



SerVermont AmeriCorps VISTA Program Information 2016-2017



The SerVermont AmeriCorps*VISTA Program is a statewide national service program in its third year. We will place 27 members at community-based organizations and state and municipal agencies whose mission and VISTA assignments cover focus areas including Veterans, Economic Development, Healthy Futures, and Education. Our VISTA members build and strengthen systems in order to increase their sites capacity to provide services that alleviate poverty to those who need them most. Our operational funding comes from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

SerVermont VISTA members help alleviate poverty in their community through the following activities:

- ◆ Recruit, train and manage community volunteers and mentors
- ◆ Develop curricula for job and skills development programs
- ◆ Initiate efforts to support military members who have had family members deployed
- ◆ Support programs that teach gardening and preparing nutritious meals and develop systems to ensure low-income families receive healthy, nutritious food
- ◆ Develop public relations campaigns
- ◆ Create operational systems (e.g. databases)
- ◆ Identify and collaborate with community stakeholders
- ◆ Create strategies to promote affordable housing
- ◆ Develop resources (grant writing, fundraising events, soliciting in-kind donations)



VISTA members serve through community-based non-profit organizations and public agencies, addressing issues related to poverty by developing and mobilizing resources that create long-term sustainable solutions at a community level. Focus is on resource development and capacity building, **not** on direct service. VISTA members are national service members and not employees.

Each VISTA makes a year-long, full-time commitment to serve on a specific project at a host site. They live and serve in some of our state's poorest areas. VISTAs receive a modest living allowance that is linked to the poverty level in their community so that they can better understand those that they serve.

They also receive professional development training throughout the year and are well-equipped for employment in the nonprofit sector after their year of service.

Approximately 300 individuals serve over 550,000 hours as AmeriCorps members in Vermont each year. SerVermont VISTAs become part of a rich alumni network and a lasting legacy of service in the state. Join us and help get things done in Vermont!

Questions? Contact Robyn Baylor at robyn.baylor@vermont.gov or 802-760-8208

Interested in being a SerVermont A*VISTA? Here's what you need to know!

Fight Poverty with **PASSION**

*“Hmmm...
what kind of
benefits do I
get as a
VISTA?”*

A Modest Living Allowance

- ◆ \$973 per month for most counties in Vermont
- ◆ \$1,108 per month for Chittenden and Franklin counties

The living allowance is taxed and distributed biweekly.



Student Loan Assistance

- ◆ VISTA Members with existing student loans may be eligible for loan deferment or forbearance on select loans. Once you are enrolled in A*VISTA, you can apply for your forbearance online.
- ◆ VISTA Members who qualify for loan deferment or forbearance are also eligible to have any interest that accrues during their year of service paid for by the National Service Trust.

End-of-Service Benefits

After successfully completing your service year you can choose to receive either:

- ◆ An education award: \$5,775 that can be applied to student loans or future education. This amount is taxed and must be used in 7 years **OR** a stipend: \$1,500 cash, which accrues at \$125 per month and is taxed.
- ◆ For one year after service, members receive non-competitive eligibility for federal jobs meaning they can apply without competing against the general public (as long as they meet basic requirements for the job).

Additional Benefits!

- ◆ 10 days of personal leave, 10 days of medical leave
- ◆ Healthcare– All VISTAs receive basic health coverage during their year of service but it does not meet minimum eligibility requirements. More information is available online [here](#).
- ◆ Childcare subsidies are available for members who qualify.
- ◆ Relocation allowance: Up to \$550 stipend if member relocates 50 miles or more to serve in addition to **up to** \$1,000 in mileage reimbursement from your home of record.

For more detailed information, please refer to the [VISTA Handbook!](#)



Eligibility

- ◆ Must be at least eighteen years old.
- ◆ Must be a United States citizen, United States National or Legal Permanent Resident of the United States.
- ◆ Must pass a criminal background check by CNCS. CNCS investigates for past sexual offenses and violent crimes. Minor offenses, unless directly relevant to service, will not bar someone from service.
- ◆ Must have a bachelor's degree or three years of related volunteer/job experience.



SerVermont Program Requirements

As part of their service year, SerVermont VISTAs will:

- ◆ Attend meetings, events and training sessions with the SerVermont team.
- ◆ Participate in service projects and events in the community, such as Martin Luther King Day.
- ◆ Check in with VISTA Leader at one-on-one site visits, three times a year.
- ◆ Submit detailed weekly timesheets.
- ◆ Collect data for submission in reports to SerVermont and CNCS.
- ◆ Submit newsletter articles for SerVermont Speaks.
- ◆ Create a Community Profile to learn about their new community.
- ◆ Create a Legacy Manual of resources to leave for the next VISTA.

Restrictions for VISTA time

- ◆ No partisan political activity (registering voters or driving voters to polls, running for partisan office).
- ◆ No lobbying.
- ◆ No pro or anti union activity.
- ◆ No religious instruction or proselytizing as part of service.
- ◆ No displacement of employees at an organization.
- ◆ No compensation for service from site (members will get living allowance from CNCS).
- ◆ No full-time enrollment in school (you may take classes if approved by CNCS).

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

Your VISTA Year is full of amazing opportunities!

Professional Development and Team Building

Each month our SerVermont team comes together for a training centered around topics like:

- ◆ *Grant Writing and Fundraising*
- ◆ *Project/Time Management*
- ◆ *Food Insecurity*
- ◆ *Poverty in Vermont*
- ◆ *Cultural Competency*
- ◆ *Personal Career Planning*

"I am happy and proud of what I accomplished this year. I am honored to have led the effort, and I have high hopes for what this can become in the future. On a personal and professional level, VISTA has exceeded what I could ever have expected from this year. I'll be forever grateful for this opportunity."

2014-2015 VISTA Team Member

"One of the highlights of my year with SerVermont has been the warm, tight-knit community I've found within the group. I wasn't expecting to make so many connections with the other VISTAs serving in Vermont, and it's made this year a thousand times more fun."

2013-2014 VISTA Team Member



Exploring the Green Mountain State

Whether you were raised in Vermont or are a flatlander (that is what Vermonters call people from anywhere else...even if you grew up in the Rockies!), your VISTA year will provide lots of opportunities to explore this great state. Vermont is renowned for its outdoor recreation, arts, local food movement, beautiful views and close-knit communities.

Throughout your year, take advantage of:

- ◆ The mountains, lakes, swimming holes and rivers that are right next to you! Visit Camel's Hump, Mt. Philo, Lake Champlain, the Willoughby Gap, Mt. Mansfield, all for little to no cost.
- ◆ Vermont's thriving arts and music! From the Bread & Puppet Circus to the Burlington Jazz Festival, Vermont has a vibrant arts and music scene. Check out musicians, artists and performers across the state!
- ◆ THE FOOD. Vermont is a mecca for fresh, local food and microbreweries!



Life After AmeriCorps: What's Next?

SerVermont VISTAs have gone on to do great things! Many attend graduate school or do a second year of service. Others have taken fantastic public sector positions across the state of Vermont and beyond. Read below to see a sampling of where our alums are now!

Recent Alumni Position Titles in Vermont

- ◆ Behavioral Interventionist, Washington County Mental Health
- ◆ Circulation Coordinator, Vermont Technical College
- ◆ Community Outreach and Volunteer Specialist, Committee on Temporary Shelter
- ◆ Crisis Fuels Coordinator, Capstone Community Action
- ◆ Database Manager, Committee on Temporary Shelter
- ◆ Development Coordinator, Community Health Centers of Burlington
- ◆ Digital Communications Coordinator, Vermont Works for Women
- ◆ Economic Development Director, Revitalizing Waterbury
- ◆ Education Coordinator, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
- ◆ Executive Assistant, Center for Whole Communities
- ◆ Executive Director, The Art House
- ◆ Farm Direct Coordinator, Green Mountain Farm to School
- ◆ Farm Program Coordinator, VT Youth Conservation Corps
- ◆ Farm and Food Director, VT Youth Conservation Corps
- ◆ Farm to Plate Network Assistant, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
- ◆ Marketing and Promotions Coordinator, Vermont Foodbank
- ◆ Project Coordinator, Bennington County Regional Commission
- ◆ Public Affairs Specialist, USDA Rural Development
- ◆ SBIRT Program Manager, VT Department of Health
- ◆ Volunteer Coordinator, Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf
- ◆ Workforce Development Coordinator, ReSource



Alumni Benefits

- ◆ If you are interested in using your education award to help pay for college or graduate school, make sure to check out [this list](#) of campuses that will match the education award or provide additional scholarship to AmeriCorps Alums!
- ◆ There are a lot of other great benefits available to alums. Check out the official [AmeriCorps Alums](#) page to learn more about the important work they do to advocate and support alumni across the country.

