



# MAVA AmeriCorps VISTA Project Request for Proposals 2019-2020



## Overview

The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA), in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), seeks applicants for AmeriCorps VISTA projects in 2019-2020. **By partnering with MAVA to host a VISTA project, your organization can develop, expand, or improve volunteer engagement that delivers anti-poverty services in Minnesota communities.**

MAVA VISTA projects focus on building volunteer engagement capacity in the areas of economic opportunity, education, and healthy futures. A typical project is renewed for three years.

Through the MAVA VISTA program you can host a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA member to implement your project goals. MAVA also provides training and technical assistance to you and the VISTA member throughout the project. Your organization provides onsite supervision of the VISTA member and day-to-day project management.

**We invite your organization to participate in this annual competitive selection process.**

## Timeline\*

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| VISTA project applications due.....  | <b>February 8</b>         |
| Sites notified of selection decisions.....   | <b>February 18</b>        |
| Site supervisors attend full-day training .....  | <b>March 1</b>            |
| Sites submit detailed project plan, VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), & Service Opportunity Listing..... | <b>March 15</b>           |
| Sites submit signed VISTA host agreement to MAVA.....  | <b>June 3</b>             |
| Sites recruit and select VISTA member(s).....  | <b>March through July</b> |
| VISTAs approved by MAVA and CNCS State Office.....   | <b>July 1</b>             |
| VISTAs sworn into service.....   | <b>August 5</b>           |

**\*Dates are subject to change**, and events on the timeline are contingent upon final decisions from CNCS regarding award of AmeriCorps VISTA resources

Contact Krista Eichhorst, Program and Operations Manager, with any questions about the program, project ideas, or application process via email ([office@mavanetwork.org](mailto:office@mavanetwork.org)) or phone (651-493-7724).

## AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) is a federally-funded national community service program. Its mission is to build sustainable organizational capacity for bringing individuals and communities out of poverty. VISTA members dedicate a year of full-time service to the community in exchange for a living allowance set at the poverty level, health care allowance, training, and the choice of an end-of-service education award (\$5,920) or stipend (\$1,800). VISTA members typically serve 40 hours per week and should be available for weekend or evening project needs as necessary. However, VISTA members may also hold part-time employment or attend school part-time with the approval of their site. For more info about AmeriCorps VISTA, visit <https://www.nationalservice.gov/vista>.

## Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration

MAVA connects, educates, strengthens and advocates for volunteer engagement leaders and their organizations to positively impact communities. Since 2001, we have provided opportunities for capacity building, networking, professional development, ground-breaking research, and advocacy related to volunteerism. For more info about MAVA, visit [www.mavanetwork.org](http://www.mavanetwork.org).

## MAVA VISTA Program

The MAVA VISTA program focuses on building volunteer engagement capacity across Minnesota to deliver anti-poverty services in the areas of economic opportunity, education, and healthy futures. Our VISTA members build volunteer infrastructure by developing or improving new partnerships, processes, and resources for inclusive, effective volunteer engagement.

MAVA provides training and technical assistance to host sites and the VISTA member throughout the project from project development and member recruitment to member onboarding and month. We also provide VISTA members with a complimentary MAVA membership for their term of service and free participation in MAVA's Volunteer Impact Leadership Training Series and 8 Strategies for Creating a More Inclusive Volunteer Program. For more info about the MAVA VISTA program, visit [www.mavanetwork.org/hostavista](http://www.mavanetwork.org/hostavista).

## MAVA VISTA Projects

MAVA VISTA projects focus on:

- Supporting community-identified and community-driven efforts to **end poverty**
- **Capacity building** by strengthening volunteer engagement infrastructure and expanding community partnerships
- **Including the community** impacted by the project in its development and implementation
- Creating **sustainable solutions** to eliminate the need for VISTA members after three years

Through the MAVA VISTA program, host sites will:

1. Serve more people, offer additional types of services, and/or provide higher quality of service through inclusive, effective volunteer engagement
2. Implement inclusive volunteer engagement best practices to effectively support communities experiencing poverty

All MAVA VISTA host sites must report on the following AmeriCorps VISTA performance measures:

- **Implementation of three or more effective volunteer management practices** through a volunteer program pre- and post-assessment provided by MAVA
- **Number & hours of volunteers** recruited (new to the organization) OR managed (in place before beginning the VISTA project)
- **One anti-poverty output and outcome** in the areas of economic opportunity, education, or healthy futures

For more info about performance measures, visit: [www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/vista](http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/vista)

### **VISTA Member Roles**

VISTA members focus on building systems, processes, and tools for organizations to effectively meet their mission. Examples of volunteer engagement capacity building activities include:

- Conducting a community assessment to determine the needs, opportunities, and challenges with developing or expanding volunteer engagement
- Designing logic models and strategic plans for new or expanded volunteer engagement
- Developing or improving volunteer position descriptions
- Building or strengthening recruitment partnerships in the community
- Conducting outreach to engage new populations of volunteers, utilize volunteers in new roles, or deliver new services through volunteers
- Creating or improving volunteer recruitment plans and materials
- Developing tools for tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of volunteer engagement
- Securing financial resources for volunteer engagement through grant writing or soliciting in-kind donations
- Developing or improving volunteer training and orientation

A VISTA member cannot be the only person in an organization who engages volunteers. MAVA will only accept applications from host sites that already have staff who engage volunteers.

### **Host Site Requirements**

#### **Project Planning**

Host sites work with MAVA to develop a clear project plan with measurable results and a VISTA Assignment Description (VAD). These documents are approved by CNCS.

#### **Project Management**

VISTA host sites oversee the day-to-day management of the project, including direct supervision of VISTA members, reporting and evaluation, and ensuring VISTA members have adequate resources and onsite support.

#### **Sustainability**

Host organizations develop the VISTA project with a goal to phase out the need for VISTA members over time.

#### **VISTA Member Supervision**

Supervisor involvement is the most important factor for a successful VISTA placement *so select an experienced staff member who has adequate time to effectively supervise the VISTA member and project.* The VISTA supervisor spends an average of 10-15 hours per month supervising each VISTA member and more time during the first month of service.

Supervisors must regularly meet with VISTA members to provide support, feedback, guidance, training, and mentoring and to assess progress toward project goals. Site supervisors are required to attend two in-person VISTA trainings with MAVA per year. Site supervisors are also required to complete mid-year and end-of-year evaluations for the VISTA member.

#### **VISTA Member Recruitment and Selection**

Sites take the lead in recruiting, interviewing, and checking references for VISTA applicants. MAVA and the VISTA Leader assist in this process and conduct general statewide recruitment. However, the *primary responsibility for filling the VISTA position rests with the host site.*

### **VISTA Member Training**

Host sites provide a three week onsite training when the VISTA member starts and as well as ongoing training throughout the year. Sites must also allow VISTA members to attend monthly MAVA VISTA trainings. Additionally, sites provide \$150 for the VISTA to use for professional development. MAVA will pay the registration fee for VISTA members to attend key MAVA trainings. Host sites are responsible for covering mileage to/from approved training events.

### **VISTA Work Space**

Host sites are expected to provide a comfortable and welcoming work environment, including office space, use of a computer, phone, and email access comparable to that of paid staff. Host sites are also expected to provide mileage reimbursement to VISTA members for project-related travel (does not include daily commute).

### **Project evaluation and progress reporting**

Host sites must be able to track and report on quantifiable measures of the project's impact. Site supervisors (with input from VISTA members) are required to complete five formal online progress reports per year (four quarterly reports and a July report) to share progress on project goals and impact.

### **Cost Share Payment**

Host sites pay MAVA a cost share to defray MAVA's expenses for managing the VISTA program. Host sites have the option of contributing a partial cost share of \$4,000 or a full cost share of \$12,312. Organizations willing and able to pay the full cost share of \$12,312 will be given priority consideration. All host sites pay \$1,000 of their cost share after they are selected in February, which is non-refundable. Host sites that fill their VISTA position pay the remainder of their cost share in July.

### **Eligibility**

Nonprofits, government agencies, schools, and faith-based organizations engaging volunteers to deliver anti-poverty services in Minnesota in the areas of economic opportunity, education, and healthy futures are eligible for MAVA VISTA resources. Certified Service Enterprises and organizations that have already completed Service Enterprise training are welcome to apply. **We encourage organizations that serve Greater Minnesota and/or communities of color through youth education, workforce development, or affordable housing to apply.**

### **Selection Criteria**

Applications are evaluated using the following criteria:

| <b>Category</b>   | <b>Weight</b> | <b>Details</b>  |
|---|---------------|---|
| Organizational Capacity:<br>- Organization information<br>- Contact information<br>- Participation in National Service Programs<br>- Organization description<br>- Project management and supervision | 25%           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organization is a registered 501(c)3</li><li>• Organization has the financial and staff capacity to effectively supervise the VISTA project and VISTA member</li><li>• Organization has a staff person dedicated to volunteer engagement</li><li>• Narrative includes a reasonable plan for providing sufficient supervision and support for the VISTA member and project</li><li>• Identified VISTA supervisor has supervision experience, and can dedicate 10-15 hours per month to supervision</li></ul> |

|   |                        |   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Concept:</b><br>- Summary of request<br>- Need statement<br>- Project vision<br>- Community involvement<br>- Goal statement<br>- Capacity-building focus<br>- Capacity-building results<br>- Capacity-building activities<br>- Programming interventions | 55%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project is focused on ending poverty through volunteer engagement capacity building</li> <li>• Project concept is compelling and contains clear goals and strategies</li> <li>• Project serves communities experiencing poverty</li> <li>• Narrative describes how the community impacted by the project is involved in its development and implementation</li> <li>• Narrative includes a realistic plan to make the project sustainable within three years</li> <li>• Project focuses on capacity building, not direct service activities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Performance Measures:</b><br>- Capacity-building<br>- Anti-poverty   | 20%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application includes appropriate measurable outputs and outcomes</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Additional Consideration:</b><br>- Financial capacity<br>- Population served   | Priority consideration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizations can pay full cost share amount of \$12,312</li> <li>• Organizations serves Greater Minnesota and/or communities of color through youth education, workforce development, or affordable housing</li> </ul>  |

### **Application Process**

Prior to submitting a new project application, you are required to participate in one informational webinar about partnering with MAVA to host a VISTA member and the application process. Register for one of the below dates online or contact Krista Eichhorst for a recorded version.

- [Thursday, January 17](#)  
12:00 – 1:00 PM
- [Friday, January 25](#)  
11:00 – 12:00 PM

New and continuation project applications for MAVA VISTA **projects must be submitted online by 5:00 PM on February 8th, 2019**. A complete application includes an attached copy of the proposed VISTA supervisor’s resume and certification of nonprofit or public agency status.

The new project application is available here: <https://form.jotform.com/62645830037152>

The continuation project application is available here: <https://form.jotform.com/62646553155156>