WSC VISTA Information Session
Synopsis

- What is the WSC VISTA Program?
- Benefits and Responsibilities.
- VISTA Projects.
- Application Process.
- Additional Resources/Navigating the WSC Website.
The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

- The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than 4 million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.
• Designed specifically to fight poverty.
• Founded in 1965 as Volunteers in Service to America.
• Incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993.
• Over 6,000 VISTAs serve nationwide today.
The Washington Service Corps (WSC) is a division of the Washington State Employment Security Department.

- Created in 1983.
- Used as a model for AmeriCorps when created in 1993.
- Intermediary agency for AmeriCorps programs.
- Nearly 800 AmeriCorps*State members and 33 AmeriCorps*VISTAs for this year.
VISTA
33 Members

Individual Placement and Special Initiatives
about 220 Members

WSC Teams
About 320 Members

Washington Reading Corps
About 245 Members
WSC-VISTA Region
Eligible Organizations

- State, local, and tribal government organizations.
- Nonprofit, private organizations—all organizations with IRS 501(c) status.
- Organizations that focus solely on advocacy and lobbying ARE NOT eligible.
- School districts, educational service districts, colleges, universities, alternative schools and others.
What Are You Applying For?

- Full time capacity building member for one year for a member placement fee at $4,500 starting September 3, 2013.

- Support and Technical Assistance provided by WSC.
Member Benefits

- Modest relocation assistance.
- Living allowance: $928 per month
- Health Benefits Coverage and optional Life Insurance
- End of Service Award
  - $5,550 Education Award or $1,500 cash stipend
- Student loan forbearance (on qualified loans)
- Childcare assistance (if qualified)
- 10 days of sick leave and 10 days of vacation leave.
- Professional work experience
- Non-competitive eligibility for Federal jobs
AmeriCorps*VISTA

The role of a VISTA member is to build the capacity and sustainability of the project and community to address and poverty related issues.

- Indirect service
- Must be 18 with no upper age limit
- Full-time service only (Averaging 40 hours per week)
- Members cannot hold outside employment
- Resources managed by the Washington Service Corps
## VISTA Activities

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<tr>
<th>Good</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptable Service</strong></td>
<td><strong>Capacity Building</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sustainable Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruit volunteers</td>
<td>Develop forms, volunteer assignment descriptions</td>
<td>Develop volunteer handbook</td>
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<td>Train direct service providers</td>
<td>Write training curriculum or train the trainer curriculum</td>
<td>Develop training manual</td>
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<td>Project Development</td>
<td>Develop procedures and systems</td>
<td>Develop volunteer management system and procedural guide</td>
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<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>Develop speakers bureau</td>
<td>Develop community partnerships</td>
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<td>Community Outreach/Public Relations</td>
<td>Develop press kits, media database, develop presence on social media</td>
<td>Secure media partners, train volunteers to manage social media outlets</td>
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<td>Organize fundraising events</td>
<td>Grant writing, develop donor database</td>
<td>Secure project staffing</td>
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<td>Organize task forces/coalition</td>
<td>Develop leadership structure of task force/coalition</td>
<td>Create infrastructure</td>
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<td>Conduct outreach</td>
<td>Design brochures, posters</td>
<td>Create mechanism for project evaluation</td>
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Host Site Requirements

- VISTA project development
- Recruitment and selection of a VISTA member
- On-site Orientation and Training
- Dedicated VISTA Supervisor (must be a full-time employee)
- Ensure member is performing appropriate activities and serving full-time
- Progress reports and member performance evaluations
- Open and ongoing communication with the WSC Program Coordinator
Key Questions to Consider

• Is there a poverty-focused project my organization would like to start?
• Are the project’s goals to help move people and communities out of poverty?
• How could VISTA member support these efforts?
• How will you measure the project’s impact?
Resources Needed to Support a VISTA

- Supervisory Time
- Office Space and Computer
- Travel Funds
- Member Development Funds

To see if your Organization is ready to host a VISTA take our Readiness Assessment
Inappropriate Activities

• Administrative Work
• Political Activities including Advocacy and Lobbying
• Displacement of Employees
• Religious Activities
• Direct Service
• Full-time Student
• Any Outside Employment
VISTA Core Principles

Overall VISTA mission: Assist local communities in the fight against poverty. VISTA projects **must** contain the Core principles:

1. Anti-Poverty Focus
2. Community Empowerment
3. Sustainable Solutions
4. Capacity Building
1. Anti-Poverty Focus

- VISTA focuses specifically on moving people out of poverty.
- Find and focus on the anti-poverty elements of your service.
All VISTA projects should empower the community.

Engage members of the community to incorporate their voice into your project.

All VISTAs are required to recruit or train volunteers.
3. Sustainable Solutions

• Members work to ensure the long-term sustainability of anti-poverty programs.

• Sponsors must develop projects with a goal of an eventual phase-out of the need for a VISTA.

• VISTA members are a short-term resource. Typically a maximum of 3 years.
4. Capacity Building

VISTA members help organizations achieve lasting solutions to poverty through:

- Partnership development
- Community outreach
- Volunteer recruitment & management
- Fundraising
- System/infrastructure design/implementation
Although the overarching mission is poverty alleviation the project focus on one of the following areas including:

- Veterans & Military Families
- Healthy Futures
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
VISTA Project Focus Areas

Veterans & Military Families
- Engaging veterans in service & providing services to low income veterans

Healthy Futures
- Food security and access to health care

Economic Opportunity
- Affordable housing for vulnerable families, employment access & training, financial literacy

Education
- School readiness, K-12 success/improving grade level, GED & college preparation
What Makes a Good VISTA Project?

- Demonstrates a clear Anti-Poverty goals.
- Addresses all of the Core Principles.
- Project supports at least one Focus Area.
- A solid vision for the project.
- Commitment to support and supervision.
- Ownership of the project by the VISTA member.
- Selecting the “right” member.
## Applications Process

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>RFA distributed and posted on WSC website</td>
<td>February 14, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answers to RFA questions posted to WSC website</td>
<td>February 22 – March 15, 2013</td>
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<td>Application due to WSC</td>
<td>March 22, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipated notification of partnership status to applicants</td>
<td>Begins May 13, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>National AmeriCorps Recruitment Posting due to WSC with final approved VAD</td>
<td>May 31, 2013</td>
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<td>Primary and backup supervisor orientations by WSC staff</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for Selecting VISTA Applicants</td>
<td>July 15, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment paperwork due to the WSC by sponsoring site</td>
<td>August 12, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Service Orientation for VISTA Candidates</td>
<td>August 27 – 30, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>VISTA Member actual start date at host site</td>
<td>September 3, 2013</td>
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Visit the WSC VISTA page to learn more about the VISTA Program and apply to host a member.

Thank You!