

AmeriCorps VISTA Terms, Conditions & Benefits



Terms:

Eligibility

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be a U.S. Citizen, national or legal permanent resident
- Must pass a background check

Service Commitment

- 12 months (365 days), full-time

VISTAs focus on:

Capacity Building

Anti-Poverty Efforts

Sustainable Results

Conditions:

Outside Employment

- Must be part-time, not conflict with project service or service hours, nor conflict with any applicable law or AmeriCorps VISTA program requirements or policies.
- Under no circumstances may a VISTA be an employee or contractor for the sponsor or project which they are assigned to serve.
- Site supervisor and sponsoring organization approval to work is required.

Educational Courses

- VISTAs may attend classes as long as studies do not interfere with the VISTA's project responsibilities.
- Site supervisor and sponsoring organization approval to enroll in classes is required.

Limitations on Activities

- VISTAs may not participate in any political advocacy, organizing, promotion, or demonstration while on VISTA duty or while perceived to be on duty.
- VISTAs may not promote, proselytize, or teach religious content while on VISTA duty or while perceived to be on duty.

Benefits:

Standard Benefits

- **Living Allowance:** \$1,026/month, federal and state taxes are withheld, FICA is not.
- **Healthcare Allowance** of \$7,150 for out-of-pocket expenses. Only covers the VISTA.
- **Leave time:** Personal (10 days), Medical (10 days), Holidays (all recognized by host site), and Emergency Leave (Contact your VISTA Sponsoring Organization Coordinator to find out details in event of emergency.)
- **\$200 Monthly Housing Allowance**, exclusive to VISTA members serving through the Initiative Foundation.
- **Training and Professional Development Opportunities** including Pre-Service Orientation and trainings held by Sponsoring Organization.
- **Opportunity to be part of a national service movement** and work with a cohort of other committed national service members.

Circumstantial/Optional Benefits

- **Settling In Allowance:** Up to \$550 for VISTAs who relocate more than 50 miles to a new community to serve.
- **Travel Relocation Reimbursement:** VISTAs approved to relocate will receive a relocation allowance based on the direct mileage between home of record and VISTA project site, up to \$1,000.
- **Protection of Public Assistance:** Any government assistance received before a VISTA starts service cannot be affected by the VISTA living allowance.
- **Child Care Benefit:** VISTAs may be eligible for child care benefits paid directly to qualified providers for part or all of the VISTA's child care costs for children under the age of 13.
- **Worker's Compensation:** Service related injuries may be covered, contact your VISTA Sponsoring Organization Coordinator for details.

End-of-Service Benefits

- **Choice of Education Award or End-of-Service Stipend Upon Successfully Completing a Full Year of Service:**
 - Education Award:** \$5,920 for tuition at a Title IV institution of higher education, for educational training, approved "school to work" programs, or to repay qualified student loans (cannot be transferred). Must be used within seven years after VISTA completes service.
 - End of Service Stipend:** \$1,803 cash (no restrictions on use).
- **Loan Deferment** (pairs with stipend) – Available at the discretion of the lender and based on "economic hardship" rather than service status. Deferment is a postponement of repayment of student loan for the length of AmeriCorps VISTA service. Terms and conditions of the deferment are at the discretion of the lender. The Department of Education will automatically pay interest accrued on subsidized loans.
- **Loan Forbearance** (pairs with education award) – Corporation can verify that members are in an approved national service position for loan holder to determine loan's eligibility for forbearance. Forbearance permits members to temporarily postpone principle loan payments. Interest continues to accrue but the National Service Trust pays it at the end of the VISTA's term. VISTAs are responsible for taxes owed on the interest.
- **Non-Competitive Eligibility for federal employment** for one year after service. Enables VISTAs to apply for federal jobs with the advantage of not having to go through the standard public competitive selection process.

More information regarding VISTA member Terms, Conditions and Benefits can be found:

- **General Resources:** <http://www.vistacampus.gov/>
- **Child care eligibility:** www.americorpschildcare.com/
- **Healthcare Allowance:** <http://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/vista-healthcare-options-0>
- **VISTA Member Handbook:** <http://www.vistacampus.gov/lessons/vista-member-handbook>
- **VISTA Supervisors Manual:** <http://www.vistacampus.gov/lessons/vista-supervisors-manual>