



Request for Concept Papers (RFCP) for New AmeriCorps VISTA Projects in American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Hawaii–

Concept Papers due November 9, 2012.

INTRODUCTION

The Hawaii State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) announces an opportunity, subject to the availability of resources, to develop one or more new AmeriCorps VISTA projects in American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Hawaii. This RFCP is open to organizations that are NOT current VISTA sponsors. Please share this notice with your networks and contact the CNCS Hawaii State Office (hi@cns.gov, 808-541-2832), with any questions.

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a full-time, national service program for individuals interested in developing lasting solutions to the problems of poverty in the United States. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve in community and faith-based nonprofit organizations and with local governments to develop and expand services and programs that help bring low-income individuals out of poverty.

Public organizations such as state and local government, Indian Tribes, and non-profit private organizations can apply to be VISTA sponsors. Please note that eligible non-profit private organizations are not limited to those with IRS 501(c)(3) status, but rather all organizations with IRS 501(c) status that focus on anti-poverty community development; organizations that focus solely on advocacy and lobbying are not eligible.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

Subject to the availability of resources, five (5) AmeriCorps VISTA members will be awarded on a full-time basis for one year of service to one or more new VISTA sponsoring organizations. Additional cost-share positions may be awarded to successful applicants. The Corporation will make an award covering a period of one year, with the potential for continuation. Members are expected to begin service in April 2013.

FISCAL YEAR 2013 PROGRAMMING AREAS

In the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, Congress directed CNCS to focus national service in areas where service can make a major impact. CNCS is carrying out Congress' intent by targeting agency resources in the CNCS Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 (http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/11_0203_cncs_strategic_plan.pdf).

The VISTA program seeks to devote resources to support those CNCS Focus Areas that best correspond with the VISTA anti-poverty mission: Economic Opportunity, Education, Healthy Futures, and Veterans & Military Families.

In 2013, priority will be given to projects that support the identified Focus Areas, and that propose intervention strategies that align with the objectives and performance measures listed below.

Focus Area	Objective	Programming Areas
Economic Opportunity	Financial Literacy	Providing financial services-related assistance to economically disadvantaged people to improve their financial literacy.
	Housing	Providing housing-related assistance to economically disadvantaged people to improve their housing situation.
	Employment	Providing employment-related assistance to economically disadvantaged people.
Education	School Readiness	Providing services for children living in poverty to make gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development.
		Providing services for children living in poverty to make gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills.
		Providing services for children living in poverty to make gains in school readiness in terms of numeracy (math) skills.
	K-12 Success	Providing services to students living in poverty to improve academic performance.
		Providing services to students living in poverty to improve academic engagement.
	Post-Secondary Success	Providing services to students living in poverty to increase enrollment in a post-secondary institution.
Providing services to students living in poverty to receive a vocational or technical certificate from an accredited post-secondary institution or to continue to another year of post-secondary education.		
Healthy Futures	Obesity and Food (Food Security)	Providing services to individuals in underserved community to gain access to food resources.
		Providing services to individuals in underserved community to gain access to preventative and primary health care services.
Veterans and Military Families	Veterans Served	Providing services to low-income veterans, veterans' family members, family members of active duty military, and military service members.

For more information on programming focus areas, please refer to the AmeriCorps VISTA FY 2013 Program Guidance (http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/2013_vista_pg.pdf).

Relevant Resources:

- A Guide to Becoming an AmeriCorps VISTA Project Sponsor (attached);
- AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper Instructions (http://www.americorps.gov/forms/ac_vista_concept.pdf); and
- AmeriCorps VISTA FY 2013 Program Guidance (http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/2013_vista_pg.pdf).
- VISTA 101: Understanding VISTA (Flash Course) (<http://vistacampus.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=10385%3E>)

TIMELINE

October 15, 2012	Request for VISTA Concept Papers released
October 22, 2012 required and non-binding)	Interested Applicants email Intent to Apply to hi@cns.gov (not
October 24, 2012	State Office hosts a webinar for interested Applicants
November 9, 2012	Completed Concept Papers due in eGrants
November 20, 2012	Applicants whose Concept Papers are successful are notified and invited to submit a Full Application
December 21, 2012	Completed Full Applications due in eGrants
January 2, 2013	State Office announces new project sponsors
January 2013 (estimated)	Mandatory VISTA Supervisor Orientation for new project sponsors (2-3 days, dates and location TBD)
March 2013(estimated) Candidates to State Office	Deadline for new projects to submit recommended VISTA
April 2013 (estimated)	First set of VISTA candidates from new projects attend Pre-Service Orientation and start service

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

Criteria for approval are based on whether the proposed project:

- Fits with one or more of the Corporation's strategic initiatives, VISTA programming priorities, or priority areas listed in the introduction section of this document.
- Addresses the needs of low-income communities.
- Leads to building organizational capacity so that the project can continue once the VISTA resources are withdrawn.
- Involves beneficiaries of the service and the low-income community in project development and implementation.
- Is designed to generate public and/or private-sector resources.
- Promotes local volunteer service.
- Complies with the provisions of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended; VISTA regulations; and VISTA policies.

Further criteria for determining approval are based on whether the applicant:

- Is a local or state government agency or a private organization designated as a non-profit by the Internal Revenue Service.
- Has resources available for VISTAs to perform their activities, such as space, supplies, and on-the-job transportation, and is able to provide emergency cash advances when needed.
- Has the management capacity and commitment to recruit, train, supervise, and otherwise support VISTAs recruited locally and nationally.
- Understands and is committed to promoting national and community service.
- Has the capacity to build community partnerships and collaborative efforts to achieve project self-sufficiency.

VISTA projects have an average lifecycle of three years and new project development happens each year. However, we may not be able to approve all of the proposed projects that meet the eligibility criteria in a given year because of limited resources and/or a potential sponsor's attributes in relation to the rest of the current programming portfolio. The Hawaii State Office strives to ensure that the portfolio of VISTA projects is diverse, both in terms of programmatic areas as well as geography.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any interested organization or individual with additional questions not addressed by this RFCP may contact:

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