

AmeriCorps*VISTA Terms, Conditions and Benefits of Service

- AmeriCorps*VISTA service is a one year commitment. You are sworn in on the last day of the Pre-Service Orientation (PSO), in that way you can made the decision while in training whether the AmeriCorps*VISTA National Service is right for you.
- With prior approval from VISTA supervisor, AmeriCorps*VISTA members are authorized 10 work days per year of personal leave and up to 10 work days per year of sick leave. More time must be approved by the CNCS Michigan State Director.
- AmeriCorps*VISTA service requires full immersion in the project and community - **full and part-time employment are prohibited**. Members must remain available for service without regard to regular working hours at all times.
- For the same reason, **full-time enrollment in an educational institution is prohibited**. There may be an exception for 1 or 2 classes that would enhance your project with approval of the CNCS Michigan State Director.
- AmeriCorps*VISTA members are expected to live and work in their community of service. **Members are responsible for finding housing and paying their own rent**. In some cases, sponsor organizations may find and/or provide free or low-cost housing to members.
- VISTA allowances are paid every two weeks (NOT twice a month).
- **Federal taxes are withheld from the subsistence allowance. State, local, and Social Security (FICA) taxes are NOT currently withheld**. VISTAs are responsible for including subsistence allowance on state and local tax returns.
- A modest relocation allowance is provided if relocation is required to serve for a one-year term of service.
- Upon satisfactory completion of a full year of AmeriCorps*VISTA service, members are eligible to receive a \$4,725 education award paid in the form of a voucher for education expenses **OR** a \$1,200 cash stipend.
- CNCS offers a “forbearance” on most students loans based on national service.
- Interest continues to accrue. The Trust will pay interest on behalf of the member upon completion of service after receipt of an Interest Accrual Form. The interest payment is not deducted from the Educational Award.
- Health coverage begins on the first day as an AmeriCorps*VISTA trainee, and ends at midnight on the termination date. Coverage is continuous during service.

- Some medical costs not covered include: Routine physicals, dental exams, and eye exams; medical costs associate with pre-existing conditions (except prescription medicines); chiropractic visits and procedures; substance abuse; allergy tests.
- Members who have dependent children may be eligible for childcare support administered through the National Association of Childcare Resources & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA).
- Members must be income eligible to participate in the Childcare program. All family income, including VISTA allowances, is calculated when determining eligibility. Each state has unique eligibility criteria for childcare.
- Persons receiving assistance or service under any federal, state, or local governmental program **before** joining AmeriCorps*VISTA should not lose those benefits, or have benefits reduced, as a result of service.
- The Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Act imposes a maximum 5-years time limit on receiving cash for public assistance; some states have decreased that time limit to 2 years. AmeriCorps*VISTA income exclusion does NOT stop any state from imposing these time limits. Any cash assistance received while in AmeriCorps*VISTA will count against a state's time limits.
- AmeriCorps*VISTA members are prohibited from participating in political campaigns or voter registration drives, providing transportation to polls, lobbying and pro- or anti-labor organizing, or taking any action with respect to partisan or nonpartisan political activity while on duty or perceived to be on duty as an AmeriCorps*VISTA member.
- AmeriCorps*VISTA members may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, proselytize, or engage in any other religious activity as part of their duties. Members may participate in religious activities outside of official duties.