



Overcoming Poverty, Building Capacity

Michigan's AmeriCorps*VISTA

What is AmeriCorps*VISTA?

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) was founded in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993. VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years.

VISTA members commit to serve full-time for a year at a nonprofit organization or local government agency, working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, strengthen community groups, and much more. With passion, commitment, and hard work, they'll create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

AmeriCorps*VISTA is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service – Michigan State Office.

244 AmeriCorps*VISTAs will serve with 48 projects in Michigan in 2010.

- Those VISTAs will serve **163 nonprofits** in Michigan. Key issues they will address include: ex-offender re-entry, youth aging out of foster care, disaster preparedness, and adult literacy.
- AmeriCorps*VISTAs in Michigan will spend more than **500,000 hours** in service this year.
- VISTAs in Michigan will recruit, place, and/or support more than **30,000 volunteers** this year.
- AmeriCorps*VISTAs in Michigan who successfully complete their term of service this year have the potential of earning more than **\$1.1 million** in education awards.

*"Our AmeriCorps*VISTAs are making a significant contribution toward improving the health and lives of uninsured, working-age adults through their support of the Upper Peninsula Access Coalition programs. Their service is helping our offices build a healthier U.P., one person at a time."*

Nancy L. Matthews
Upper Peninsula Health Access Coalition

Financial Impact

\$4,514,737 in Federal Funds was allotted to the Corporation for National and Community Service – Michigan State Office for 2009-2010 AmeriCorps*VISTA Programs.



228 AmeriCorps*VISTAs in Michigan served with 41 projects in 2008-2009.

Their service made an impact across the state of Michigan, including in the following ways:

- Two VISTAs assigned to the Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency of Benton Harbor successfully referred 155 at-risk families to the Earned Income Tax Credit. These families saved, on average, \$225 each.
- Members serving at The Upper Peninsula Health Alliance Coalition are involved with securing donated medical care, prescriptions, lab results, and other services for the uninsured. In just three short months, one VISTA was able to enroll 42 new clients in the Coalition's services, while others helped patients obtain medications valued at more than \$136,000.
- VISTAs serving at The Baldwin Center in Pontiac helped launch a community garden for the homeless shelter which helps promote environmental awareness and community education, as well as entrepreneurial skills.
- A VISTA serving with the Hamtramck Drug Free Community Coalition engaged local middle school students to use peer-to-peer support to prevent underage smoking and drinking. As a result, the students coordinated their first-ever Hamtramck Health Hike which created an awareness about health issues and substance abuse prevention.
- Members serving at the Mixed Greens project in Grand Rapids created a seasonal year-round curriculum package related to healthy/nutritious eating and sustainable living. Their service provided much-need capacity to successfully implement essential life-skills programming at after-school programs.

"Our VISTAs' hard work, skill, and enthusiasm brought new life to the programs in the schools we serve and attracted new volunteer tutors. They also extended our reach into areas of the Grand Rapids community where we had no previous contacts while their organizational abilities increased the efficiency of our programs, enabling us to accommodate more volunteers."

Fritz Crabb
Schools of Hope &
Greater Grand Rapids
Reads

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COMMUNITY
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Corporation for National and Community Service
Michigan Office
211 W. Fort St,
Suite 1408
Detroit, Michigan 48226
313.226.3024
Fax: 313.226.2557
www.nationalservice.gov