



Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA Project Host Site Applicant Guidance 2023 - 2034

About the Project

Our Purpose: The VISTA project, through service and volunteering, will seek to create a climate where economically disadvantaged individuals and youth are provided the tools needed for financial well-being and academic success, and communities have the resources needed to address critical needs related to poverty.

How You Can Partner with Us: By completing the host site application you can request one or more full-time VISTA members to complete a year of service meeting a specific need in your community. This document will detail the Volunteer Iowa VISTA program, and key details about utilizing full time VISTA members to fight poverty and build capacity in your community. Please read this document before completing the host site application.

This guidance is for all VISTA projects that begin October 2023 – August 2024. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications for projects starting fall and winter will have priority over those whose start dates are in the spring and summer.

About Volunteer Iowa

Volunteer Iowa, also known as The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS), is a state agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Volunteer Iowa and its partner agencies work with organizations on three main fronts:

1. Help organizations develop quality programs that use service as a strategy to fulfill their missions and address Iowa’s greatest areas of need.
2. Help organizations employ strategies to engage Iowans in their communities.
3. To build the volunteer infrastructure to allow service to happen.

One tool used by Volunteer Iowa is the AmeriCorps VISTA project. This document helps outline what you need to know as a host site. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer at any time. We hope to partner with you!

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About AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps is a national service program that allows individuals to commit a significant amount of time to serving their community to help address problems. The AmeriCorps VISTA program began during the War on Poverty of the 1960s and remains the poverty-fighting branch of AmeriCorps. All VISTA placements support the overall goal of eliminating poverty. As a host site applicant, you should be prepared to articulate how the position you are proposing to create will help address poverty-related issues in Iowa and/or your local community. If you need AmeriCorps members or volunteers for other types of service activities, please contact [Volunteer Iowa](#) to discuss your options.

AmeriCorps VISTA Priorities

- 1. Economic Opportunity:** AmeriCorps VISTA's commitment to ending poverty requires focusing on projects that provide opportunities to low-income individuals to get training, education and skills that will meet the needs of employers. In addition, projects that focus on asset building are encouraged to apply. Volunteer Iowa will continue to give priority to projects that support and/or facilitate access to housing and services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and financial security of economically disadvantaged people in rural communities and minorities who experience socioeconomic inequality. Priority areas include, but are not limited to:
 - **Employment:** Improving or creating job skills training programs that lead to increased employment
 - **Financial Literacy:** Improving access to services and benefits aimed at contributing to enhanced financial literacy.
 - **Housing:** Transitioning individuals into or helping them remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing including a focus on eviction prevention, and those that were displaced due to COVID-19.
 - **Federal Benefit access:** Increasing awareness of and access to federal benefit programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit (CTC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and others.
- 2. Education:** Volunteer Iowa 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. Priority areas include, but are not limited to:
 - **School readiness and learning loss** for economically disadvantaged children.
 - **K-12 success** in student educational and behavioral outcomes in low-achieving schools, including remote learning program development.
 - **Career and Technical Education** to help students gain the skills they need to compete for employment.
 - **College access and success** for low-income students.
 - **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs as pathways for economically disadvantaged students.

3. Healthy Futures: The VISTA program will give priority to projects that meet health needs, including access to food resources and health care, for economically disadvantaged individuals. Priority areas include, but are not limited to:

- **Access to health care:** Connecting economically disadvantaged individuals to preventative education and treatment/recovery services regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, to include mental health services.
- **Food security:** Alleviating hunger and increasing access to nutritious food. Potential partners may include, but are not limited to, individual food banks and pantries, networks of food banks, K-12 schools, community gardens, and after-school programs.
- Bring **culturally relevant services** to underserved groups according to age, geography, and disability.
- Create **wrap-around support** including physical, mental, and social welfare elements.
- **Education, Resource Development, Prevention, and Treatment:** Increase and improve services to low-income individuals affected by substance abuse.

4. Veteran and Military Families: The VISTA program will give priority to projects that focus on low-income veterans and military families as beneficiaries. Priority areas include, but are not limited to:

- **Economic opportunity:** Employment and homelessness prevention/reduction.
- **Education:** School readiness, success in K-12 education, and post-secondary employment success.
- **Healthy futures:** Access to health services, including substance abuse prevention and recovery and mental health services.

5. Environmental Stewardship: Supporting anti-poverty initiatives that focus on environmental stewardship and climate change in low-income communities. Priority areas include, but are not limited to:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Connecting underserved populations to renewable energy and energy efficient practices.
- **Awareness & Stewardship:** Building community resilience.

Volunteer Iowa Host Site Selection Process

Through our grant with our federal agency, AmeriCorps, we place members with host sites across the state as well as directly with Volunteer Iowa.

Eligibility: Public and nonprofits with a 501(c) status addressing individual, family, and/or community poverty-related issues are encouraged to apply.

Volunteer Iowa will use the following procedures for determining when to award VISTA positions to partner agencies.

1. Interested organizations must complete the VISTA host site application in its entirety and submit it to the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer.
2. Applications will be reviewed by the Volunteer Iowa staff to determine whether the proposed goals and activities of the VISTA placement fit within Volunteer Iowa- identified priority areas of (1) Healthy Futures (2) Economic Opportunity (3) Education, (4) Veteran and Military Families, and/or (5) Environmental Stewardship.
3. Volunteer Iowa staff will determine whether the applicant should be approved for placement within the Volunteer Iowa VISTA program, taking into consideration information contained within the application including:
 - The eligibility of the potential host site (i.e., Whether proposed member activities are allowable, whether the proposed host agency is permissible, etc.).
 - Ability to provide cost share funding.
 - Ability to provide adequate supervision to a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA member.
 - Quality of proposed service activities.
 - Ability to meet the needs of unserved or underserved communities.
 - Past performance of previous VISTA project, if applicable.
 - Other factors that help determine which placements would best further Volunteer Iowa strategic goals.
4. Once approved, host sites will consult with VISTA project staff to refine areas of the application, such as the Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD), and will work together to develop a recruitment and outreach strategy focused on the agreed upon VISTA start date.

VISTA Project Timeline

Deadlines: The following schedule outlines the due dates of the host site application as well as the selection of the VISTA member. Applicants can submit at any time as there can be additional VISTA start dates offered based on the best fit for the host site and Volunteer Iowa. Please contact the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer to discuss alternative dates.

Summer is the primary enrollment period for the VISTA project as, nationally, this is when the highest number of candidates are looking to start their year of service. However, applicants can choose between several start dates throughout the VISTA year.

Applicants should know that it takes on average 120 days from application to placement of a VISTA member with your organization. Most of this time is for recruitment, selection, and placement of the final candidate so this timeframe is flexible based on the success of recruiting the ideal candidate(s).

All applicants will be asked to select a Cohort, and a start date, for the VISTA project. The following is a timeline for start dates and deadlines.

Fall Cohort

Start date: October 2023

Applications due on a rolling basis

Applicant notification and consultation based on application submission date.

Final candidate selection due to Volunteer Iowa: September 2023

Winter Cohort

Start dates: January 2024

Applications due on a rolling basis

Applicant notification and consultation based on application submission date.

Final candidate selection due to Volunteer Iowa: December 2023

Summer Cohort

Start dates: June, July, and August 2024

Applications due on a rolling basis

Applicant notification and consultation based on application submission date.

Final candidate selection due to Volunteer Iowa: various dates in May, June, and July 2024

Memorandum of Agreement

Once a VISTA member placement is awarded to a host site, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be sent to for signature. The MOA with Volunteer Iowa outlines the responsibilities of each party regarding the placement of the AmeriCorps VISTA member. Signed MOAs should be in place with each site after placement of the VISTA member but before the VISTA member begins service.

Cost to host a VISTA Project

Site Support Payments. Approved host sites under the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program are required to provide a site support payment to Volunteer Iowa for part or all of the expenses associated with the operation of the VISTA program, such as the living allowance costs, recruitment efforts, training of members and host site staff, and other relatable costs to support the operation of the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program which is not provided by AmeriCorps via a support or program grant. The site support payments will be required of all approved host sites unless a waiver is provided by Volunteer Iowa. Site support payments will be attributed to the member service term. Site support payment received will be allocated to each fund based on the calculation of members enrolled. Site support payments will be collected based on the organization's ability to pay and based on the expenses directly attributed to the program.

Cost Share. One factor considered when awarding positions is the host site's ability to provide a cash payment towards our cost-sharing fee from AmeriCorps. There are two types of VISTA positions that are awarded to us by AmeriCorps: Standard members (which require no cash match by Volunteer Iowa) and Cost-Share members (for which Volunteer Iowa is charged a fee to help cover a portion of the expenses involved). Our project always includes a mix of Standard and Cost-Share members. Typically, the full cost share fee is about the same amount as the living allowance paid to the VISTA member for the year.

Volunteer Iowa divides these costs among all project sites and our expected cost to host a VISTA project this year is between \$4,000 - \$22,880 for a full-time VISTA position. In some cases, Volunteer Iowa may award VISTA positions to host sites with demonstrated financial need at a lower rate.

In addition to the above fees, all host site organizations should expect to incur some additional expenses in hosting a member. These may be in-kind expenses, such as those involved in providing a phone and computer to the member, or cash expenses, such as paying for your member to attend a conference related to their service activities, mileage reimbursement for service-related travel, etc. We expect each host site to set aside \$250 per VISTA for professional development opportunities. Details about these fees and other financial responsibilities are outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement.

On-site, Virtual Service Site, Teleservice

VISTA members must reside in Iowa and within commuting distance of their project host site. Exception: members may live within 30 miles of the Iowa border if their project host site is near the state's border. Remote service is not permitted. Any host site applicant will be required to provide information on the location in which a VISTA candidate would serve. This is especially important during recruitment as the advertisement will need to be clear about the expectations for service.

On-site: This refers to organizations that will require VISTAs to serve in-person at the host site organization. Typically, this would be a traditional placement where the member has office space and is expected to be in person for the duration of their service year.

Virtual Service: Virtual service sites refer to organizations that do not have a physical location (e.g., brick and mortar building) but maintain a defined geographic service area. Virtual service sites are permitted but must be located within the commuting area, as members are to be physically present to meet with their supervisor and/or attend community events when required.

Teleservice: Is allowable, up to full-time, from a location within the commuting area of project host site and members are to be physically present at the sponsor (Volunteer Iowa), host site and/or community events when required.

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

The VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) is the document that will guide your VISTA Member in their service, and it is helpful for creating a position description once you are ready to start recruiting for a member.

The VAD provides a broad outline of what a member will work on during their year of service. Similar to a position description, it is valuable in recruiting members and as the basis of a detailed work plan by breaking down objectives identified in the project application into a realistic set of activities to reach those objectives. These activities can be adapted as the project evolves, which means VADs should be updated at least every project year, and to match the unique strengths of the members serving with your project. The VAD will also be used to orient the members to the project, organization, and community. The VAD can also be used to identify areas for skill development and to assess how well the member is doing. You can use the VAD in your recruitment, to share with your applicants the specific problem they will be working to address, the long-term goal of their efforts, and the specific activities in which they will be engaged. Once your VISTA begins service, they should receive their own copy of the VAD.

Writing VADS: There are five elements to a VAD: Title, project details, project goal statement, objectives, and member activities.

Give each VAD a distinct title (with “AmeriCorps VISTA” included) related to the position.

Project Details: Each VAD contains the project name, site name, and focus area(s).

Project Goal Statement: The VAD begins by stating the overall goal of the project (as opposed to the overall goal of the specific member position). This is a good jumping-off point in describing the assignment to the member. The statement provides context for how the project addresses poverty and how the activities will build capacity. The project goal must:

- Address poverty by member efforts
- Describe who (population) will be served
- Include verbs to describe the member activities
- Define how the member activities will build capacity
- State the specific product(s) or service(s) resulting from member efforts

Objectives: Articulate what the member will achieve throughout the assignment in order to reach the project’s goal. Include multiple objectives that link the overall project goal and the member’s activities. Use active verbs. Include a performance period (what month of service you want the member to work on the objective) with a clear beginning and end for each objective. It is helpful to be specific with performance periods, as your members will use that information to guide their service terms. For example, a performance period could be, “First through third month of service.”

Member Activities: Identify the specific activities the member will carry out to achieve the objectives. Activities that include the desired outcome or deliverable are most informative and effective. Use active verbs and avoid vague statements such as, “will assist with...” Activity statements should be specific enough that someone unfamiliar with the project can understand the expectations of the member.

There are several resources available to help you develop an effective VAD. Contact Volunteer Iowa for examples.

Recruitment and Placement

If you are awarded a VISTA position, you will be notified by Volunteer Iowa staff regarding when to start your recruitment and what the due date is for nominations. My AmeriCorps, a nationwide database, is used to manage applications for AmeriCorps positions. Recruitment and placement of members will take place in three phases. See below for an outline of the process involved in recruiting an AmeriCorps VISTA member once you have been awarded a placement through the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program.

There are multiple times per year when VISTA members may begin their service as referenced under 'VISTA Project Timeline'. Recruitment begins well in advance of these dates since selected candidates must be identified and enrolled in the program about one month in advance of their start date.

Volunteer Iowa provides recruitment support through one-on-one assistance to host sites, as well as through distribution of opportunities to serve through our partnership network, Commission members, Service Year, and more broadly through social media and other online platforms. Additionally, the VISTA Leader, when serving, assists with recruitment. However, it is the responsibility of the host site to recruit a candidate for service.

Recruitment Materials: Volunteer Iowa will help you create project-specific recruitment materials to help spread the word about your position. Volunteer Iowa staff will post your position and open it for electronic applications. Potential applicants will see your position by searching on the AmeriCorps recruitment website, [My AmeriCorps](#). You will be expected to advertise the position locally and through your own recruitment channels (i.e., through local college and university service or career centers, in local newspapers, on your agency website, by forwarding to your contacts, etc.).

Interviews & Deadlines: Volunteer Iowa will use a three-step process for selecting AmeriCorps VISTA Members. Host Sites are encouraged to recruit from within their networks, volunteers, and community they serve.

1. The Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer and/or VISTA Leader will do the initial screening of applicants to ensure their understanding of the VISTA program and its terms, conditions, & benefits. These interviews will occur on a rolling basis as applications are received. Please advise the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer of applicants you directly recruit to expedite the review of their applications. Candidates must apply for the position through [MyAmeriCorps](#) before they interview with Volunteer Iowa.
2. Your organization will receive information about the applicants who have passed the initial screening on a rolling basis. Host sites will do their own round of interviewing and select their top candidate (and one to two alternates). The name of the top candidate(s) should be submitted to Volunteer Iowa with the "VISTA Host Site Recommendation Form".

If no concerns arise, Volunteer Iowa will notify the host site that the applicant(s) are approved, and an offer may be made by the host organization. If the first-choice candidate does not accept the position, an offer may be made to the next alternate. Those who accept the offer will be nominated by Volunteer Iowa. Final approval of candidate is completed by AmeriCorps. All enrollment steps by selected applicants, Volunteer Iowa, and host sites must be completed by the specified due date.

More information about VISTA recruitment and creating a plan can be found starting on page 47 of the Sponsor Handbook (linked at the end of this guide).

Eligibility & Preferred Skills

When recruiting for a VISTA member, it is important to keep in mind the member eligibility criteria and recruitment priorities established by the AmeriCorps and Volunteer Iowa:

- Members must be at least 18 years of age at the time of placement.
- Members must hold one of the following citizenship statuses: US citizen, US National, Lawful Permanent Resident Aliens and persons residing in a state that have the following legal residency classifications: refugee, asylum or asylee, temporary protected status, or deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) status.
- To earn an education award, members must be U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, or Legal Permanent Residents.
- To earn a cash award, members must be Legal Residents.
- Applicants must have earned a high school diploma or GED, or they must agree to work toward completion during their service. You may set additional educational standards for your position, depending on the skills you feel will be necessary for fulfilling the responsibilities of your position.
- Members must serve on a full-time basis for the 12-month term.
- Typically, full-time means the Members should follow the work schedule of regular employees at their host site—this may be a regular 9AM-5PM schedule or may include some evening and weekend hours.
- Members should be given the same holiday leave as paid employees at the site.
- Ten sick and ten personal days are allowed, as well as emergency leave, if necessary.
- Members may have part-time outside employment during the project period if it does not conflict with AmeriCorps VISTA duties.
- Members may attend classes full-time during their term of service, however it is not recommended as VISTA is full-time and service activities take priority over classes. It is the responsibility of the host site to manage members' time and set appropriate expectations of service.
- Members must not be listed on the National Sex Offenders Public Registry (visit <https://www.nsopw.gov/Search/Verification> to check a candidate's name on the list—official checks will be conducted by AmeriCorps).

Member Benefits

VISTA members receive modest benefits while in service. These benefits are discussed during the candidate screening call as well as during the Virtual Member Orientation that is provided on their first day:

Living Allowance

The gross annual subsistence allowance is \$22,882.

Health Benefit Program

Members are eligible to participate in one of two Health Benefit Programs: The AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefits Plan and the AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare Allowance. While these are excellent support for most VISTAs, they are not insurance and do not satisfy the individual responsibility requirement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). International Medical Group (IMG) is the administrator of the AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare Allowance and the AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefit Plan. For details about either benefit, please visit: americorpstvista.imglobal.com.

End of Service Benefit

VISTA members must choose either the \$6,895 Education Award or the alternative, the end-of-service cash stipend of \$1,800 prior to their start of service. Members who are at least 55 years of age at the start of their service may select the education award and transfer the award to their child, stepchild, grandchild, step-grandchild, or foster child. Prior to the members' 10th month of service, they have the option of changing from the educational award to the end-of service stipend. Members are NOT able to change from the end-of-service stipend to the educational award.

Child Care Benefits

Child-care benefits are contingent on having a child under 13, meeting an income threshold, needing child-care assistance to complete the VISTA assignment, and having a financial need to pay necessary child-care expenses. More information can be found [here](#).

Forbearance

Student loan deferment or forbearance or forgiveness opportunities are available depending on the type of student loan. Members are responsible for obtaining information about whether they would qualify for these benefits as a result of VISTA service. This is not an automatic benefit of the program.

Leave

Ten days of personal leave and ten days of medical leave are available during the year of service. Each can be used with the approval of the Host Site supervisor. Additionally, up to 5 emergency leave days can be provided with the approval of Volunteer Iowa.

Training and Professional Development

AmeriCorps VISTA provides a variety of training and development opportunities. These include: VMO: Virtual Member Orientation, an online orientation that introduces VISTA members to the terms, conditions and benefits of service and key programming principles at the start of their service. OSOT: On-Site Orientation and Training is provided by the sponsoring organization and introduces members to the organization, the community, and the goals of the project. Other training and professional development opportunities provided through the VISTA Campus include but are not limited to VISTA Structured Online Courses and VISTA Webinar Series.

Non-Competitive Eligibility

After completing service, non-competitive eligibility allows an AmeriCorps VISTA member who meets the minimum qualifications for a federal job to be hired by a federal agency without having to compete with the general public.

The Federal Employee Compensation and Federal Tort Claims Acts cover VISTA Members. In addition, the Income Disregard provisions apply to any Member who receives government benefits.

The AmeriCorps relocation allowance covers members moving over 50 miles to begin service. In addition, the VISTA housing policy encourages sponsors to find ways to provide free or low-cost housing for VISTAs. This practice may yield a larger and more diverse applicant pool.

Training

Virtual Member Orientation (VMO)

All VISTA members must attend an AmeriCorps-sponsored virtual member orientation on the first day of their VISTA service. Staff from AmeriCorps will present information on AmeriCorps VISTA and the expectations for and requirements of the program. Your VISTA member should expect to attend the VMO and will then be officially sworn into service.

Host Site Orientation & Training

All AmeriCorps VISTA members need to receive an orientation to their service site and local community. Each host site will develop a host site orientation and training (OSOT) plan to make sure their member is acquainted with the expectations and plans at their site. All host sites will be required to submit a copy of the OSOT plan prior to the member start date. OSOT plans will vary according to the background of the VISTA, but they should provide:

- An understanding of common expectations and agreements for the working relationship between VISTA and supervisor
- An understanding of the culture and mission of the host site organization
- Knowledge of the bigger picture related to the VISTA project and the community
- Understanding of the organization's policies, including
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Time and attendance, service hours
 - Travel reimbursement policy and procedure
 - Working with the media
 - Evaluation of individual VISTA and of the project
 - Reporting requirements for the VISTA project
- A training plan to build skills and knowledge needed to implement the Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD)

Orientation to the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA Project

All members will be required to attend an in-person or virtual orientation to the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA program within the first few weeks of their service. At this orientation, they will learn more about Volunteer Iowa and the programs we operate, how Commissioners and staff can support the VISTAs, expectations we have for the VISTAs to represent AmeriCorps and Volunteer Iowa in the communities they serve, and other requirements of serving on the Volunteer Iowa project.

Ongoing Training

Host sites should provide on-going training and member development activities to VISTAs, as needed, to improve their skills and provide them with knowledge and resources to complete their assigned activities. Volunteer Iowa will notify host sites of trainings we sponsor that may be relevant to VISTAs. Host sites are also expected to set aside \$250 per member to support the participation in training, conferences, and other professional development activities relevant to their position.

Member Management & Supervision

Each host site is required to designate up to 10 hours of site supervisor time for the AmeriCorps VISTA member(s). This may fluctuate based on the skill level of the VISTA member, as well as during the term of service. For instance, supervisors may have more time spent with the VISTA during the first few months of service while they are onboarded and getting started on their project versus towards the end of the term. The host site supervisor will:

- Provide day to day oversight of the AmeriCorps VISTA member(s).
- Provide regularly scheduled supervision time, twice a month at minimum, though weekly scheduled one-on-one supervisions are highly recommended and considered a best practice.
- Serve as the agency contact with Volunteer Iowa.
- Be allowed to attend any necessary supervisor training.

Sites must also provide AmeriCorps VISTA Members with sufficient office space, materials, and supplies to complete their duties, as outlined in the VAD. Materials and supplies will generally include access to a computer, phone, printer, etc.

If travel is required for the completion of service activities, sites must provide VISTA Members with mileage reimbursement and/or access to agency vehicle. If members are required to use their own personal vehicles, they must be notified of this in advance. Mileage reimbursement and/or agency vehicle access for VISTA member(s) should be in accordance with agency travel policy for other employees or the state rate of \$.50/mile, whichever is greater.

Reporting

Reports on VISTA members' progress will be due on a regular basis to the Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer. These Progress Reports document member development activities, volunteer recruitment and resource development, and include narratives on challenges and highlights of service, and document progress under the specific categories outlined in the VAD. Photos, articles written, and other materials produced as a result of the VISTA project and/or members are highly encouraged to be submitted along with the reports. Both members and supervisors will be expected to complete reports.

Host Sites should develop a plan for tracking the required reporting items. Sample reports can be sent, upon request. Additional reports may be required throughout the AmeriCorps VISTA member's service year, especially as requested by AmeriCorps. Information about any additional reporting requirements will be communicated to host sites in writing.

Promotion

Volunteer Iowa supports not only AmeriCorps VISTA, but also many other national service and volunteer efforts throughout Iowa. We see our VISTA host sites and members as partners in our work to promote service and volunteerism. Since we are a very small agency with staff located mostly in Des Moines, our VISTA host sites and members serve as our "eyes and ears" in communities throughout the state. We ask host sites to share with Volunteer Iowa any potential partners or opportunities to expand our work.

VISTA members and host sites are also expected to share information about Volunteer Iowa and our programs with the communities and clients they serve.

VISTAs are expected to participate in Days of Service and special days that highlight various volunteer efforts. VISTA members will be highly encouraged to design and/or participate in a service event for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, held the third Monday in January each year, and AmeriCorps Week, typically held in the spring each year.

Volunteer Iowa encourages AmeriCorps VISTA host sites and members to seek additional ways to partner with Volunteer Iowa, such as by nominating individuals or groups for our volunteer awards programs, sharing information with partner businesses about the Employer Volunteer Initiative, utilizing the statewide volunteer opportunity database "Get Connected" to post volunteer opportunities, or presenting at the Iowa Nonprofit Summit. Organizations that actively collaborate with Volunteer Iowa are looked upon favorably when being considered for continued VISTA placements at their site.

Evaluation & Recognition

Both members and supervisors will be required to complete a mid-term and an end-of-term evaluation. Volunteer Iowa should be notified immediately if performance problems arise during a members term of service.

The Volunteer Iowa VISTA Program Officer and/or other designees from Volunteer Iowa will make at least one site visit to the host agency during the VISTA member's term of service. This may be in person or virtual. These visits will help to ensure compliance with VISTA regulations but also provide host sites with an opportunity to demonstrate what has been accomplished due to the service of a VISTA Member at their site. The site supervisor and the VISTA Member must participate in these visits, but other host agency staff, clients, and/or board members may also be made available to discuss the impact of the VISTA.

Host sites should also consider what they can do to recognize and thank VISTA Members for their service. Volunteer Iowa also makes every effort to support other member gatherings and recognition opportunities.

Resources

- [VISTA Sponsor Handbook](#)
- [AmeriCorps VISTA Member Benefits](#)
- [Volunteer Iowa Service Enterprise](#)