



## Corporation for National and Community Service AmeriCorps VISTA Project Selection Guidelines Fiscal Year 2018

AmeriCorps VISTA's core principles act as a guideline for project development. The 2018 FY principles include a focus on anti-poverty, community empowerment, sustainable solutions, and capacity building.

### Principles Breakdown:

- **Anti-Poverty Focus:** VISTA projects should focus on long-term solutions to poverty rather than short-term services.
- **Community Empowerment:** Each project must be responsive and relevant to the lives of community residents, and tap into inherent community assets, strengths, and resources.
- **Sustainable Solutions:** AmeriCorps VISTA members serve as short-term resources to build the long-term sustainability of anti-poverty programs. Projects should be developed with a goal to phase out the need for VISTAs and have the project continue without them.
- **Capacity Building:** VISTA members strengthen sponsors by building infrastructure, expanding community partnerships, securing long-term resources, and more, as determined by local needs, with all activities focused on creating pathways out of poverty for low-income communities.

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### **FY 2018 CNCS Focus Areas:**

*Economic Opportunity, Healthy Futures, Education, Veterans & Military Families*

**Economic Opportunity:** In FY 2018, VISTA will continue to give priority to projects that support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and financial security of economically disadvantaged people and communities.

### VISTA project activities should focus on the following objectives of Economic Opportunity:

- **Employment/Workforce Development:** Improving or creating job skills training programs that lead to increased employment, including vocational, education, and apprenticeship programs.
- **Financial Literacy:** Improving access to services and benefits to enhance financial literacy for both adults and young students.
- **Housing:** Transitioning individuals into, or helping them remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing, with a special focus on veterans.

**Healthy Futures:** In FY 2018, the program will give priority to projects that meet health needs for economically disadvantaged individuals.

### Projects should support the following Healthy Futures Objectives:

- **Access to Health Care:** Connecting economically disadvantaged individuals, particularly youth, to preventative education and treatment/recovery services in regards to the opioid crisis.
- **Food Security:** Alleviating hunger and increasing access to nutritious food.

**Education:** The VISTA program will give priority to projects that support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children.

\*Content that appears in this document was taken directly from the *AmeriCorps VISTA Program Guidance For Current And Potential Project Sponsors* report. More information can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/fy-2018-program-guidance-ameri-corps-vista>



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**Fiscal Year 2018**

Projects should focus on the following objectives of Education:

- **School readiness** for economically disadvantaged young children.
- **K-12 success** in student educational and behavioral outcomes in low-achieving schools.
- **Post-secondary success.**

**Veterans & Military Families:** AmeriCorps VISTA will support projects that focus on low-income veterans and military families as beneficiaries, or enhance existing projects to better serve those populations.

Projects should focus on the following areas of Veterans & Military Families:

- **Economic opportunity:** Employment and veterans' homelessness prevention/reduction.
- **Education:** School readiness, success in K-12 education and college success.
- **Healthy futures:** Opioid prevention and treatment.

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**Lake Effect Leaders AmeriCorps VISTA Project:**

To ensure that VISTA members are successful during their service term, host sites must adhere to the Lake Effect Leaders' guidelines and policies as stated below:

- Contribute \$4,500 to support project administration and member development.
- Provide Lake Effect Leaders with in-kind support with a monetary value of at least \$1,000
- Reimburse VISTA members for on-the-job transportation expenses.
- Provide VISTA members with resources to perform their tasks, i.e. adequate workspace, computer, telephone, consumable supplies, etc.
- Provide VISTA members with weekly supervision and support.
- Offer a VISTA position with your organization regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age or disability
- Submit weekly logs and progress reports in a timely matter
- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement with Allegheny College/Lake Effect Leaders.
- Cover cost of clearances, tests, vaccines, etc., if required by the organization
- Ensure VISTA members are working on appropriate assignments that build capacity within the organization, as outlined in the member's VISTA Assignment Description (VAD).
- Support VISTA members participation in project activities such as trainings, service days, and professional development opportunities.
- Communicate with Project Director if concerns arise during the term of service.

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**Timeline for Concept Application:**

**November 22nd:** Concept Application is due (if needed, follow-ups to submitted applications will be requested by Mariana Silva via email throughout the subsequent weeks)

**~March 2018:** Host sites will be chosen by CNCS and sites will be notified

**To apply, please contact Mariana Silva, Project Director, at [msilva@allegheny.edu](mailto:msilva@allegheny.edu)**

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