employee who is on strike or is being locked out, or an employee who is subject to a reduction in force or has recall rights subject to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedure.
- Will comply with the ineligible service provisions found in section 132 of the Act. Specifically, a program may not use AmeriCorps*VISTA members to perform service that provides direct benefit to any (1) business organized for profit; (2) labor union; (3) partisan political organization; (4) organization engaged in religious activities (unless such service does not involve the use of assistance or participants to give religious instruction, conduct worship services, provide instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious education or worship, construct or operate facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engage in any form of proselytizing; or (5) nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code (26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(3)).
- However, the provisions contained in section 132 of the Act shall not be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative.
- Will comply with all Prohibited Activities related to AmeriCorps*VISTA member service.
- Please supply letters of support for your organization.

By signing below, you certify that you agree to perform all actions and support all intentions in the Acknowledgement, Certification and Assurances sections above.

Organization Name:

Name & Title of Authorized Representative:

Signature and Date:

APPLICATION SELECTION CRITERIA

VISTA placement sites will be determined through a competitive application process. Applications are reviewed, scored, and ranked by a committee of community representatives. Selections will be based on the sum of points given for each section of the application. The total point value for each question is listed in bold at the end of the question.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be typed in 12 point font and submitted single-sided for ease of copying. The narrative section should not exceed 5 pages.

APPLICATION NARRATIVES (not to exceed 5 pages)

COMMUNITY NEED – 30 Points Possible

- Indicate the number of VISTA members(s) requested. State the specific poverty-related need(s) the VISTA project will address. Use current and local statistical data, citing the source whenever possible, to substantiate the problem. **10 points**
- Provide a detailed description of the project for which you are requesting a VISTA. This should include mention of the population to be served, issue areas, history of your organization's activities in these issue areas, and the type of service activities you expect the VISTA member to accomplish. **20 points**

PROGRAM SUPPORT – 30 Points Possible

- Placement Sites will be responsible for recruiting a VISTA to serve at their organization with the assistance of our program staff. Describe in specific terms how your organization will recruit qualified applicants to serve as VISTA members on this project. What challenges do you anticipate in recruiting qualified applicants? **10 points**
- Describe plans for daily supervision of the VISTA member(s). State if supervision will be a full-time or part-time responsibility. If your organization is accepted to our program, supervisors are required to attend a VISTA Supervisor training on either <<insert dates>>. Please state the intention to attend this training and the date preferred. **10 points**
- What in-kind resources will you provide to ensure the success of the proposed project? **5 points**
- Describe the service-related transportation needs of the VISTA members and your plan for meeting those needs. Describe the accessibility of services provided to members of the community with disabilities. Is your organization able to accommodate AmeriCorps*VISTA members with disabilities? **5 points**

VISTA ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION (VAD) & POSITION DESCRIPTION – 30 Points Possible

- Please complete a VAD for each VISTA position requested (See Appendix B). **20 Points**
- Please provide a position description for each VISTA position requested (see Appendix C). **10 Points**

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY – 10 Points Possible

- State how many years you anticipate needing VISTA resources. Provide a brief outline of your future project plans. **5 Points**
- One of the primary purposes of VISTA is to ensure sustainable solutions to problems facing low-income communities. Address how you will ensure the proposed project and outcomes continue without VISTA resources. **5 Points**

RETURNING PROJECTS ONLY

Current or past AmeriCorps*VISTA sponsoring organizations seeking project renewal are required to complete this section.

- State if your organization has had AmeriCorps*VISTA members before, if so how many and when?
- Briefly state your project's objectives and provide a clear description of the project's outcomes and accomplishments.
- Current VISTA host sites must ask their existing VISTA member to complete the Site Renewal Questionnaire. Please contact <<insert contact info>> directly to obtain a copy of this document.

APPENDIX A

VISTA Prohibited Activities <<Adapt to fit your program, make sure these are current>>

Federal law and the Corporation for National and Community Service policy prohibit AmeriCorps programs and their members from engaging in certain activities. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

AmeriCorps*VISTA service requires a full immersion in the project and community, both full and part-time employment are prohibited. Members must remain available for service without regard to regular working hours at all times. For the same reason, full-time enrollment in an educational institution is prohibited. Part-time enrollment in an educational institution is generally prohibited. One course may be authorized if: (a) the course is directly related to project assignment; or (b) the course is part of the member's career development plan developed in coordination with his or her supervisor. More than one course may be authorized if enrollment in the course(s) (6 hours or less) is required for Pell Grant eligibility. Note: Additional educational credit(s) may be received for AmeriCorps*VISTA service and training if allowed by the institution, but this cannot include enrollment in additional school courses or class time. Enrollment in an educational institution requires approval from the <<insert name of your program>> Supervisor and Corporation for National and Community Service State Director.

- Any efforts to influence legislation, including lobbying for AmeriCorps.
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts or strikes.
- Assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing.
- Impairing existing contracts or collective bargaining agreements.
- Engaging in partisan political activities or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office.
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials.
- Engaging in religious instruction; conducting worship services; providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship; constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship; maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship; or engaging in any form of religious proselytizing.
- Providing a direct benefit to:
 - A for-profit entity
 - A labor union
 - A partisan political organization
 - An organization engaged in the religious activities described in the preceding sub-clause unless Grant funds are not used to support the religious activities.
 - A nonprofit entity that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of Title 26, except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent Members from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative.
- Performing services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any:
 - Presently employed worker
 - Employee who recently resigned or was discharged
 - Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures
 - Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency or sick)
 - Employee who is on strike or is being locked out.

At no time should a member be hired to perform any work for the sponsoring organization even if it is unrelated to the member's service. Should a sponsor site offer a paid position to a member during his or her service year, the sponsor will be responsible for the full cash match per the contract. our program will not be responsible for a replacement VISTA member at that site.

Other activities as the Corporation and/or our program determine will be prohibited, upon notice.

APPENDIX B

VISTA Assignment Description <<Adapt to fit your program>>

Creating a VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Design the VISTA Assignment Description to cover the one year period in which the member will be serving. The description will demonstrate:

- A realistic effort to help bring communities out of poverty; not simply make poverty more tolerable.
- Responsibilities and duties of VISTA members that are geared toward building a permanent infrastructure within the organization.
- Proposed project results that are measurable and convey the actual impact the project has on the individuals, families and communities being served.

<<SEE THE SUPERVISOR SECTION OF THE VISTA CAMPUS FOR RESOURCES ON WRITING A VISTA ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION>>

Appendix C

Sample Position Description <<Adapt to fit your program>>

ORGANIZATION: My Organization, Inc. (MOI)
ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION: MOI's mission is to provide high-quality housing to low-income households; MOI is committed to assisting its tenants maintain housing stability, improve their quality of life, and develop assets that will help them break the cycle of poverty.

POSITION: Tenant Services Coordinator
LOCATION: My Organization, Inc. 0321 Somewhere St. Nowhere, OR

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Tenant Services Coordinator will facilitate service delivery to 312 low-income households at five apartment communities in the Nowhere region and raise funds to increase MOI's capacity to deliver tenant services. The Tenant Services Coordinator will work with low-income residents to identify service needs, contact service providers to establish partnerships for referrals and service provision, and facilitate site-based educational programming on a range of topics from parenting skills to financial education. The Tenant Services Coordinator will also work with MOI's Executive Director to develop a fundraising strategy, research and identify funding sources, and write grants/funding applications.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Facilitate resident advisory councils and support resident activities that build community.
2. Contact service providers; establish partnerships and referral systems to ensure service provision.
3. Identify speakers for site-based presentations and programming; schedule and coordinate same.
4. Solicit donations for residents and events (i.e. pizza for meetings, tickets for family outings, etc.)
5. Write/publish MOI News, a bi-monthly newsletter for residents.
6. Coordinate and oversee summer food program and back-to-school supplies giveaway (in partnership/conjunction with other organizations).
7. Maintain database that tracks tenant services provided, tenant participation in programming, and results of tenant satisfaction surveys.
8. Research and identify sources of funding for MOI's Tenant Services Program.
9. Work with staff to write grants and submit funding applications.
10. Complete general office duties related to position (mailings, filing, phone calls, community outreach, etc.).
11. Attend orientation, trainings, meetings, and other courses.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

1. An independent, self-motivated, creative and resourceful individual with a commitment to MOI's mission.
2. Strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills – please attach a writing sample.
3. Fundraising/grant writing experiences a plus.
4. Comfortable with computers, proficient with Windows Office Suite and database programs.
5. Valid drivers license, good driving record, and personal vehicle (MOI will provide parking).

CONTACT: For more information about this position, please contact:
Supervisor Savvy, Executive Director, at
ssavvy@myorganizationinc.com or (503) 123.4567, ext. 8