



May 19th, 2025

Dear LEL Community,

After careful consideration we regretfully announce that Allegheny College and the Lake Effect Leaders (LEL) Team have made the difficult decision to sunset our beloved Lake Effect Leaders AmeriCorps VISTA project at the conclusion of the 2024-25 cohort and grant year.

Although we have not yet received an official termination notice, we must recognize the broader challenges AmeriCorps programs nationwide are currently facing. Significant reductions at the federal level - including the termination of 85% of AmeriCorps staff and a 41% cut in budgets/programs - have severely diminished support for continuing our initiatives. These realities have made long-term planning increasingly uncertain and difficult. Please know that all operations will be continuing as usual throughout the remainder of this 2024-25 service year, and LEL staff are committed to supporting our members and the nonprofits they're serving during this transition period.

As we prepare to close this chapter, we are incredibly proud of what Lake Effect Leaders has accomplished over its almost 22 years of continuous operation alongside Allegheny College. Together with our community partners, LEL has placed 333 VISTA members across more than 150 nonprofits and schools throughout northwestern Pennsylvania - leaving a legacy of service, capacity building, and lasting community (and individual) impact.

Thank you for being a part of the LEL community.

On behalf of LEL,

Eva Thomas ('16-18), LEL Project Director and Grant Manager  
Colin Hurley ('07-09), Director of Community Engagement, Allegheny College

