



Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration AmeriCorps VISTA Request for Proposals (2012-2013)

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA), in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), is requesting proposals from organizations interested in hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA member for the 2012-2013 service year.

MAVA will be selecting up to four new VISTA host sites for VISTA member placement August 2012 – August 2013. The VISTA position is for one year with the opportunity to reapply for up to two additional years. Please tailor applications accordingly.

Proposals (including supervisor resume and position description, plus signed certification page) **must be submitted to MAVA (office@MAVANetwork.org) via email by Wednesday, February 15th.**

More information is available at www.MAVANetwork.org/hostvista

Application Process and Timeline

- Nonbinding letter of intent to apply emailed to MAVA by **January 31** (Brief e-mail to office@MAVANetwork.org indicating intention to apply and initial thoughts for VISTA project to help MAVA anticipate the number of proposal reviewers needed.
- Interested sites complete application by **February 15**.
- Sites notified of award by **March 7**
- Position posting and VISTA Assignment Description due by **April 1**.
- Sign agreement with MAVA on hosting the VISTA by **May**.
- VISTA member must be selected by **June 8**.
- VISTA member begins service in **August**

More information is available at www.MAVANetwork.org/VISTA

If you have questions about this application please contact:

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Program Information

VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America), often described as the domestic equivalent to the Peace Corps, is a National Service program sponsored by the federal government offering members a modest living allowance in exchange for their commitment to a year of service to low-income communities to improve the lives of people in need. The mission of AmeriCorps VISTA is to build permanent infrastructure in organizations to help them more effectively bring individuals and communities out of poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA members work needs to be targeted towards one of the [five strategic focuses of the Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (Economic Opportunity, Education, Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military Families, Disaster Services, Environmental Stewardship, special emphasis on Education and Economic Opportunity).

Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration

The Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administration (MAVA) empowers leader of volunteers to impact communities across Minnesota. Since 2001, our organization has provided networking, professional development, groundbreaking research and advocacy related to volunteerism. MAVA members are connected with over 800 leaders of volunteers around the state, and have the opportunity to engage in leadership, our bi-annual conference, earn a certificate in volunteer leadership and lend a voice to issues in volunteer management throughout Minnesota. Visit www.MAVANetwork.org for more information.

Mission: Inspiring excellence in the leadership of volunteers to impact communities.

MAVA VISTA Program

The purpose of the MAVA VISTA member assignments is to build your organization's capacity to meet mission through volunteers , thus working to eliminate generational poverty.

The VISTA member work will be targeted toward enhancing the organization's engagement of volunteers to more effectively meet the organization's mission Building capacity will result in the organization providing more service, serving in better ways and/or providing service for a longer period of time. MAVA will provide training and technical support related to volunteer resources management to VISTA members to assist with completion of the project.

Vision of VISTA Volunteer Capacity Building Projects

The aim of the MAVA Volunteer Capacity Building VISTA Core is to utilize the resource of VISTA members to help organizations advance systems and strategies for engaging volunteers. The ideal projects will be ones that have a vision of how involvement of VISTA members, for up to a three year period, will yield concrete measureable results of increased capacity. A project might start with the VISTA member working with staff and volunteers to assess current strengths, weakness and opportunities of the volunteer program and to develop a work plan to enhance the volunteer program. The next step might be the VISTA members involvement in working with other staff and volunteers to plan and carryout specific projects that will build the

volunteer program. This could include activities ranging from building partnerships for volunteer recruitment, to systemizing the process for engaging volunteers, to designing an expansion of the volunteer program. During the process, attention would be paid to how the effort will be sustainable after the VISTA placement.

VISTA Duties

The purpose of AmeriCorps VISTA members is to *build capacity*. This means that VISTAs are not to be spending their time engaging in direct service activities. Rather, their duties should include activities that would create a lasting impact on your organization's capacity to engage volunteer and ability to serve low-income communities.

The VISTA member placement is NOT meant to replace a staff position or do ongoing volunteer management functions. In order to ensure support for the VISTA's work and to help guarantee the VISTA work is capacity building, the VISTAs will only be assigned to organizations that have a volunteer resources staff position in place.

Sample Allowable Volunteer Capacity Building Activities

- Assessing volunteer program using standard volunteer programs assessment tool
- Planning with staff on updating systems for engaging volunteers to meet expectations of today's volunteers
- Providing training and resources to other staff
- Developing a volunteer handbook
- Developing volunteer training and orientation
- Improving systems for tracking volunteers and evaluating volunteer program impact
- Building partnerships for volunteer recruitment with schools, churches or other agencies
- Developing new strategies to recruit volunteers (for example, developing a volunteer recruitment plan, setting up social media plan to recruit volunteers, starting a speakers bureau to recruit volunteers, etc)
- Expanding the volunteer program to involve a new population of volunteers (i.e. youth, Boomers, new Americans, etc.)
- Expanding the volunteer program to involve volunteers in new roles or to deliver new services through volunteers
- Finding funding sources for volunteer programs

Examples of Activities Not Allowed

- Doing day-to-day volunteer management such as recruiting, interviewing or assigning volunteers, tracking volunteer hours, etc.
- Replacing work previously done by staff

Benefits and Commitments

Benefits and Expectations of AmeriCorps VISTA members

VISTA members receive a living allowance (105% of the poverty level), health benefit plan, training, and choice of an education award (approximately \$5,500) or end-of-year stipend (\$1,500) in exchange for a year of full-time service, all of which are provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). VISTA members typically serve 40 hours per week and should be available full-time for evening and weekend project needs as necessary. Accordingly, they are not permitted to hold other jobs or attend full-time school while in service.

Host Organization Requirements

Host organizations are required to follow MAVA and CNCS expectations outlined in the host memorandum of understanding and CNCS agreement.

Cost Share Payment: These are partial cost-share VISTA positions, with a \$4000 annual payment to cover a share of the VISTA living allowance and a share of the MAVA costs for coordinating the VISTA project. One position could be a full cost share position. Organizations willing and able to pay the full cost share amount (currently \$11,676) should indicate that on the application and will be given priority for the full cost share VISTA placement.

Member Recruitment: Sites are expected to take the lead in recruiting, interviewing and checking references for VISTA applicants. MAVA will assist you in this process and will place your position description on the MAVA job board. We will also conduct general statewide recruitment activities. However, the primary responsibility for filling the VISTA position rests with the host. MAVA and CNCS will have final approval of applicants.

Onsite Orientation and Training (OSOT): Sites are required to provide an orientation to the VISTA member at the beginning of service. Plans for this OSOT need to be sent to MAVA by July 15.

Work Space: Host Organizations are expected to provide a comfortable work environment, including reasonable office space, use of a computer, fax, phone and email access comparable to that of paid staff.

VISTA Mileage: Host organizations are expected to cover VISTA mileage for project related travel.

Professional Development: Host organizations are asked to provide \$150 for VISTA to use for professional development. VISTAs will be offered opportunities to attend MAVA trainings at no charge. Host organizations are also responsible for covering mileage to/from approved training events.

Supervision: Supervisors are expected to be actively and regularly involved in the VISTA's work.

Supervisor involvement is the key determinant of a successful VISTA placement. Expect that your site's VISTA supervisor will spend an average of 10-15 hours per month supervising each VISTA member and more time during the first month of service. Please take this into careful consideration when choosing a staff member for the VISTA Supervisor position.

Reporting: Site Supervisors and VISTAs are required to complete four progress reports per year (due quarterly) according to MAVA guidelines.

Training Attendance: Site Supervisors are required to attend trainings/meetings for supervisors, including a mandatory supervisor training before the start of the VISTA year.

Project Plan and VISTA Assignment Description Completion: Sites must be able to provide necessary administrative support to design and complete the goals and objectives of the VISTA project. *These goals and objectives must be clearly defined, and hosts need to be able to demonstrate measurable results. MAVA will provide assistance in designing the goals.*

Sustainability: Host organizations must ensure that the VISTA's work is continually leading toward building organizational and/or community capacity to continue the efforts of the project once the VISTA resources are withdrawn. All VISTA projects should be developed with a goal to phase out the need for VISTA members and strengthen the ability of the project to continue without them.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be judged against the following criteria:

1. The potential of the project to build the organization's capacity to engage volunteers to meet mission.
2. The extent to which the project supports the AmeriCorps VISTA missions and program goals, specifically as they relate to building the organization's capacity to eliminate poverty and the Corporation for National and Community Service's five strategic goals (priority given to projects in the area of Education and Economic Development).
Innovation and creativity in addressing generational poverty.
3. Priority will be given to proposals from organizations that are MAVA members.
4. The ability of an organization to provide appropriate support and an adequate work environment.
5. Fit with the goal of geographic distribution of projects throughout Minnesota.
6. The extent to which the project's goals and objectives are clearly defined and demonstrate measureable outcomes.