



**Application for Full-time Host Sites
2018-19 VISTA RFP
Application Deadline: August 10th, 2018**

Equal Opportunity and Non-discrimination

Step Up Savannah and sub-granted programs, in compliance with applicable laws and in furtherance of its commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces equal opportunity, diversity and inclusiveness does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information and veteran status in its programs or activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs.



Step Up Savannah Host Site Request for Proposals AmeriCorps VISTA Program



The Step Up Savannah VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) Program provides an opportunity for community organizations or local government agencies to create, develop and strengthen initiatives that focus on breaking the cycle of poverty for traditionally underserved communities.

Timetable of Key Events	
Request for Proposal Released	Thursday, July 19th
VISTA Proposal Due to Step Up Savannah	Friday August 10, 2018
Award Notifications Date	Friday, August 24, 2018

Proposal Submission

Proposals must be emailed to akopp@stepupsavannah.org with "(insert your organization's name) VISTA Proposal" in the subject line. Fax will not be accepted.

Submission includes:

1. One complete proposal as PDF (including scanned versions of documents requiring a signature)
2. One Word version of position description

If your organization has never hosted a VISTA and would like more information about the program, please see <https://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/vista-101-understanding-vista-0> for further assistance.

AmeriCorps VISTA Program Manager(s) Information:

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Section 1: AmeriCorps VISTA Program Overview & Requirements

What is Step Up Savannah?

Step Up Savannah promotes economic opportunity and financial security in Chatham County, GA. The organization acts as a convener, attracts outside resources, adapts and creates effective programs and products, trains neighborhood and nonprofit leaders, and advocates for policies that will improve the lives of low-wealth families. It works through a participative process relying upon its diverse board of directors and a network of partners, seeking out lasting solutions that enable low-wealth families to work toward economic opportunity and financial security. More information is available at stepupsavannah.org.

Step Up Savannah was selected by CNCS to be a VISTA intermediary organization. As an intermediary, we place service participants with other organizations and institutions, referred to as a “Host Site.” In this role, Step Up is able to help various host sites gain access to infrastructure support and national service resources, thereby assisting these organizations to better meet needs in their communities. Step Up helps build the capacity of community organizations and local government agencies to expand and improve services, foster collaboration among organizations, recruit volunteers, and engage community members as partners in creating sustainable solutions to local problems.

What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), an independent federal agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps is made up of three main programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps). AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a full-time national service program for civic-minded individuals interested in developing lasting solutions to the problems of poverty in America.

AmeriCorps VISTA Members serve in community organizations, higher education institutions, local governments, and other agencies to develop and expand services and programs that help support the efforts of low-income individuals to rise out of poverty. All VISTA projects must demonstrate four key principles: 1) Anti-poverty focus, 2) Capacity building, 3) Sustainability, and 4) Community Empowerment. The purpose of VISTA is to build capacity of non-profit organizations and communities to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Projects should be responsive and relevant to the lives of community residents and engage them in project planning and evaluation. *Activities should focus on building capacity of organizations or communities, rather than providing direct service to individuals.* As short-term resources designed to create long-term solutions, VISTA must focus on sustainable improvements that will last beyond the VISTA term. Host site applicants should keep these key principles in mind as they consider their plans for a VISTA’s service.

The award of all VISTA resources as well as the approval of all VISTA sites and final project application is subject to the availability of funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service, approval of fiscal year 2018 federal appropriation, and approval by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

What do AmeriCorps VISTAs Do?

Each VISTA member makes a yearlong, full-time commitment to serve on a specific project at a community organization or governmental agency. VISTA members **do not provide direct services**, such as tutoring children. Instead, they focus their efforts on building the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations. VISTAs develop programs to meet community needs, write grants, build sustainable partnerships, and recruit and train volunteers.

Restricted VISTA Activities

- Displacement of Employed Workers: AmeriCorps VISTA members are prohibited from performing activities or duties that would otherwise be carried out by employed workers, or would supplant the hiring of, or result in the displacement of, employed workers, or would impair existing contracts for service
- Administrative Duties: Unless needed for specific VISTA service activities, the project may not include administrative duties that support general organizational goals such as clerical responsibilities, answering phones, or data entry. If needed, the general duties should be very limited. For example, a VISTA's entire VAD should not comprise of data entry as that is not a sustainable activity. They can create the database, and test it by doing some limited data entry but once created and fine-tuned, the activity is turned over to a staff person to finish the data entry and maintain.
- Direct Service: Projects cannot be direct service but instead must build the capacity of communities to address their own challenges.
- Prohibited Activities: Please see attachments for full list.

Host Site Eligibility

Proposals must be submitted by a community organization or governmental agency.

Placement sites are eligible to apply for an AmeriCorps VISTA Member to serve with their organization, in the same position, for up to three years. Each year is meant to build upon the previous year and focus on building sustainability for the program:

- Year 1 – AmeriCorps VISTA Member establishes and creates a program or project and begins to create structure for sustainability
- Year 2 – AmeriCorps VISTA Member continues to implement project and continues to create structure for sustainability
- Year 3 – AmeriCorps VISTA Member focuses on making the project sustainable
- Year 4 – proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must address a significant community need or new project focus.

Selection Process

Host site selection is based on proposal alignment with program goals and institutional capacity to host a VISTA. Submitting an application does not guarantee a VISTA placement.

While each applicant may submit more than one application, selections will be made to ensure a diversity of placement sites (location, institution/organizational type, populations served). Priority will be given to host sites:

- Who aren't currently hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA Member through another project;
- That clearly articulate potential for significant community impact through the program;
- That demonstrate a culturally inclusive environment;
- That aim to apply a racial equity lens to their work;
- That provide additional benefits;
- That have a clear evaluation plan to track community impact.

Renewal applications will be considered based on completed results from the previous year's application and the host site's completion of requirements stated in the previous year's MOU. This includes but is not limited to timely submission of complete timesheets; timely submission of reporting for progress reports; timely return of MOUs and other correspondence; consistency in day-to-day supervisory duties including providing feedback to VISTA(s); and commitment and consistency in providing VISTA(s) with amenities such as local mileage, parking,

and professional development opportunities. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will provide the final approval of all sites.

Requirements for VISTA Host Sites

1. **Project Development:** Projects must work to break the cycle of poverty by addressing critical community needs. AmeriCorps VISTA Members must be placed in a capacity-building role for the entire term of service. Activities cannot duplicate routine functions of staff or displace paid employees. The impact of service provided to the community and campus must be measurable and fit within the goals and activities of the AmeriCorps VISTA Program.
2. **Member Support:** All Host Sites will recruit; provide an on-site orientation training (OSOT); provide AmeriCorps VISTA member(s) with a defined service space; active day – to – day supervision; assign service that meets the specific goals of the project described in the VISTA(s) Assignment Description (VAD); evaluate performance; approve time records and requests for time off; and document and address performance problems. In addition to the cost share, organizations must set aside \$100 for the VISTA’s professional development and cover the expense of all service-related travel. The VISTA Program requires supervisors to meet with their VISTA at least one time per week and encourages host sites to provide assistance with local resources (food, housing, transportation).
3. **Records and Reporting:** All Host Sites must maintain thorough and complete programmatic records to be shared with Step Up and CNCS if requested. Step Up is responsible for biweekly attendance reporting and quarterly progress reporting to CNCS. Host Site records include but are not limited to documentation of VISTA member attendance, services provided through a site-specific tracking document, and results and evidence of VISTA professional development and training.
4. **Recruitment:** Step Up and host sites will collaborate in the recruitment process. Each site will manage a recruitment campaign specific to their project, including site-specific qualifications. At the same time, Step Up will recruit through the national AmeriCorps recruitment portal. Qualified candidates identified through the portal will be interviewed by Step Up and forwarded to host sites. All candidates identified by VISTA host sites, as well as those identified through our national recruitment process will become part of the candidate pool. CNCS, with input from Step Up, will make final decisions in the selection of AmeriCorps VISTA Member candidates with host site input.
5. **Additional Site Benefits:** Sites are not required to provide any additional site benefits, beyond the \$100 professional development fund and covering service-related travel costs, but are strongly encouraged to identify benefits that can help VISTAs serve on a poverty-level living allowance. Sites that do provide housing, food, transportation, or other basic needs support may find it easier to recruit members and experience higher retention rates for their members. No direct payments can be paid to the VISTA members. Discuss with the VISTA Program Manager specific guidelines if you wish to provide additional site benefits.
6. **Cost Share Requirements:** In order to continue our commitment to providing host sites with highly trained AmeriCorps VISTA Members and to provide those Members with significant professional development opportunities, Step Up requires all AmeriCorps VISTA host sites to submit a Cost Share. This Cost Share follows a common practice in AmeriCorps programs across the country. Participating institutions will be expected to cost share according to the following project schedule (cost share amounts are for the 2018-2019 service year and are subject to change each year):

Project Year	Cost
Year 1	\$1,500
Year 2	\$2,000
Year 3	\$2,500
Year 4	\$3,000

7. **Local Travel/Mileage and Parking Reimbursement Requirements:** Host Site will pay local mileage reimbursement to VISTA member for all service related travel required for position. If paid parking space is required for the VISTA, the Host Site must pay for this cost. Host sites must document their ability and commitment to providing these funds.
8. **Criminal Background Checks:** The Corporation for National and Public Service (CNCS) will conduct a National Sex Offender Public Website check, State of Georgia check, and FBI fingerprint check on all VISTA members prior to their placement on site. Fingerprints must be submitted to the CNCS office via Step Up within two weeks of the VISTA start dates. Failing to do so will result in the immediate termination of service. Additionally, if sites require members to complete more extensive background checks for their institution the cost of those checks must be paid for by the host site.
9. **Mandatory Supervisor Trainings:** All selected host sites must designate a Supervisor for their VISTA member(s) and participate in 2 in-person trainings and one webinar conducted by Step Up to ensure host sites are equipped to satisfy their VISTA obligations.
10. **Cooperation:** All host sites are required to actively participate in the project through attendance at meetings, fall check-ins, site visits, and cooperation with Step Up staff regarding certifying accuracy and completeness of data.
11. **Working Families Network Membership:** All host sites must be a WFN Member to receive a VISTA Member. Non-members must commit to joining membership, if selected. Membership dues (\$25) cover one calendar year (January to December.)

The VISTA Manager and VISTA Leader are available to answer questions and concerns regarding the grant application process at any time.

Program Duration

Applicants must apply for a VISTA one year at a time and will be eligible to re-apply to host a VISTA member for up to three consecutive years. VISTA positions are contingent upon final approval from CNCS.

Section 2: Submission, Notification & Acceptance Process

Due Date	Host Site Applicant Requirement
July 19 th , 2018	RFP Released
August 10 th , 2018	<p>Proposal Due Date & Requirements Proposals must be emailed to akopp@stepupsavannah.org with “<i>your organization’s name-VISTA Proposal</i>” in the subject line. Please submit a separate application for each position for which you are applying. Fax will not be accepted. Submission includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One complete proposal as PDF (including scanned versions of documents requiring a signature) AND 2. One Word version of position description
August 24 th , 2018	<p>Award Notification Date Site Selection may be contingent upon the applicant providing additional information or making revisions and all placements are contingent upon CNCS approval and available funding.</p>
TBD	<p>Site Supervisor Training Each site supervisor is REQUIRED to attend the orientation.</p>
TBD	<p>Cost Share & MOU Due Date Placement sites that fail to pay the cost share and return the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the due date may be subject to reallocation of the AmeriCorps VISTA Member position. If the due date of the Cost Share poses a significant challenge for your institution, please contact the VISTA Program Manager.</p>
TBD	<p>Member Recruitment Launch Step Up Savannah and all sites will launch national recruitment efforts for the AmeriCorps VISTA team (pending approval from CNCS).</p>
TBD	Member Recruitment Deadline (Selection and paperwork complete)
TBD	Member Begins at Host Site

**Request for Proposal Cover Page
Step Up Savannah
2018-2019 AmeriCorps VISTA Program**

VISTA Project Title: _____

Institution/Organization: _____

Host Site Tax ID/ EIN: _____

Mailing address: _____

Address where VISTA will serve: _____

Site Supervisor: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

By signing below, we understand that:

- We are required to provide a cost share as outlined in the RFP by Friday, August 10th, 2018.
- Our institution is responsible for covering host site project operating expenses (such as supervision, service related travel, site-specific training, site-specific background checks, at least \$100.00 for AmeriCorps VISTA Member professional development, phone, office supplies, business cards, etc.) above the required cost share.

We are submitting the following:

- Completed Proposal Cover Page
- Completed application goals and narrative in provided template
- Acknowledgment of the AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities
- AmeriCorps VISTA Member Position Description
- Organizational Capacity Checklist
- Supervisor's resume with contact information

Supervisor Signature Date

Authorized Representative Name Title

Authorized Representative Signature Date

Section 3: Request for Proposal

Proposal Instructions - *Each response should not exceed 500 words.*

Organizational Information

1. What is your organization's mission statement?
2. What is your organization's vision statement?
3. Has your organization sought to apply a racial equity lens to your work? If so, how?
4. Please list the number of staff: Full-time: _____ Part-time: _____

Diversity/Inclusion

Priority is given to organizations that demonstrate the diversity of our community at both a staff and board level. Please answer the following questions to ensure that AmeriCorps VISTAs are placed at organizations that work towards inclusion.

5. What is the gender and race/ethnicity of your staff? (List percentages)
6. What is the gender and race/ethnicity of your board of directors? (List percentages)
7. If your board and/or staff lack diversity, please describe the steps you are taking to better represent the community in your organization.

Priority Focus Area(s)

8. Select the priority focus area(s) based on the activities of the proposed VISTA project.
- Focus Area: Economic Opportunity (*Required*)
 - Improving financial stability, access to affordable housing and employment opportunities for economically vulnerable families.
 - Focus Area: Education
 - Improving graduation rates for students.
 - Improving grade-level performance.
 - Focus Area: Healthy Futures
 - Improving the health and wellness of individuals in the areas of obesity prevention, aging in place and access to health services.
 - Focus Area: Veterans and Military Families
 - Increasing economic, education and health opportunities for veterans and military families by leveraging national service, including veterans serving veterans.
9. Describe how your organization and the proposed AmeriCorps VISTA position align with the selected focus area(s).

Project Goals & Performance Measures

The activities listed below are key elements of the VISTA Program. Proposals will include the majority of the activities listed below in the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), although they are not required. Host sites should be prepared to track all activities. Please check all program activities that apply to your VISTA project.

- [Priority Activity]** Recruit and support community volunteers
- [Priority Activity]** Develop community partnerships and support capacity-building efforts of partners
- Implement effective volunteer management practices
- Train students, staff, and/or community volunteers
- Complete community assessment identifying goals and recommendations
- Build new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) or enhancements
- Leverage cash resources
- Leverage in-kind resources
- Other (please list)

10. Describe the overall goal of the VISTA project. Specifically address the intended impact on the host site's capacity and the community issues identified above.

11. Describe the objectives, activities, and performance milestones the VISTA will accomplish this year.

12. Describe how you will assess, track, and ensure oversight of project goals.

Statement of Need

Applicants should describe the specific needs of the community, organization, and/or institution as they relate to hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA Member and alleviating community poverty.

13. Describe the community you serve and give examples of an identified community need to be addressed by the AmeriCorps VISTA Member's service.

14. Demonstrate why an AmeriCorps VISTA position is an appropriate way to address these needs and how hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA will help to directly alleviate poverty in your community.

Organizational Capacity

This section of the narrative should address the host site's ability to supervise, train, and support an AmeriCorps VISTA Member throughout the entire term of service including the institutional capacity that exists to support the AmeriCorps VISTA position.

15. Describe the institutional capacity that exists to support the AmeriCorps VISTA position.

16. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the key individuals involved.

Project Sustainability

Institutions that utilize AmeriCorps VISTA resources are expected to build a sustainable project, which after three years, no longer requires support from an AmeriCorps VISTA Member. Projects achieve sustainability in a variety of ways: through raising funds to support a paid staff person; transitioning the service of the AmeriCorps VISTA Member to other volunteers, existing staff, or students; and/or through meeting the community need outlined in the project proposal. Proposals will demonstrate a commitment to the sustainability of the project and a clear sustainability plan. In limited cases, a project extension beyond the three-year cycle may be possible with demonstrated continuing need.

17. Describe how the site will work toward the sustainability of the proposed project. What are the lasting outcomes that will result from the infrastructure development and capacity-building activities?

Member Recruitment & Member Orientation

18. Describe how your institution plans to recruit for the AmeriCorps VISTA position including where you will advertise, who will be involved in recruitment, populations targeted, etc.

Required Attachments Include

- Proposal Cover Page
- Acknowledgement of AmeriCorps Member Prohibited Activities (signed)
- AmeriCorps VISTA Member Position Description
- Organizational Capacity Checklist
- Site Supervisor Resume, including office contact information
- Optional Attachments
 - May include short biographies of staff, letters of support from additional key partners and stakeholders, newspaper articles, etc.

Acknowledgement of AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities

AmeriCorps VISTA Members may not perform specific activities in the course of their duties, while charging time to the AmeriCorps program, nor at the request of anyone including Step Up or the host site. Furthermore, Members and staff may not engage in conduct that would associate the national program or the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with prohibited activities. Host sites must become familiar with specific provisions described in CNCS's formal regulation and the grant provisions.

While charging time to the AmeriCorps VISTA program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and Members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - I. A business organized for profit;
 - II. A labor union;
 - III. A partisan political organization;
 - IV. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - V. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph g. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- k. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps VISTA Members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non- CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps nor the Step Up logo while doing so.

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to comply with restrictions of the AmeriCorps prohibited activities

Site Supervisor Signature

Date

AmeriCorps VISTA Member Position Description

Host Site Name:

Department:

Location:

Website:

Position Title:

Summary of Position and Project Goal:

Essential Responsibilities/Activities:

Marginal Responsibilities:

Required Qualifications:

- **18 years and older**
- **Must have at least an Associate's Degree or equivalent credits**
- **Demonstrate a commitment to or willingness to explore issues of racial justice and equity**
- **A U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident**
- **Able to serve full-time for 365 days**
- **Ability to pass a criminal history background check**
- Site Specific Requirements:

Preferred Qualifications: (examples listed)

- Project management experience
- Event coordination experience
- Proficient in all Microsoft Office software

Organizational Capacity Checklist

Overall Site Support

For satisfactory Member performance and to ensure that each Member has access to the tools necessary to perform their service activities, Step Up Savannah **REQUIRES** that host sites provide each Member with the following (please acknowledge that the site will provide all of the following amenities by checking the boxes below):

- Designated on-site supervisor
- Courtesy staff appointment (or access to staff amenities: i.e. office keys, access to organizational vehicles, access to shared computer files, organizational ID with library privileges if available, etc.)
- Individual organization email account
- Organization business cards, identifying the member as a “AmeriCorps VISTA” with a VISTA logo (if room)
- Secure office/desk space with office supplies with daily access to computer with internet
- Daily access to phone
- \$100.00 in professional development funds to be used at the discretion of the Member with supervisor approval
- Reimbursement for travel or support for service related travel (bus pass, site-owned car, etc.)
- Daily access to computer with internet
- Comprehensive community and host site orientation
- Recognition that an AmeriCorps VISTA serves at the host site as demonstrated by placement of the AmeriCorps VISTA logo on AT LEAST program websites but preferably organization webpage.

Supporting VISTAs with Local Resources (Housing, Meal Plan, and Transportation)

Though not all community organizations have residential living, whenever possible Step Up strongly encourages host sites to support VISTAs with local resources (housing, food, or transportation). Host sites may not offer money directly to a VISTA to supplement the VISTA’s living allowance, to pay rent, utilities, or other costs. Nor may VISTAs accept third-party payments for utilities or other housing costs other than rent. However, host sites can provide additional support listed below. This allows Step Up to recruit nationally for positions and assimilates the AmeriCorps VISTA Member into the daily life of the community. These fringe benefits are not subject to federal income tax withholding.

The host site is able to (please check all that apply):

- Provide housing
- Provide a meal plan (or access to cafeteria) or monthly grocery gift card
- Provide housing support (paid directly to landlord)
- Provide a bus pass (for service related travel)

AmeriCorps VISTA Member Travel and Transportation Support

For this position the AmeriCorps VISTA Member (please check all that apply and include in position description):

- Should have a valid driver’s license
- Should have access to a personal vehicle for service-related travel (Member’s may not transport clients)
- Should be willing and able to drive a site-owned vehicle for service-related travel
- Will only utilize public transportation for any service-related travel