



# Michigan Community Service Commission AmeriCorps VISTA Program Host Site Request for Proposal and Application

**DUE: June 14, 2019**

ISSUED BY:

The Michigan Community Service Commission  
Open to Applicants in all prosperity regions of Michigan

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Awards are contingent on final appropriations and approval by  
the Corporation for National and Community Service.

## **AmeriCorps VISTA Host Site Opportunity**

The Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) invites all organizations that support youth to apply to become an AmeriCorps VISTA program host site. MCSC seeks geographic representation in all regions of the state.

MCSC'S VISTA Program seeks to support organizations to provide resources to empower youth to be successful in school and/or work. Organizations that assist with developing solutions to decrease the opportunity gaps faced by youth through mentoring are encouraged to apply.

The 2019 - 2020 AmeriCorps VISTA program year will be August 2019-August 2020, with various start dates as the current VISTAs complete their service.

## I. About MCSC

### Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC)

MCSC serves as an intermediary AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor through The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The Michigan Community Service Commission is the state's lead agency for volunteerism and utilizes service as a strategy to address the state's most pressing issues and empowers volunteers to strengthen communities.

**Awards under the MCSC VISTA program are subject to appropriations and approval from the Corporation for National and Community Service.**

## II. Overview of AmeriCorps VISTA

### Overview of AmeriCorps VISTA

Founded in 1965, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was designed to provide needed resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to increase their capacity to lift communities out of poverty. In 1993, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of national service programs, housed at the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). AmeriCorps VISTA provides opportunities for Americans 18 years and older from a diverse range of backgrounds to dedicate a year of full-time service with a sponsoring organization to create or expand programs designed to empower individuals and communities in overcoming poverty. For more information about AmeriCorps VISTA visit: <https://www.nationalservice.gov>.

### Core Principals for VISTA Programming - Capacity Builders

VISTA members focus on capacity-building activities. On occasion, they may perform limited direct service activities which are deemed a necessary component to completion of the VISTA's overall capacity building assignment. VISTAs also participate in direct service activities as part of a term-limited special initiative such as National Days of Service.

VISTAs create systems that remain long after their term of service ends. VISTA projects expand the scale, impact, and resource-leveraging ability of programs and organizations. VISTA members strengthen sponsors by building infrastructure, expanding community partnerships, securing long-term resources and more, as determined by local needs.

### Prohibition Against Supplanting/Displacing Existing Workers

VISTAs are not staff members or employees of the sponsoring organization to which they are assigned or the host site and its partners. VISTA members may not engage in activities at sponsoring organizations or host sites that would displace or supplant paid staff, contractors, or existing volunteers.

### MCSC VISTA Program Priorities for the 2019-2020 Program Year

MCSC's VISTA Program focuses on Michigan's youth up to 25 years of age. The program takes a cradle to career approach, and currently works with K-12 school systems, non-profits, and universities. VISTA members may provide capacity to organizations by:

- Supporting after school programs, mentoring programs, non-profit support, university or K-12 programs
- Encouraging children and youth to learn and providing them the opportunity to achieve
- Helping youth gain the skills to assist them with having access to employment or further schooling
- Providing financial education to prepare youth to be independent
- Assist youth with making an impact in their communities through volunteerism

## About MCSC AmeriCorps VISTA Members

- MCSC VISTA members vary in age and come from a variety of diverse backgrounds and experiences. A year of national service is regarded as a full-time placement requiring a minimum of 37.5 hours of service each week.
- Most VISTAs have graduated from a two or four-year college degree program
- The minimum age requirement to serve as a VISTA is 18 years old
- If the applicant has the skills that fit the needs of a host site, they will be considered for service with the MCSC VISTA Program.

During a VISTA member's year of service, each member receives a monthly stipend, support and benefits from CNCS.

Those benefits include:

- Living Stipend - \$12,277.72
- End of Service Award - Education Award - \$6,095 or Cash Stipend – approximately \$1,800
- Healthcare Assistance
- Child Care Assistance
- Relocation or Settling in Allowance (if moving more than 50 miles)
- Other benefits may apply. Visit [the VISTA benefits page](#) on VISTACampus.gov

## III. Host Site Eligibility and Requirements

### Eligibility to Apply to MCSC AmeriCorps VISTA Program

Michigan Community Service Commission VISTA Members will be awarded based on three criteria: geographic representation, strength of program through the demonstration of meaningful impact, and a focus of youth development. All non-profit, K-12, higher education institutions and state entities may apply.

Applications for more than one VISTA member will be considered and should be denoted in the online application. A project plan will be required for each requested VISTA member at the time of the application.

VISTA members are short-term resources with the goal of building long-term sustainability in host site programming. VISTA projects are required to be developed with the goal to build infrastructure in order to phase out VISTA members over time, thusly allowing the host site and community partners to have the capacity to continue without them.

### Application for Renewal

Current MCSC sites may apply for renewal at the beginning of each program year, provided they follow all of the guidelines of this RFP. Renewal applications will be prioritized in the review process. Awards are made on an annual basis and are not guaranteed. Renewal applicants must outline the goals and objectives for the renewal year based on the progress made during the current program year. The renewal application must include a project plan building on the current year's work illustrating strides towards sustainability.

## IV. Host Site Responsibilities

### VISTA Member Recruitment

Host sites are required to perform local recruitment for their assigned AmeriCorps VISTA placement. This includes posting the position, screening, interviewing and submitting the locally recruited candidate to MCSC once identified. Parallel to local recruitment by the host sites, MCSC will perform a state-wide recruitment looking for talent applicable to position descriptions. MCSC will prescreen applicants and contact the host sites that

seem to be a good match. MCSC will interview selected candidates, check references, and submit the candidate to CNCS for approval.

### **Supervision**

Applicants must identify an individual who will serve as the primary host site supervisor. The identified supervisor must have the capacity to provide day-to-day support to the proposed VISTA. Additionally, MCSC requires that the person who serves as the host site supervisor be a full-time employee of the host organization. The supervisor will be required to attend a supervisor training and participate on support calls.

### **VISTA Support**

Host sites are required to provide their VISTAs with a secure office/desk space with office supplies, access to phone and private voicemail, use of a computer with internet and email account, access to photocopier and printer, community and organization orientation, and assistance in securing housing and accessing resources.

Host sites are permitted to provide additional non-cash support to the MCSC VISTA during their year of service. Examples of allowable non-cash support are:

- Organizational housing or rentals subsidy paid directly to the landlord
- Meal plans
- Access to facility amenities such as fitness centers
- Access to free or reduced trainings, courses, or university classes
- Conference attendance and other professional development opportunities
- Travel support including bus passes and parking

Additional cash payments beyond the VISTA living stipend are not permitted.

### **Host Site Fee**

The MCSC is responsible for the program cost share to the CNCS, the program and administration costs, and providing training. All host sites must pay a “host site fee” to MCSC to assist with these costs. For the 2019-2020 program year, the host site fee will be \$7,500 per VISTA member.

VISTAs earn roughly \$1,000 per month before taxes. Providing a housing stipend will increase the recruitment of VISTAs and will aid in the retention of the VISTA throughout the program year. If the program or organization can provide housing for free, that will drastically increase VISTA interest in a particular host site.

**All host site fees are non-refundable and are due seven days before the scheduled start date of the selected VISTA.**

## **V. The Role of the Michigan Community Service Commission**

### **Grant Administration**

- Complete required programmatic and financial grant reports
- Conduct site visits in support of program implementation
- Conduct monitoring visits to ensure compliance with the federal application, procedures and reporting
- Complete expense reimbursements for MCSC required events
- Track VISTA members’ attendance and use of leave time (based on submitted timesheets from host sites)
- Support host site supervisors by phone, email and on-site as needed
- Collect monthly VISTA outcomes report to aid in outcomes report to CNCS

## Tracking, Networking, and Program Support

- Convene VISTA members biannually for professional development trainings
- Connect with VISTA members monthly for conference calls and monthly professional development
- Connect VISTA Members and host sites to additional training opportunities and resources available through MCSC, CNCS and its partners

## Recruitment

- Recruit candidates through the AmeriCorps portal, Service Year, and other statewide outreach networks
- Provide support for host site supervisors on recruitment
- Screen candidate applications, conduct interviews, check references, write sponsor evaluations of candidates and submit candidates to CNCS for approval

## VISTA Member Support

- Facilitate access to relocation support to incoming VISTA members
- Conduct VISTA orientation training at the beginning of a member's year of service
- Provide professional development trainings and opportunities throughout the member's year of service
- Provide support to VISTA members by phone, email and on-site as needed

## VI. Performance Measures and reporting requirements

MCSC, as a part of the project application to CNCS, has selected performance measures that coincide with the goals of our project. These performance measures will be collected in monthly reports supplied by MCSC. Those monthly reports will be collected and combined to create reports to be submitted to CNCS on the projects progress.

## VII. Online Application Process

### Online Application

The application to host a Michigan Community Service Commission AmeriCorps VISTA is online: [click Here](#) to be taken directly to the application. Applications must be submitted online by **June 14, 2019**. Applications will be reviewed when received and applicants notified as applications are reviewed and decisions made.

Here is the direct Application Link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MCSC\\_VISTA\\_Host-Site\\_Application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MCSC_VISTA_Host-Site_Application)

## VIII. Application Overview

*Following are the applications questions you will answer online. They are listed here to allow you to gather the information you will need to supply in the application.*

### Organizational Information

1. Address and contact information for the organization
2. Contact information for the Executive Director / organization leader

3. Contact information for the designated host site supervisor
4. A description of the mission and goals of the organization, including how the organization is supporting youth to be successful - include all services offered to youth (ages 0-25). Please also list outcomes demonstrating your organization's impact.

### **Commitment of Host Site Support and Program Requirements**

Applicants must accept the cost share and commit to abide by the program requirements. The application outlines the level of support and involvement expected of the host site and supervisor. This may include, but is not limited to, training events, monthly supervisor calls, program reporting and timekeeping. A detailed program timeline will be provided during the onboarding process.

### **VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)**

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) details the goals and general activities of the MCSC VISTA Project. **All MCSC VISTA host sites will be using objectives one and two as part of their formal Project Plan to align with our VISTA project. Host sites may also choose additional objective(s) that build the capacity of the organization.** In the online application, host sites will be required to commit to completing objectives one and two and select optional objectives they feel will align with their program.

#### **Objective One – Asset and Resource Coordination (Required)**

Activities:

1. Identify and make accessible community resources that will assist youth to be successful. (Required)
2. Assist with inputting organization and resource information into 211. (Required)
3. Provide training to help parents, youth, mentors/coaches be aware of resources. (Optional)

#### **Objective Two – Recruit and Engage Volunteers (Required)**

Activities:

1. Assist with recruiting and/or managing volunteers to support youth. (Required)
2. Recruit, engage, and/or manage youth as volunteers at community events. (Required)
3. Volunteer at the MCSC Governor Service Awards ceremony. (Required)
4. Develop corporate partnerships that engage employees in volunteering to support youth. (Optional)
5. Support the delivery of trainings that offer best practices to engage volunteers. (Optional)
6. Facilitate recognition events to celebrate volunteerism. (Optional)

#### **Objective Three – Youth Voice. (Optional)**

Activities:

1. Support youth to identify needs, challenges, and solutions to solve the issues their communities face.
2. Assist youth with identifying procedures and policies that cause challenges and prevent them from being successful.
3. Gather information through surveys and meetings led by youth leaders
4. Collect, analyze and summarize data gathered to use in developing a plan of action.
5. Assist youth with planning volunteer activities to engage their peers in making a difference in their community.
6. Support youth with writing grants to fund service projects and activities and gain an understanding of the power of philanthropy. (for example - MCSC mini-grants)

#### **Objective Four – Access to Careers (Optional)**

##### Activities:

1. Promote increased access to information and remove barriers to youth pursuing college, skilled trades' trainings, or employment opportunities.
2. Provide workforce development opportunities.
3. Develop or strengthen partnerships and networks that assist youth with exploring career options and accessing after-school skill building activities, summer employment, and AmeriCorps opportunities.
4. Increase the number of youths accessing information and obtaining internships, scholarships, and youth employment.
5. Assist with supporting mentoring initiatives that help youth explore careers and access resources.
6. Explore opportunities to utilize the arts and sciences to expand skills of youth.

#### **Objective Five – School Success (Optional)**

##### Activities:

1. Assist programs with enhancing systems that support youth with being successful in school.
2. Explore implementing a Success Mentor program to increase school attendance.
3. Identify mentoring programs in the community and assist youth with accessing them.
4. Support the coordination of corporate and nonprofit programs providing services to youth.
5. Assist with making data available that demonstrates the progress of students receiving services.

#### **Objective Six – Resource Development (Optional)**

##### Activities:

1. Assist with developing a fund development plan to increase resources for youth.
2. Identify and apply for grants to support the initiative.
3. Assist with implementing fund development events to support youth services in community.
4. Identify federal, state, and local resources to fund and support youth initiatives.

### **Project Plan Narrative**

In this section of the proposal complete a narrative that outlines the work a VISTA would complete during a year of service with the organization. Narratives will leverage the selected objectives supported by the member activities. The narrative is intended to provide MCSC with a general idea of the intended work, we understand projects may shift depending on the selected VISTAs skill set.

### **Position Description**

As noted above in section VII, applications will be reviewed as received. A completed position description will allow for a seamless transition into recruitment. All applicants must provide a position description at the time of submission in order to be prepared to begin recruitment if selected. Include the following points in the position description:

- Provide a description of the mission and purpose of the organization and a general outline of the VISTA's intended role. Be CREATIVE AND ENGAGING!
- Outline the Duties of the VISTA (Minimum of 6 bullets)

### **Certification of Application**

The final portion of the application is to certify that all information provided is accurate and complete. Check the box to certify and enter the name of the representative applying for the program.