

Wichita State University VISTA Fellows (WSU Center for Community Support & Research) Site Application

Application Due Dates

February Placement -- September 1
July Placement – February 1

Project Director:
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316.978.6778

Timeline

- Application materials submitted by site
- Award notification to applicants (by email)
- Mandatory VISTA site supervisor training (one day)
- VISTA member recruited
- Pre-Service Orientation for VISTA member
- VISTA member starts at placement sites

Program Overview

Wichita State University's Center for Community Support & Research (CCSR) has a mission to partner with communities and organizations to strengthen Kansas through education, leadership development, facilitation and research. The WSU VISTA Fellows project will seek to address economic opportunity, education and healthy futures for economically disadvantaged people and communities by placing VISTA members with organizations and agencies whose missions and activities directly impact these human needs. VISTAs will be dedicated to activities that help strengthen and build the organizations' capacities to deliver programs addressing contributing factors of poverty.

What is AmeriCorps*VISTA?

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 focused on helping communities out of poverty.

Mission: To start, strengthen, or expand programs, systems or services that help people move 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. VISTAs 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.
- **Community Empowerment:** VISTA partners ensure that the project engages residents of the low-income community in planning, developing and implementing the project. The project must be responsive and relevant to the lives of the community residents and should tap into inherent community strengths.

Who are AmeriCorps*VISTA members?

VISTA members who serve with us come from the community, 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 they serve and they receive a monthly living allowance of \$946, 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 \$1,500 or an Education Award of \$5,500. 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/or 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

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

- 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

Our program requires a cost share from each sponsoring organization for each VISTA member awarded. The cost share is used to pay for sponsored trainings and travel, and to administer the program. **The cost share for organizations that are entering their first, second, or third year utilizing VISTA resources is \$4,000.**

Additional Costs to Consider

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 types of 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

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 trainings.
- If your organization is accepted, the designated Site Supervisors will be required to attend ONE AmeriCorps*VISTA Supervisor training (one day).

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 resources 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.

Awareness

- Support efforts to increase awareness of the service our program's VISTA members provide the community (via media, social media, etc.).

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 weekly and quarterly during the service year.
- Participate in site visits with staff from our program.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- All application materials must be received **by September 1** for February placement and **by March 1** for July placement (as approved by Project Director)
- Submit original application (cover sheet, narratives and addendums) via regular mail to:

Teresa Strausz
1845 Fairmount Box 201
Wichita, KS 67260

- Submit via email an electronic copy of the proposal narratives, position description and VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) by 5 p.m. on September 1 or March 1 to teresa.strausz@wichita.edu.
- 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

Site Application

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. Documentation from Board of Directors (or other Oversight Body) of approval for VISTA (could be Board minutes, letter of commitment, etc.)
3. Copy of VISTA Site Supervisor Position Description
4. Tax-Exempt Status Form

Initials _____

FACE SHEET

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. Cost Share Description: (Our program requires a cost share for all organizations.)

☐ \$4,000 - 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 WSU VISTA Fellows Project designates certain service days and hours to program-sponsored member development and service activities. We support the WSU VISTA Fellows Project 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 cost share) 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 WSU CCSR 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. 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. 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. **20 points**
This section should include:
 - Mention of the population to be served
 - Issue areas and which CNCS Priority Area(s) your project will address:
 - Education (School Readiness, K-12 Success, Post-Secondary Success)
 - Economic Opportunity (Financial Literacy, Housing, Employment)
 - Healthy Futures (Access to Food Resources, Access to Health Care or Preventative Care)
 - History of your organization's activities in these issue areas
 - Type of service activities you expect the VISTA member to accomplish (should address Data Systems; Volunteer Recruitment, Management, Training; Fund Development; and/or Community Collaboration/Partnership Development)

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 one day VISTA Supervisor training. Please state the intention to attend this training. **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 in addition to the previous sections.

- 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.

APPENDIX A

VISTA Prohibited Activities

All limitations on member activities and duties can be found and must be reviewed by site applicant at the following web link:

<http://www.vistacampus.org/mod/book/view.php?id=2093&chapterid=2172>

Examples of prohibited activities:

- The Corporation acknowledges that religious activities play a positive role in healthy communities, that religion is a defining characteristic of many community organizations (faith-based and secular), and that religious belief and action are central to many AmeriCorps VISTA members' lives.

It is important, however, that AmeriCorps VISTA programs and their members do not endorse or promote, or appear to endorse or promote, religion or a specific religious belief. Consequently, we impose a number of limitations on activities that AmeriCorps VISTA programs can support and in which members can engage while serving, or when otherwise, representing AmeriCorps VISTA. AmeriCorps VISTA members are free to pursue these activities on their own initiative on non- AmeriCorps time, and using non-AmeriCorps funds. The AmeriCorps VISTA logo should not be worn while doing so.

- AmeriCorps VISTA members, as well as AmeriCorps VISTA programs and projects, are subject to certain restrictions related to their engagement in political activities. Such political activities are classified as either: (1) engaging in electoral activities; (2) engaging in lobbying; or (3) participating in demonstrations.
- 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 cost share per the contract. Our program will not be responsible for a replacement VISTA member at that site. In addition, VISTA members should not perform 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.

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

APPENDIX B

VISTA Assignment Description

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 individuals and/or communities out of poverty
- 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.

AmeriCorps VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

VISTA Project: Wichita State University VISTA Fellows		VISTA Member Name:
Site Name:	Assignment Area:	Date:

VISTA Member Activities and Steps Checklist	Planned Period of Work
Goal (from VISTA Project Plan):	
Activity 1: Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
Activity 1 Comments/Summary of Accomplishments:	Activity 1 Completed (date): _____
Activity 2: Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
Activity 2 Comments/Summary of Accomplishments:	Activity 2 Completed (date): _____
Activity 3: Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
Activity 3 Comments/Summary of Accomplishments:	Activity 3 Completed (date): _____
Activity 4: Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
Activity 4 Comments/Summary of Accomplishments:	Activity 4 Completed (date): _____

Appendix C

Sample Position Description

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