

AmeriCorps VISTA  
Request for Concept Paper  
September 30, 2021







# Agenda

- What is AmeriCorps VISTA
- What AmeriCorps VISTA can and can't do for your organization
- Who does What
- How can you connect to AmeriCorps staff and Additional Resources





Fighting Poverty

Empowering Low- Income  
Communities

Building Capacity for  
Communities and Organizations

Creating Sustainable Solutions



What is  
AmeriCorps  
VISTA?

# What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

## Key Definitions and Terms



✓ VISTA Project

✓ Project Sponsor

✓ Project Director

✓ Supervisor

✓ AmeriCorps Region Office

✓ VISTA Member

✓ Leader

✓ Summer Associate



**450K+**  
Total Volunteers  
Mobilized

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**3.2M+**  
Total Volunteer  
Hours Mobilized



What is  
AmeriCorps  
VISTA?







**\$199M+**  
Total Resources  
Leveraged



What is  
AmeriCorps  
VISTA?





**2M+**  
Youth Supported



What is  
AmeriCorps  
VISTA?





# What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

**373K+**

Total Individuals  
Supported with  
Opioid Programming



AmeriCorps



meriC



AmeriCorps

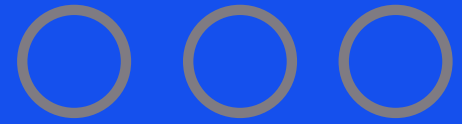




## REDCO Community Food Sovereignty

This project utilizes 17 VISTA members to empower members of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate and improve the quality of life by building the capacity of organizations and programs that provide services that educate, empower, and engage Rosebud Sioux Tribal Members.

- 17 VISTA members serve at organizations throughout Rosebud that align with AmeriCorps' Healthy Futures, Education, and Economic Opportunity focus areas
- In FY20, VISTA members generated \$2.6+ million in cash resources; \$22,917 in-kind resources



## Audubon Area Community Services

This small project utilizes 5 VISTA members to build capacity for self-sufficiency programs in several rural counties in Western Kentucky. The program has an emphasis on healthy futures, particularly opiate addiction and recovery programs. VISTAs build capacity by creating resource directories, preparing presentations on opiate use and addiction, developing life skills classes, improving community awareness, and preparing informational packets for families of incarcerated adults in treatment programs. In the past program year VISTAs have:

- Recruited 127 Community Volunteers
- Managed 144 Volunteers
- Leveraged over \$110,000 of cash and in-kind resources for the project
- Developed and delivered numerous public presentations to increase awareness of substance abuse and related resources. For example, VISTAs helped implement a Recovery Celebration event in Owensboro, KY with over 600 community members attending.





# AmeriCorps VISTA Project Sponsors

# AmeriCorps VISTA Program Models



## Single Site Model

- Supervisor
- VISTA Member(s)

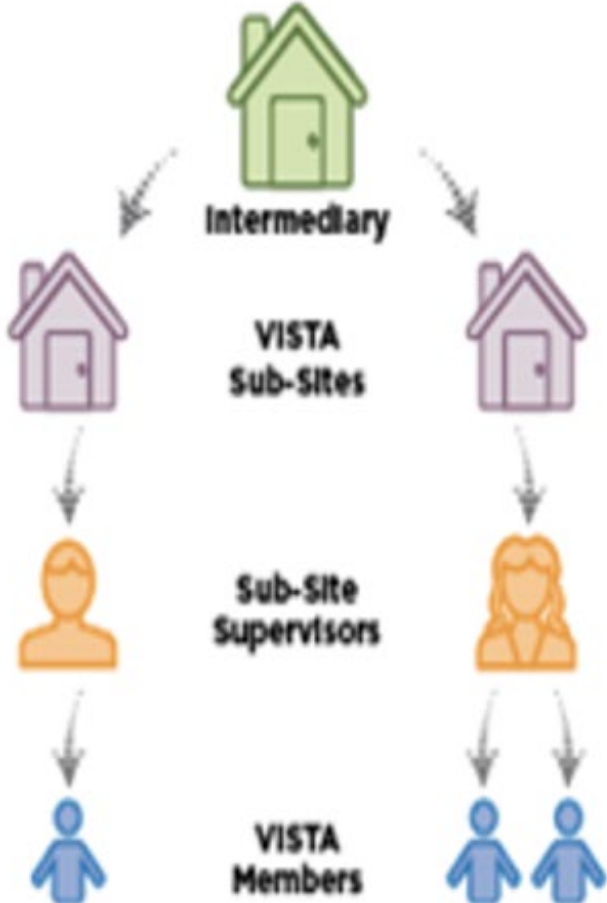
## Intermediary Model

- VISTA sub-sites are located in the state and may include sites in another state or cluster
- Sub-site supervisors
- VISTA members(s)

### Sponsoring Organization



### Sponsoring Organization







# Responsibilities: Project Management



**Obtain Community input-** work WITH, not just for the target population(s)



**Performance measures-** measuring results through outputs and outcomes



## Reporting

- Project Progress Reports (PPRs)- two a year
- VISTA Progress Report Supplement (VPRS)- annual, due mid November



# Responsibilities: Member Management

- Recruit and place VISTA members
- Provide workspace, equipment and supplies
- Professional development and on-site orientation & training
- Assist VISTA members with community entry
- VISTA supervision and performance appraisals
- Sponsor Verification Form







# Capacity Building vs Direct Service

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Tasks and activities to expand the scale, reach, efficiency or effectiveness of specific antipoverty projects

## DIRECT SERVICE

Providing services to the identified project recipients or clients of a project





# AmeriCorps VISTA Members

# The Basics

- 18+ years of age
- U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents
- Must pass a criminal history review
- May have specific knowledge skills, or abilities required by the sponsoring organization
- Local or national recruits







# VISTA Leaders

- Projects with eight or more VISTAs may have a Leader assigned to support the members
- Leaders guide data collection & interpret data (they do not perform the reporting)
- Coordinate, facilitate, and support the efforts of VISTA members (do not supervise)



**Create Powerful Partnerships** with businesses, community leaders, and other stakeholders

**Expand current programs** in demographic, geographic, and/or programmatic scope

**Build** volunteer management, leadership and training systems

**Leverage** both cash and in-kind resources by building development systems



What is  
AmeriCorps  
VISTA Members  
Do?



## What do AmeriCorps VISTA Members NOT Do?

- International Work
- Religious Activity
- Prohibited Political Activity
  - Hatch Act
  - Voter Registration
  - Union Organizing
- Supplanting staff or existing volunteers



# Benefits for AmeriCorps VISTA Members



**Living Allowance**



**End of Service Award**



**Employers of National Service**



**Health Benefit**



**Professional Development**



**Non-competitive Eligibility**

# What makes an AmeriCorps VISTA Project- and Application-Successful?



- Clearly shows how the capacity building activities you are proposing directly ties into anti-poverty outcomes in the community you're serving
- Includes deliberate engagement of your beneficiary population and communities
- Is designed with the end in mind – when will your project become self-sustaining and how? With additional staff? Community volunteers? Partnerships with other organizations and agencies?
- Focuses not only on the project activities but on the development of members. VISTAs may be younger and in need of greater supervisor or they maybe retired community members that can work on their own. As a project director and VISTA Supervisor, you will have to flex your skills to adapt to the people you recruit. It will be worth it in the end!



# Beginning the Application Process



# VISTA Application Process



The screenshot shows the AmeriCorps eGrants login interface. At the top left is the AmeriCorps logo and the text 'AmeriCorps'. Below this is a decorative header with blue and red stripes, and the word 'eGrants' on the right. The main content area is titled 'LOGIN' and contains a form with the following elements:

- User Name input field with a help icon.
- Password input field with a help icon.
- Remember me checkbox.
- [Forgot your password? Get help](#) link.
- [Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account](#) link.
- [View system rules of behavior](#) link.
- A large block of text detailing system security and monitoring policies, including a reference to the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986.
- [Login to eGrants](#) button.
- [Click here to disable the pictures](#) link with a checkbox.

At the bottom of the page, there is footer text: '508 Approved | Contact Help Desk | Privacy' and 'OMB Control Number 3045-0187, expires 12/31/2021'. The release version is noted as '7.5.1'.

1

## AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper

Organizations submit an AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper. The Concept Paper is a preliminary screening tool used to evaluate whether the organization would be an appropriate sponsor.

2

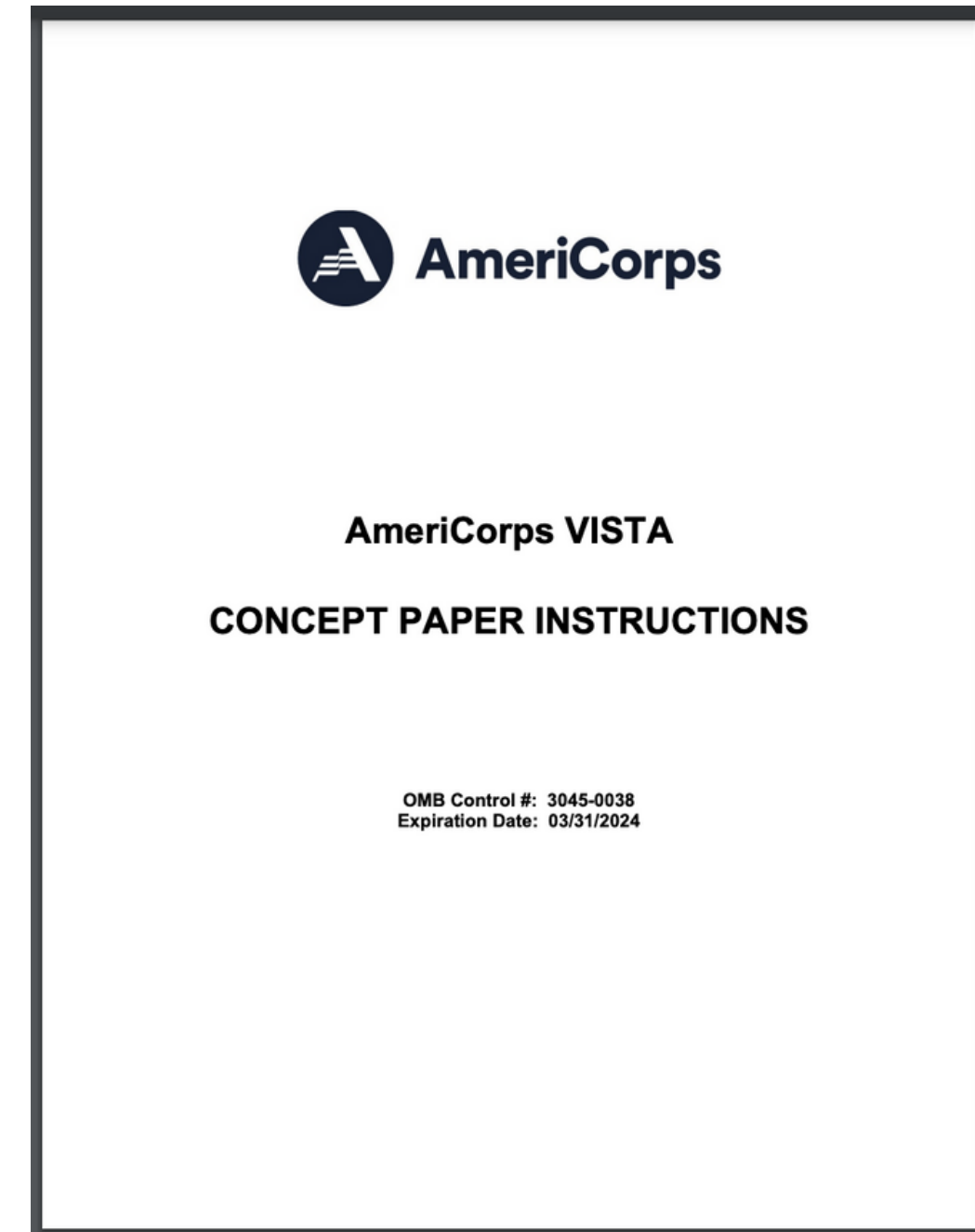
## AmeriCorps VISTA Project Application

If AmeriCorps approves the Concept Paper, the organization submits an AmeriCorps VISTA Project Application based on the approved Concept Paper.



# Characteristics of a Strong Concept Paper

- Aligns with AmeriCorps focus areas/VISTA programming priorities
- Addresses the needs of a low-income community
- Involves the community in project development and implementation
- Leads to organizational capacity and sustainability
- Generates public or private sector resources
- Promotes local volunteer service
- Be specific



# What Types of Programming Does VISTA Support?

Title: VISTA Annual Guidance  
Date issued: 09/03/2021  
Date posted: 09/03/2021  
Unique identifier: VISTA.001

Topic: VISTA Annual Program Guidance

Summary: This guidance for potential and existing project sponsors directs the development of new projects and outlines national programming priorities for FY 2022. The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.



**AmeriCorps**

## **AMERICORPS VISTA ANNUAL PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR CURRENT AND POTENTIAL PROJECT SPONSORS**

Fiscal Year 2022

October 1, 2021–September 30, 2022







# Focus Areas & Current Programming Priorities

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Housing
- Employment/ Workforce Development
- Benefits Access



## VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILIES

## HEALTHY FUTURES

- Access to Health Care
- Food Security



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## EDUCATION

- School Readiness
- K-12 Success
- Post Secondary Success
  - Higher Education
  - Career & Technical Education



# Concept Paper Submission

Concept Papers are submitted in eGrants.

Create an eGrants account:

<http://egrants.cns.gov> NOT grants.gov

- Click on: Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account.
- Click on: Create a Grantee Account
- Click on: This is my first time. I want to create a new account with eGrants

You will need the following information:

- EIN Number
- DUNS Number (not required to create an account, but needed if your organization is awarded a grant)
- Your organization's contact information
- Your contact information

The image displays two screenshots of the eGrants website interface. The top screenshot is the 'LOGIN' page, featuring a header with the AmeriCorps logo and 'eGrants' text. Below the header is a login form with fields for 'User Name' and 'Password', a 'Remember me' checkbox, and links for 'Forgot your password? Get help', 'Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account', and 'View system rules of behavior'. A disclaimer text is visible below the form, and a 'Login to eGrants' button is at the bottom right. The bottom screenshot is the 'BECOME A GRANT APPLICANT' page, also with the AmeriCorps and eGrants header. It prompts the user to 'Please select one of the following options below.' and provides three options: 'I have an eGrants account...', 'This is my first time. I want to create a new account with eGrants...', and 'Already have an eGrants account? Proceed to Login'.



# eGrants

## eGRANTS MESSAGES

Welcome Nate  
Welcome to eGrants!

## VIEW MY GRANTS/APPLICATIONS

[View All](#)

## VIEW MY ACCOUNT STATEMENTS

[Current Statement](#)

## VIEW MY AMERICORPS PORTAL

[Portal Home](#)

### Creating an Application

- [New](#)
- [Continuation/Renewal](#)
- [Amendment](#)
- [Concept Paper](#)

### Managing My Account

Click on the links below to access common account functions.

[My Account](#)

### Reporting to CNCS

- [Financial Report](#)
- [Progress Report](#)
- [Progress Report Supplement](#)



Welcome Nate

Start Concept Paper

Select a NOFA

Legal Applicant Info

Ohio CDC Association  
100 E Broad St  
Ste 500  
Columbus, OH 43215

Start a New Concept Paper

cancel

next

Select a NOFA

Please select a NOFA and click on the "next" button. Please refer to the application guidelines and instructions to determine the correct NOFA for your project.

 **FY 2021 AmeriCorps VISTA State New Projects****Due Date:** 06/01/2021

**Summary:** The FY 2021 AmeriCorps VISTA State New Projects NOFA is for new projects with start dates between October 2020 and September 2021. Please contact [vista@americorps.gov](mailto:vista@americorps.gov) for confirmation if uncertain which NOFA to apply against.

 **FY 2022 AmeriCorps VISTA State New Projects****Due Date:** 07/15/2022

**Summary:** The FY 2022 AmeriCorps VISTA State New Projects NOFA is for project projects with start dates between October 2021 and September 2022. Please contact your Portfolio Manager or [vista@americorps.gov](mailto:vista@americorps.gov) for confirmation if uncertain which NOFA to apply against and to confirm Concept Paper due dates.

508 Approved | Contact Help Desk | Privacy | disable the pictures

Release version: 7.5.1

cancel

next



Welcome Nate

Start New

- Applicant Info
- Application Info
- Narratives**
- Review
- Authorize and Submit

Concept Paper Info

NOFA: FY 2022 AmeriCorps  
VISTA State New Projects

Type: New  
Status: Concept Paper Initial  
Entry

Start New Concept Paper

[back](#) [next](#)

Narratives

Please Enter or edit the Narrative for each category as appropriate

narrative entered [?](#)  narrative not entered [?](#)

<input type="checkbox"/> Need	<a href="#">view/edit narrative</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening Communities	<a href="#">view/edit narrative</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Capability	<a href="#">view/edit narrative</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediary Justification	<a href="#">view/edit narrative</a>



Executive Summary Template:

[**Organization Name**]'s mission is [**Mission Statement**]. The proposed VISTA project aligns with the [**Choose one or more AmeriCorps Focus Area**] focus area(s). The VISTA project will seek to [**enter goal(s)**] and expects to benefit [**enter type and estimated number of beneficiaries**]. [**Enter number of VISTAs**] VISTA members will contribute to the goals of the project by performing activities such as [**enter activities**] over the course of [**enter expected length of project**].

## AmeriCorps VISTA Request for Concept Papers Timeline

Task	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Concept Papers due by 11:59 pm	November 3, 2021	January 26, 2022	March 23, 2022	June 1, 2022
Concept Paper decisions	December 2021	February 2022	April 2022	July 2022
Application decisions	January 2022	April 2022	May 2022	August 2022



# Completing the Application Process



- ✓ **Submit a Full VISTA Application:** If your organization's concept paper is accepted, your AmeriCorps Regional Office will notify you and request that you submit a full application.
- ✓ **Supervisor Orientation:** AmeriCorps will provide a virtual orientation
- ✓ **Member Recruitment:** The sponsoring organization will develop a Service Opportunity Listing on eGrants to recruit VISTA candidates. There are resources available to assist with this process.

# Contacts and Resources



<b>Contact Your Region Office:</b>	<a href="https://americorps.gov/contact/region-offices">https://americorps.gov/contact/region-offices</a>
<b>Request for Concept Papers webpage</b>	<a href="https://americorps.gov/vistarfcg">https://americorps.gov/vistarfcg</a>
<b>FY 22 Notice</b>	<a href="#">FY22 AmeriCorps VISTA Request for Concept Paper Notice</a>
<b>Concept Paper Instructions</b>	<a href="#">AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper Instructions</a>
<b>Sponsor a VISTA member</b>	<a href="https://americorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/american-corps-vista">https://americorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/american-corps-vista</a>
<b>FY22 Annual Program Guidance</b>	<a href="#">FY 22 AmeriCorps VISTA Annual Program Guidance</a>
<b>eGrants</b>	<a href="https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp">https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp</a>
<b>National Service Hotline</b>	1-800-942-2677; eGrants technical issues, option 3

## VISTA History and Legacy Video

This video showcases stories of ordinary people meeting extraordinary challenges as VISTA members and describes the foundation of VISTA's legacy.

<https://youtu.be/QfYCddyQw6E>



## 1964 Presidential Address Highlighting VISTA

This video includes footage from 1964 when President Johnson declared the War on Poverty and proposed VISTA as part of this plan.

[https://youtu.be/\\_ftv7wCbMbg](https://youtu.be/_ftv7wCbMbg)

## What can VISTA do for You?

This video explains how VISTAs bring enthusiasm, experience and commitment to the organizations they serve, helping sponsors deliver better education, health, nutrition, and other services to people in need.

<https://youtu.be/zugQxvjgXAw>





Thank You for Attending!

