

AmeriCorps VISTA

Request for Concept Papers

October 19, 2023



This webinar is produced and published at US taxpayer expense

Today's Presenters



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Session Outcomes

- Describe what AmeriCorps VISTA is and identify what AmeriCorps VISTA members can and can't do for your organization
- Learn how to apply and connect with AmeriCorps staff and resources
- Review the Concept Paper submission process



What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

Fighting Poverty

Empowering Low- Income
Communities

Building Capacity for Communities
and Organizations

Creating Sustainable Solutions

Key Terms

VISTA Project

**AmeriCorps
Regional Office**

Project Sponsor

VISTA Member

Project Director

VISTA Leader

Supervisor

Summer Associate

.....
**2022 AmeriCorps
VISTA Impact**
.....



200K+

*Individuals Supported in
Substance Abuse Programming*



AmeriCorps

Arizona Food Bank Network

This project utilizes 30 VISTA members to increase the capacity and sustainability of food pantries and bolster local food systems.

- 30+ VISTA members serve at organizations throughout Arizona that align with AmeriCorps' Healthy Futures focus areas
- In FY20, VISTA members generated \$330,000 in cash resources; \$1.8 million in-kind resources

Housing Action Illinois

This project utilizes 20 VISTA members to increase the capacity of nonprofits and public agencies that serve families who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing housing instability. The program has an emphasis on economic opportunity. In the past program year, VISTA members have:

- Generated \$516,862 in cash resources; \$55,989 in-kind resources
- Developed partnerships, tracking systems, sustainable evaluation initiatives, and more

AmeriCorps VISTA Project Sponsors

VISTA Program Models

Sponsoring Organization

Sponsoring Organization



Single-Site



Intermediary



VISTA Sub-Site



VISTA Sub-Site



Supervisor



VISTA Members



Sub-Site Supervisor



VISTA Member



Sub-Site Supervisor



VISTA Members

Single Site Model

- Supervisor
- VISTA Member(s)

Intermediary Model

- VISTA host sites can be located in the same state and may include sites in another state(s)
- Sub-site supervisors
- VISTA members(s)

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

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



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)
-



What do AmeriCorps VISTA Members do?

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 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**

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Beginning the Application Process

VISTA Application Process

1

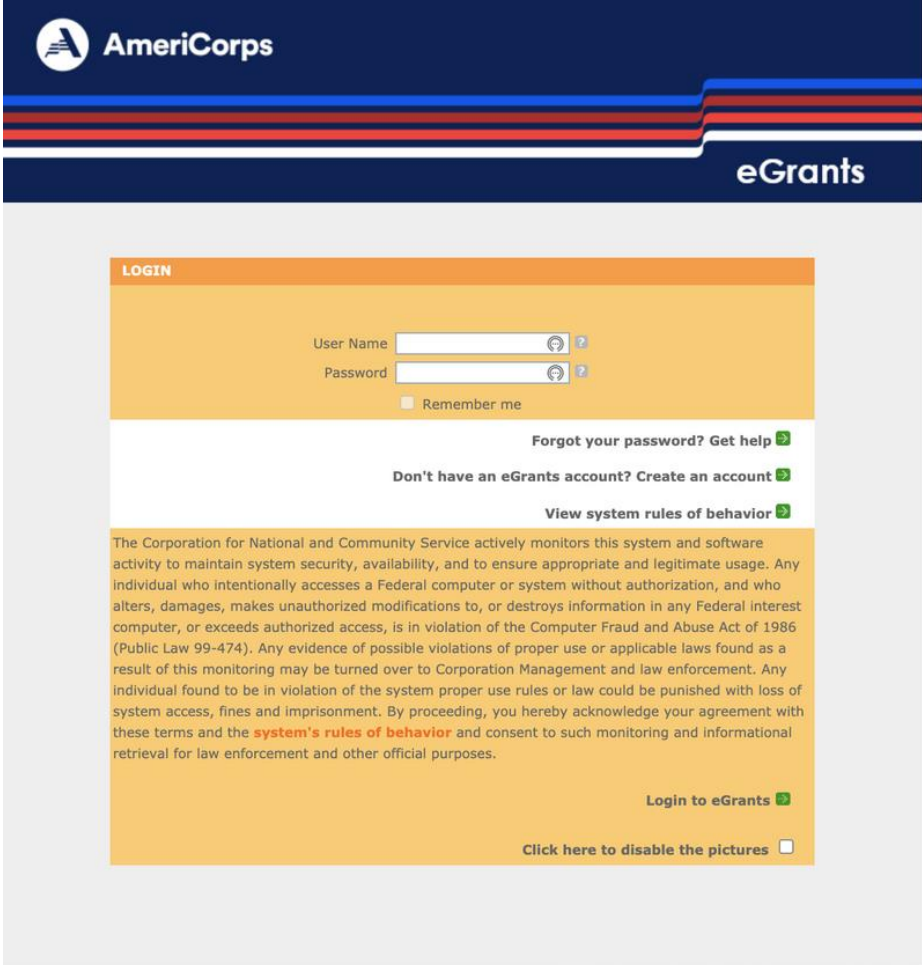
AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper

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.





AmeriCorps VISTA

CONCEPT PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

OMB Control #: 3045-0038
Expiration Date: 03/31/2024

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



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

Fiscal Year 2024
October 1, 2023–September 30, 2024

**What Types of
Programming
Does VISTA
Support?**

Focus Areas & Current Programming Priorities



Economic Opportunity

- Housing
- Employment/
Workforce
Development
- Benefits access

Focus Areas & Current Programming Priorities



Veterans & Military Families

- Access to Health Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Healthy Futures



Environmental Stewardship

- Energy Efficiency
- Awareness & Stewardship



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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
- UEI Number (not required to create an account, but required to receive federal resources)
- Your organization's contact information
- Your contact information



The image shows two screenshots of the eGrants website. The top screenshot is the 'LOGIN' page, which features a yellow header with the AmeriCorps logo and 'eGrants' text. Below the header, there is a login form with fields for 'User Name' and 'Password', each with a question mark icon. A 'Remember me' checkbox is located below the password field. To the right of the form, there are three links: 'Forgot your password? Get help', 'Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account', and 'View system rules of behavior'. Below these links is a paragraph of legal text regarding system security and monitoring. At the bottom of the form, there is a 'Login to eGrants' button and a link to 'Click here to disable the pictures'.

The bottom screenshot is the 'BECOME A GRANT APPLICANT' page, which also has a yellow header with the AmeriCorps logo and 'eGrants' text. Below the header, there is a yellow box with the text 'Please select one of the following options below.' and two buttons: 'I have an eGrants account...' and 'This is my first time. I want to create a new account with eGrants...'. Below the yellow box, there is a link to 'Already have an eGrants account? Proceed to Login'.



eGrants

<p>eGRANTS MESSAGES</p> <p>Welcome Joy Welcome to eGrants!</p>	<p>VIEW MY GRANTS/APPLICATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ View All ➔ 1 Approved for Consideration/Funding ➔ 7 Awarded ➔ 2 Closed ➔ 3 Concept Papers ➔ 1 Under CNCS review <p>VIEW MY AMERICORPS PORTAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Portal Home
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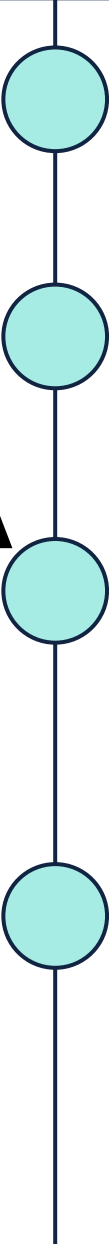
<p>Creating an Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ➔ Continuation/Renewal ➔ Amendment ➔ <li style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px;">Concept Paper ➔ 	<p>Managing My Account</p> <p>Click on the links below to access common account functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My Account ➔ 	<p>Reporting to CNCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Report ➔ Progress Report ➔ Progress Report Supplement ➔
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508 Approved | [Contact Help Desk](#) | [Privacy](#) | [disable the pictures](#)
 Release version: 7.9.1

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**].

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 may be 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!

AmeriCorps VISTA Request for Concept Papers Timeline

Task	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Concept Papers	November 16, 2023	February 15, 2024	March 28, 2024
Concept Paper decisions	December 2023	March 2024	April 2024
Application decisions	March 2024	June 2024	July 2024

Contacts and Resources

Contact Your Regional Office	https://americorps.gov/contact/region-offices
Request for Concept Papers webpage	https://americorps.gov/vistarfcg
Concept Paper Instructions	AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper Instructions
Sponsor a VISTA member	https://americorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/ameri-corps-vista
FY24 Annual Program Guidance	https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2023-09-06-FY24-AmeriCorps-VISTA-Annual-Guidance.pdf
eGrants	https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp
AmeriCorps Hotline	1-800-942-2677; eGrants technical issues, option 3
System for Award Management (SAM)	SAM.gov

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>

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>

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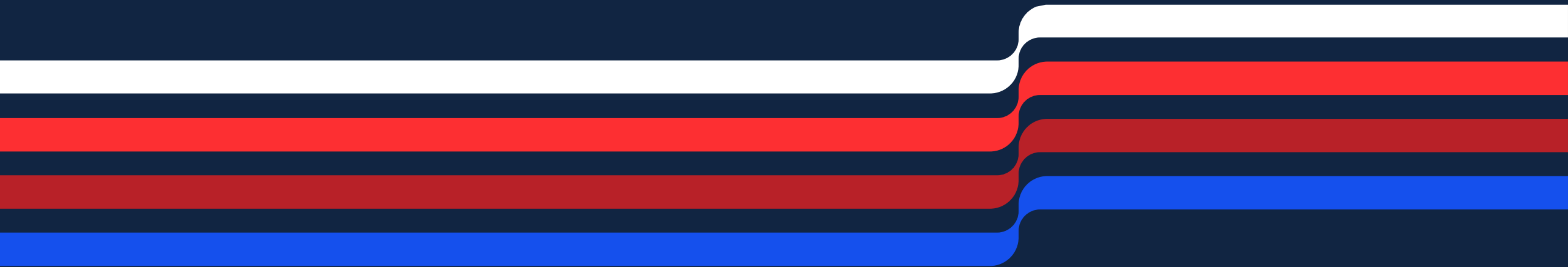
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Thank you.



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