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Nevada Volunteers AmeriCorps VISTA Project Subsite Application Guidance 2026

About the Project:

Our Goal: The Nevada Volunteers VISTA project aims to break the cycle of poverty in Nevada, where there is documented community need, access barriers, and underutilization of federal funding. This project invites indigenous tribes, rural counties, and nonprofit/community organizations in under-resourced communities to partner with Nevada Volunteers on strategies that lead to solutions.

How You Can Partner with Us: By completing the subsite application, you can request one or more full-time VISTA members to complete a year of service, meeting a specific need in your community. This document will detail the Nevada Volunteers VISTA program and key details about utilizing full-time VISTA members to fight poverty by building capacity in your organization and community. Please read this document in its entirety before completing the subsite application.

Applications can be submitted at any time during the calendar year and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

About Nevada Volunteers

Nevada Volunteers holds a unique position as Nevada's only mandated State Service Commission and a nonprofit. This designation provides access to federal and State funds and philanthropic donations. We're the only local organization that administers AmeriCorps State and National funding in Nevada, creating access channels to national service members who align with community partners to tackle tough challenges in Nevada communities. We collaborate with Nevada nonprofits, higher education institutes, municipalities, tribal governments, and other mission-driven organizations to distribute resources to make the most meaningful impact for all Nevadans. Our mission is simple: we strive to be a helping hand to those in our state who are always helping others.

Nevada Volunteers VISTA Program Officer:

This document helps outline what you need to know as a subsite. Before completing the subsite application, please contact the Nevada Volunteers VISTA Program Officer to answer any preliminary questions and to guide you through the application process. We hope to partner with you!

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About AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps is the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteerism.

Founded in 1965, AmeriCorps VISTA is a federal anti-poverty national service program designed to provide resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to strengthen efforts to address poverty and poverty-related problems in the United States. AmeriCorps VISTA supports efforts to address poverty by providing opportunities for Americans, 18 years of age and older, to dedicate a year of full-time service with an organization on a project that will create, strengthen, or expand initiatives designed to empower individuals and communities in addressing poverty.

By program design, AmeriCorps VISTA members are not providing a direct service to people in need of poverty relief. Rather, VISTA members build the capacity of anti-poverty organizations and community programs by strengthening, expanding, and increasing their reach.

AmeriCorps VISTA Priorities

Economic Opportunity

AmeriCorps VISTA's commitment to addressing poverty includes focusing on projects that create or strengthen opportunities for low-income individuals to develop workforce knowledge and skills that will meet the needs of employers. In addition, projects that focus on housing are strongly encouraged to apply.

Priority areas include:

- **Housing:** Transitioning individuals into or helping them remain in safe, affordable housing.
- **Employment/workforce development:** Improving or creating job skills training programs that lead to increased employment.

Healthy Futures

The VISTA program will give priority to projects that meet health needs for low-income individuals.

Priority areas include:

- **Access to health care:** Connecting underserved individuals to preventative education and treatment/recovery services, to include mental health services.
- **Food security:** Alleviating hunger and increasing access to nutritious food. Potential partners may include, but are not limited to, individual food banks and



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pantries, networks of food banks, K-12 schools, community gardens, and after-school programs.

Education

The AmeriCorps VISTA program will support projects that enhance access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for low-income children. The AmeriCorps VISTA program will target new project development in communities with large concentrations of low-income students (e.g., Title I schools).

Priority areas include:

- School readiness and learning recovery for low-income children.
- K-12 success in student educational and behavioral outcomes.
- Post-secondary support for career and college:
 - Career and Technical Education (CTE) to help students gain the skills they need to compete for employment.
 - College access and success for low-income students.

Veterans and Military Families

AmeriCorps VISTA will support projects that focus on veterans and military families experiencing poverty as beneficiaries.

Priority areas include:

- **Economic opportunity:** Employment and homelessness prevention/reduction.
- **Education:** School readiness, success in K-12 education, and post-secondary career and college success.
- **Healthy futures:** Access to health services, including substance abuse prevention and recovery and mental health services.

Environmental Stewardship

The AmeriCorps VISTA program will support anti-poverty initiatives that focus on environmental stewardship in low-income communities. This is in connection with building resilient communities and supporting individuals and communities experiencing poverty who are affected by unsafe or unhealthy environments.

Subsite Selection Process

Nevada Volunteers utilizes a standardized subsite selection process designed to ensure that high-quality organizations with clearly defined capacity-building needs receive VISTA

member support. The standard subsite selection process consists of the following steps and can occur throughout the VISTA grant year:

- Staff review application for compliance and validity



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- Question and Answer period
- Clarification/negotiation with applicants
- Drafting and signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Subsite Agreement

Nevada Volunteers VISTA staff will determine whether the applicant should be approved as a subsite within the Nevada Volunteers VISTA project, taking into consideration information contained within the application, including the following:

- The eligibility of the potential subsite (i.e., whether proposed member activities are allowable, whether the proposed host agency is permissible, etc.).
- Ability to provide adequate working space and supplies to the VISTA member.
- Ability to provide adequate supervision to a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA member.
- Quality of proposed service activities.
- Ability to meet the needs of unserved or underserved communities.
- Past performance of previous VISTA project, if applicable.
- Other factors that help determine which sites would best further Nevada Volunteers' strategic goals (i.e., program type, geographic representation, and populations served)
- Number of VISTA members available.

Once approved, Nevada Volunteers will draft a Subsite Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be reviewed and signed by the approved organization.

Expectations of Subsite

Recruitment

There are multiple times per year when VISTA members may begin their service, and recruitment begins well in advance of these dates because selected candidates must be identified and enrolled in the online system up to one month in advance of their start date.

Primary responsibility for recruiting the AmeriCorps VISTA member rests with the Subsite.

Failure to recruit a member when you are awarded a position will decrease the likelihood that you are offered a position at a later date. Nevada Volunteers provides recruitment support through one-on-one assistance to subsites, as well as through distribution of opportunities to serve through our partnership network, Commission members, and more broadly through social media and other online platforms. If you are awarded a VISTA position, you will be notified by the Nevada Volunteers staff regarding when to start your recruitment and what the due date is for nominations.



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Member Training

Virtual Member Orientation (VMO)

All VISTA members must attend an AmeriCorps-sponsored virtual member orientation on the first day of their VISTA service. Staff from AmeriCorps will present information on AmeriCorps VISTA and the expectations for and requirements of the program. Your VISTA member is expected to attend the VMO and will then be officially sworn into service on the day of the VMO.

On-Site Orientation & Training (OSOT)

All AmeriCorps VISTA members need to receive an orientation to their service site and local community. Each subsite will develop an On-site orientation and training (OSOT) plan to make sure their member is acquainted with the expectations and plans at their site. OSOT plans will vary according to the background of the VISTA, but they should provide:

- An understanding of common expectations and agreements for the working relationship between VISTA and the supervisor
- An understanding of the culture and mission of the sponsoring organization
- Knowledge of the bigger picture related to the VISTA project and the community
- Understanding of the organization's VISTA Policy, including
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Time and attendance, duty hours
 - Travel reimbursement policy and procedure
 - Evaluation of individual VISTA and of the project
 - Reporting requirements for the VISTA project
- A training plan to build skills and knowledge needed to implement the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

All subsites will be required to conduct OSOT with their members during the first two weeks of service and submit a copy of the OSOT plan to Nevada Volunteers. The OSOT should be submitted to Nevada Volunteers before the VISTA member starts service.

Ongoing Training

Subsites should provide ongoing training and professional development activities to VISTA Members to support future career goals and provide them with the knowledge and resources to complete their assigned activities.

Member Supervision

Each member must be assigned a supervisor who provides direct supervision and support on a day-to-day basis. Supervisors are advised to have weekly one-on-one check-in meetings with their members.

Core supervisor responsibilities are the following:



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- Deliver On-Site Orientation and Training (OSOT)
- Consistently apply VISTA policies, project policies, and site policies. Direct any questions about VISTA policies and project policies to the VISTA Program Officer, who answers them or escalates them to the AmeriCorps regional office if necessary
- Support the member to the best of their abilities to meet their project and development goals
- Ensure that the member is supported in adhering to the VAD, including providing relevant training and assistance in working toward goals, as well as ensuring the member is not redirected to unrelated or unallowable activities
- Familiarize key stakeholders, including staff and partners, with the VISTA project
- Facilitate access to administrative support
- Document the facts and measures taken to address a performance or conduct issue

Although the supervisor provides day-to-day direction and guidance to the members, the members are not employees of the sponsor or subsite. One of the challenges of hosting members is ensuring that everyone who interacts with them understands they are with your organization for a very specific purpose and not as “general help.”

Some ways in which supervising members is different from supervising employees are:

- Members in the VISTA program are enrolled in national service, and they commit to serving for one year in the community, focused on the goals of the assigned project.
- Members are often early in their careers and may need extra guidance and support in adjusting to the organization’s workplace norms and establishing professional working habits.
- As part of service, members have access to limited benefits and are often interested in cultivating an experience that is meaningful both professionally and personally. They may be interested in more coaching, mentoring, and professional development than the average employee. They also may have a deeper appreciation for recognition from your organization and community.
- Members may need extra support in integrating into the organization and community quickly and effectively. They need to transition quickly in order to make a difference during their one-year term, and this can be a bigger adjustment for members who are from outside the community or new to the field in which they are serving.
- Each member has a specific assignment with a capacity-building focus. Other staff in your organization may not recognize the distinct member function, and supervisors play a key role in helping other staff and partners understand both the nature of VISTA service and each member’s specific assignment. This includes supporting members in setting and maintaining boundaries when others ask the member to help with activities unrelated to the VAD.



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- Members cannot be terminated by the subsite or sponsor, but the sponsor may request the member's removal from the project by providing documentation and details to the AmeriCorps regional office.

Any change to the supervision plan for a member needs to be navigated proactively to avoid potential pitfalls for the project. If the member's supervisor is not available to supervise them full-time—perhaps due to a new position within the organization, a leave of absence, or a departure from the organization—it is critical that the supervisor communicate with the VISTA Program Officer about the impending change.

Reporting

Reports on VISTA Members' progress will be due on a regular basis to the Nevada Volunteers VISTA Program Officer. Nevada Volunteers uses an online reporting system, OnCorps, to collect reports. All AmeriCorps VISTA members and site supervisors will be required to register in this system in order to enter and submit reports. These Progress Reports document volunteer recruitment and resource development include narrative sections on challenges and highlights of service, and document progress under the specific categories outlined in the VAD.

Subsites should develop a plan for tracking the required reporting items. Sample reports can be sent upon request. Additional reports may be required throughout the AmeriCorps VISTA member's service year, especially as requested by AmeriCorps. Information about any additional reporting requirements will be communicated to subsites in writing.

Cost Share

Nevada Volunteers expect that organizations will contribute financially to the VISTA(s) requested. AmeriCorps provides a living allowance, health reimbursement, and an education award or end-of-service stipend. The site fee covers monthly training, ongoing technical assistance, potential cost-share expenses, and the online timekeeping and reporting platform. The site fee is \$3,500.00 per Standard VISTA, for first-year subsites and increases by \$500 per VISTA each year (not to exceed \$7,000 for each Standard VISTA). In some cases, Nevada Volunteers may award VISTA positions to host sites with demonstrated financial need at a lower cost-share rate. Nevada Volunteers will send an invoice to the subsite before the member's start date for payment.

In addition to a cost-share fee, all subsite organizations should expect to incur some additional expenses in hosting a member. These may include in-kind expenses, such as those involved in providing a phone and computer for the member, or cash expenses, such as paying for the member to attend a conference related to their service activities. We expect each partner organization to allocate money per VISTA for professional development opportunities. Details about the cost-share fee and other financial responsibilities are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Other Information



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Prohibited Activities of VISTA Service

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or AmeriCorps, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

- Attempting to influence legislation
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
- 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
- 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
- Providing a direct benefit to:
 - A business organized for profit
 - A labor union
 - A partisan political organization
 - A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative
 - An organization engaged in religious activities, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services
- Any activity prohibited by applicable Executive Order/Memorandum
- Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

In addition to the above-listed activities, the activities listed below are expressly prohibited:

Census Activities: AmeriCorps members and volunteers associated with AmeriCorps grants may not engage in census activities during service hours. Being a census taker during service hours is categorically prohibited. Census-related activities (e.g., promotion of the Census, education about the importance of the Census) do not align with AmeriCorps State and National objectives.



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Election and Polling Activities: AmeriCorps members may not provide services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities.

AmeriCorps 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- AmeriCorps funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while engaging in any of the above activities on their personal time.

All locations where members serve should post a list of the prohibited activities

Member Benefits

Members receive:

- Training and Professional Development
- Relocation allowance (if eligible)
- A living allowance from the Agency
- Healthcare benefits while in service
- Childcare benefits (if eligible)
- Student loan forbearance or deferment while in service
- An End of Service Benefit which consists of either:
 - The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust (equal to the maximum Pell Grant)
 - Or a cash stipend accrued at a monthly rate
- One year of non-competitive eligibility status for federal government jobs

How to Apply

To request VISTA member support, please complete the Nevada Volunteers VISTA Subsite Application [here](#).