



How AmeriCorps*Vista can Build Your Capacity



FLACDC Summit
Orlando, FL
August 19, 2014

Before we begin . . .



Please place your phone on **MUTE**

...usually *6 for conference call systems

Please do not place the call on HOLD

This may cause music to drown out the call

We will pause for questions

Even so, please feel free to send us a question and ask for clarification if needed...

Corporation for National & Community Service

Our Mission

“Improve lives, strengthen communities, foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.”

We provide opportunities through our Senior Corps, and AmeriCorps programs for citizens to express their patriotism and address critical community needs...

CNCS mobilizes engaged citizens through the following National Service programs:

AmeriCorps

☆ VISTA

☆ State/National

☆ NCCC

Senior Corps

☆ RSVP

☆ Foster Grandparents

☆ Senior Companions



AmeriCorps

★ **State & National**

The largest CNCS program. Provides grants to nonprofit, public and other organizations to engage Americans of all backgrounds to volunteer and address local community needs.

★ **VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)**

Provides full time volunteers to community organizations to create and expand anti-poverty programs.

★ **NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)**

A residential, team-based program which provides leadership and service opportunities for young adults to address national and community needs in all 50 states.



Senior Corps

☆ **(RSVP) Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**

Adults over 55 who volunteer their time to address community needs. There is no income requirement, they receive no stipend and may volunteer as little or as much as they desire.

☆ **(FGP) Foster Grandparent Program**

Adults over 55 who meet income guidelines and receive a small stipend to volunteer at least 20 hours a week serving a child with special needs.

☆ **(SCP) Senior Companion Program**

Adults over 55 who meet income guidelines and receive a small stipend to volunteer at least 20 hours a week serving a frail senior in order to facilitate independent living.



CNCS Key Focus Areas

- **Education**
- **Military Families & Veterans**
- **Expanding Opportunity**
- **Healthy Futures**
- **Environmental Stewardship**
- **Disaster Response & Mitigation**



For this current funding cycle,
special priority will be given to organizations whose VISTA
projects focus upon:

- ***Education***
- ***Military Families & Veterans***
- ***And those who chose to Cost-Share...***

How can AmeriCorps*VISTA help?

- AmeriCorps*VISTA members are adults, aged **18 years and older**, who your organization recruits and selects to work within the projects you create.
- AmeriCorps* VISTA members serve **40 hours per week for 12 months**.
- The Corporation covers the cost of AmeriCorps*VISTA members serving with your organization, including **training, a small living allowance, relocation assistance, a health care plan and child care benefits**.

AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve in your communities to perform activities such as:

- Recruiting and organizing volunteers
- Building and sustaining collaborative partnerships
- Developing comprehensive listings of available services and resources
- Conducting research
- Generating and coordinating donations
- Conducting a needs assessment
- Fundraising and writing grants
- Creating marketing/development campaigns

AmeriCorps*VISTA members CANNOT:

- Provide direct service to clients
- Carryout administrative or clerical tasks
- Participate in political activity
- Take outside work during their project year
- Replace your organization's paid staff or its volunteers
- Take part in labor organizing activities
- Engage in religious activities as part of their member duties

Who May Sponsor an AmeriCorps*VISTA Project?

- CNCS makes it a priority to work with **grass-root** agencies, **local community** charities and **faith-based** organizations to ensure they have access to AmeriCorps*VISTA members to meet the needs of their communities.
- The Corporation's Florida State Office staff are available to help you and your organization understand the application process.

The following entities are eligible to sponsor an AmeriCorps*VISTA Project:

- Faith-Based or Not-for-Profit organizations with a 501 (c) 3 tax exempt designation
- State and local governments
- Educational institutions
- Native American Tribal governments

Project Sponsors must be able to:

- Direct the project
- Supervise the AmeriCorps*VISTA members
- Provide necessary administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project
- The primary goal for every AmeriCorps*VISTA project should be the sustainability of the project by the sponsoring agency and the community after the AmeriCorps*VISTA project ends

Responsibilities of Sponsoring Organization

- Sign Memorandum of Agreement with CNCS and abide by terms of Agreement
- Create an Advisory Council for the project
- Document all program achievements through progress reports
- Supervise VISTA members and provide work space and other support

Responsibilities of Sponsoring Organization (cont'd)

- Provide on-the-job orientation and in-service training
- Reimburse AmeriCorps*VISTA members for service related travel
- Conduct member performance appraisals and track attendance

CNCS Provides...

- Payroll (HR) Services... all members receive Direct Deposit from the US treasury...
- Member Living Allowance
- \$5,550 Segal Education Award or \$1,500 post-service stipend
- Health Coverage for VISTA members
- Training for members and Supervisors -
 - including travel and per diem costs
- Relocation Assistance - moving expenses plus “settling in stipend”
- Liability Insurance for members
- Child Care (optional)
- Assistance with member recruitment

Cost-Share Partnership

A cost--share partnership project is a low-cost way to receive critical help from skilled volunteers and allows CNCS to place more VISTA members than would otherwise be possible

Sponsor provides:

- Approximately \$11,200 per year for a negotiated number of AmeriCorps* VISTA positions – with flexible options for reimbursing AmeriCorps*VISTA for your share

CNCS provides:

- Education Award of \$5,645 or \$1,500 cash stipend
- Health coverage of about \$2,700 per member
- Training and some travel costs; relocation allowance
- Child care reimbursement for income-eligible member
- Bi-weekly living allowance for a negotiated number of AmeriCorps*VISTA positions

What kind of projects are approved?

- The mandate of AmeriCorps*VISTA is to eliminate or reduce poverty and poverty-related problems in the United States by encouraging and enabling persons from all walks of life, all geographical areas, and all age groups to perform meaningful and constructive volunteer service
- This service uses human talent and dedication to assist in solving poverty-related problems and creates opportunities for self-advancement for people living in poverty
- AmeriCorps*VISTA projects generate the commitment of private sector resources, encourage volunteer service at the local level, and strengthen local agencies and organizations

Application Process

Non-competitive Procedure

- i.e. the Florida State Office can assist you in developing the proposal

Simple on-line 2-Step process

- Part A – The “Concept Paper”
- Part B – The “Application”

Successful AmeriCorps*VISTA projects have the following FOUR pillars as their foundation...

An Anti-Poverty Focus

Community Participation & Empowerment

Capacity Building Activities

Implementing Sustainable Solutions

The Concept Paper

Be sure to describe:

- How the new infrastructure created by the project will bring individuals, and ultimately, the entire community out of poverty
- How the community will be involved in the proposed project
- How the sponsoring agency will ensure project sustainability
- How the project will collaborate with other National Service Programs (i.e. other VISTA, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps projects)

The VISTA Assignment

- **Indirect Service** – assignments that do not involve providing direct assistance to clients
- **Capacity Building** – tasks that increase the organization's ability to provide assistance to more recipients or to provide a higher quality of assistance to the project's existing client base
- **Creating Sustainable Projects** – efforts, that if successful, will not have to be duplicated and, which result in products that outlast the individual VISTA member

Examples of Service Activities

Indirect Service

- Recruiting volunteers
- Training direct service providers
- Public speaking
- Writing press releases
- Organizing fundraising events
- Organizing task forces
- Conducting outreach

Examples of Service Activities

Capacity Building

- Creating volunteer assignments
- Writing manuals; training trainers & staff
- Developing a speakers' bureau
- Producing media kits
- Writing grants
- Creating databases
- Fostering & recruiting leadership
- Developing brochures

Examples of Service Activities

Sustainability

- Developing program handbooks
- Developing a “Train the Trainer” curriculum
- Developing community partnerships
- Securing funding for staff positions
- Creating infrastructure and agency procedures
- Creating evaluation instruments

Designing a Successful AmeriCorps*VISTA Project

- To develop a successful AmeriCorps*VISTA project, it is helpful to begin with the end in mind.
- What is the specific community need you are trying to address?
- And... how will you know when you have succeeded?

Designing a Successful AmeriCorps*VISTA Project

- How will VISTA members mobilize community resources and increase the capacity of the low-income community?
- How can your organization involve the low-income community in both the planning and execution of the VISTA project?
- Crucial to the concept of local self-reliance is that the sponsoring organization plans for the eventual sustainability of the project and for the absorption of the VISTA members' functions by the organization and community

Next Steps

- Create an eGrants Account
- Submit a Concept Paper in eGrants
- If your Concept Paper is approved, the Florida State Office will notify you in writing and instruct you to submit a full application in eGrants.
- Approval of your Concept Paper does not automatically guarantee approval of your Application.

Creating an eGrants Account

- Go to www.egrants.cns.gov
- At the login page, click on the link titled: Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account
- eGrants is used to create a Concept Paper and Application, write recruitment listings, approve VISTA members, and more



The screenshot shows the eGrants login page. At the top, there is a header with the date "9/25/2008, 5:27 PM, EDT" and a "help" link. Below the header is a banner image showing a teacher and a student looking at a chalkboard with handwritten text: "TUBE FEET which stick to the SEASTARS and SEAURCH ECHINODERMS (E-K) MEDIAN SPIN". The main content area is titled "eGRANTS" and "LOGIN". It contains a login form with fields for "User Name" and "Password", a "Remember me" checkbox, and a "Login to eGrants" button. Below the form is a paragraph of legal disclaimer text. At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Forgot your password? Get help", "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account", "View system rules of behavior", and "Click here to disable the pictures".



SERVE
your community

BUILD
your capacity

IMPACT
on our nation

Home » Build Your Capacity » Grants

Build Your Capacity

Grants

- Funding Opportunities
 - Managing AmeriCorps Grants
 - Managing Senior Corps Grants

eGrants

- Become a Peer Reviewer
- Criminal Background Check Requirements
- Learning and Best Practices
- New to National Service
- FAQs

eGrants

eGrants Log-in





eGrants is an online system designed to automate the entire grants and project management process from application to closeout, which includes:

- Submission and tracking grant applications and concept papers.
- Online grant application peer review.
- Negotiating and awarding grants and cooperative agreements,
- Managing grants and cooperative agreements including processing amendments, and continuations.
- Creating, submitting and editing your recruitment listings.
- Selecting applicants and searching for applicants.
- Approving project transportation (V-81) forms (VISTA only).
- Financial Status and Progress Reporting.

[Here is a tutorial](#) that explains how to create and manage an eGrants account.

eGrants Help Desk Information

[help](#)

eGrANTS

LOGIN

User Name

Password

☐ Remember me

Login to eGrants

[Forgot your password? Get help](#)

Don't have an eGrants account? [Create an account](#)

Click here to disable the pictures ☐

Concept Paper Elements

- Applicant Info
- Application Info
- Narratives
 - Need
 - Strengthening Communities
 - Organizational Capacity
 - Intermediary Justification (optional*)
- Review
- Authorize and Submit



In Closing -

To be approved for a VISTA Project...

You must demonstrate that the VISTA project will ...

- **Eliminate poverty** (not just make it more bearable)
- Bring forth **individual empowerment** and assist people in bettering their position in life
- Include outcome-based reporting that measures the impact of the **population being served**

For More Information

To get more information about the application process,
please contact the

Florida Corporation State Office

FL@cns.gov or at (407)-648-6117

Check out our website at

www.nationalservice.gov