



Frequently Asked Questions



Current as of May 27, 2015

What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

AmeriCorps VISTA is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. Founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993, VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years.

What are the benefits of VISTA?

- A \$5,730 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or \$1,500 post-service stipend, upon completing your service.
- Modest living allowance Members will receive \$11,676 for the year paid every two weeks.
- Healthcare benefits while in service, (please visit americorpsvista.imglobal.com for more info.)
- Childcare assistance while in service.
- Student loan forbearance or deferment while in service for qualified federal loans
- One year of noncompetitive status for a federal government job
- Access to the network of VISTA & VISTA Alumni (170,000 strong)
- Valuable training (pre-service and in-service training from CNCS, state training and on-site training)
- Settling-in allowance of up to \$550 for those relocating over 50 miles for a service placement. A member will also receive an additional relocation allowance, based on direct mileage between his/her home of record and site. This translates into 23 cents per travel mile plus 10 cents a mile to cover shipping costs not to exceed \$1,000. No shipping receipts are necessary.
- In our program, mileage reimbursement for trips will also be available. Some sites are able to provide transit passes and other benefits.

How do I apply?

Complete and submit the online AmeriCorps application, which can be found at <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do> under the Apply to Serve section. Sending cover letters and resumes to the Project Director (Eric Gebbie eric.n.gebbie@state.or.us) is strongly encouraged and may strengthen your application.

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What happens after I submit my application?

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. You should expect to hear from a representative from the Partnership Project within two weeks about the possibility of an interview.

Where do Oregon AmeriCorps VISTA members serve?

Our VISTAs serve at sites throughout the state of Oregon, in both rural and urban communities.

How long is my AmeriCorps VISTA service?

VISTA members are placed at a site for one year (12 months). The start date for this Oregon Public Health VISTA team is August 28, 2015. However, VISTA members will need to attend a Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) in Portland, OR from August 24-27 (travel to and from orientation will be provided by CNCS). On August 28, at the end of Pre-Service Orientation, VISTA members will be sworn into service. The full team will also attend additional State training at the beginning of September in Portland.

Upon successful completion of a year of service, VISTA members generally can apply for an additional year of service (reenroll) subject to available placements. Not all reenrollments are approved, however if you are granted a reenrollment, keep in mind you may only earn two Eli Segal Education Award vouchers, including any time served in any AmeriCorps program. Members are welcome to serve additional years with the VISTA program, but will only have the choice of the \$1,500 stipend upon completion of service.

Are the start dates flexible?

No, the start and end dates are set and members must be able to make required orientations and start dates at their host sites. The start date for this Oregon Public Health VISTA team is August 28, 2015. However, VISTA members will need to attend a Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) in Portland, OR from August 24-27 (travel to and from orientation will be provided by CNCS). On August 28, at the end of Pre-Service Orientation, VISTA members will be sworn into service. The full team will also attend additional State training at the beginning of September in Portland.

Can I get a part time job on the side?

As of May 3, 2015, AmeriCorps VISTA members are allowed to have outside employment. The outside employment must be approved by their supervisor, be legal, and not interfere with regular service work hours or other AmeriCorps VISTA events and trainings.

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What kinds of training opportunities are available to me as an Oregon AmeriCorps VISTA?

During Pre-Service Orientation (PSO), VISTAs will network with each other and learn about diverse topics like: the history of the VISTA program, poverty concepts, understanding your placement, organizational culture, rights and responsibilities, and capacity building. The Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division (the sponsoring agency for Oregon's statewide public health VISTA program), then provides the VISTA members an additional orientation and training. This 4-day orientation and retreat in the Columbia Gorge covers public health, the team, life in Oregon, and critical professional development skills. In addition, various training opportunities will be provided throughout the year of service, including all-team retreats in different parts of the state, team attendance at state conferences, and individual participation in training requested by the VISTA or their supervisor. These training opportunities will include a variety of topics, such as public health science, leadership, tools of strategic planning, grant writing, creative communication, volunteer management, alternative fundraising, and living on a VISTA budget.

Facts about the Oregon Health Authority/AmeriCorps VISTA Partnership Project

- In Oregon, there are 36 counties with 34 Local Health Departments, and 9 Oregon Tribes.
- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that operates nationwide service programs, such as AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps. There is a State Office for CNCS located in downtown Portland.
- In 2009, the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division (OHA-PHD) applied to CNCS to become a Sponsoring Agency to develop a partnership project between the Medical Reserve Corps and the AmeriCorps VISTA programs. Since then, OHA has expanded its VISTA Partnership Project to include health department accreditation, chronic disease prevention, environmental health, oral health, disaster healthcare volunteer management, healthcare reform, health equity, and many other projects targeting specific public health issues that impact people living in poverty.
- The AmeriCorps VISTA/OHA Partnership Project is recruiting its tenth team and continues to be the largest VISTA project in the state of Oregon.

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- Local Health Departments (LHDs) and other organizations apply to the state Public Health Division to be selected as a host site for a VISTA member. During this process we vet each site to ensure they have dedicated and enthusiastic supervisors, clear vision for the project, and the resources needed to fully support the VISTA's projects and year of service.
- Agreements are drafted and signed between Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division and CNCS, as well as between the Public Health Division and each host sites.
- Recruitment, selection and processing of VISTAs will begin in June 2015 and continue until early July 2015.
- The state Public Health Division has developed a training and orientation program for all VISTAs in September. Site supervision and on-site training will happen throughout the year of service.
- A service year is one year, full-time. Those VISTA members who are sworn into service beginning August 28, 2015 will end their service on August 27, 2015

Important Dates for 2015-2016

May 27-July 9	Active recruitment and interviewing
August 24-27	Pre-Service orientation in Portland, Oregon
August 28	VISTAs are sworn in to service
September 1	First day on-site for August 2015-2016 Team
September 14-17	Training at the State Office and retreat center
October 12-13	Team Meeting at the Oregon Public Health Association conference
December 10-11	Team meeting
January 18	MLK Day Service Project
March/April TBA	Cesar Chavez Day Service Project