



Serve Wisconsin AmeriCorps VISTA Program: Information for Applicants

We connect passionate, driven individuals with capacity building projects in organizations throughout Wisconsin. To find opportunities with our project, visit my.americorps.gov and search for Serve Wisconsin VISTA.

First, apply online through my.americorps.gov if you have not already done so. We will contact you if you are selected for a first round interview. All interviews are conducted virtually.

Interviews are with the VISTA supervisor at the organization hosting the VISTA member and possibly a Serve Wisconsin staff member. A VISTA Assignment description will be shared with you ahead of time so that you can review the project in more detail as well as a list of potential interview questions (page 3).

Candidate selection is a shared decision between our staff and the staff at our partner organizations. An offer will be extended within 1-2 weeks of interviews. When possible, we give candidates one to two days after the offer letter has been sent to decide whether or not to accept the position.

Important Dates

Dates of Service: August 30, 2021 – August 29, 2022

Countdown Webinar Date: August 24, 2021

First day at your organization: August 30, 2021

Interview Tips

Research the organization you are applying to serve with. Interviewers appreciate candidates who have a familiarity with their organization such as an understanding of their mission, location, programs, etc. A great way to research the organization is to spend time on their website. We recommend starting with the “About us” section but encourage you to explore further.

Take time to prepare your responses and share specific examples. Attached are examples of questions we may ask ahead of time so you can provide thoughtful answers (see page 3).

Prepare questions to ask the interviewers. This is the next year of your life and an important commitment. You’re interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you. Not asking questions may communicate a lack of investment on your part.

Serve Wisconsin VISTA Member Benefits & Conditions

AmeriCorps VISTA is a year-long, full-time commitment. Similar to the Peace Corps, VISTA members live in the community they are serving. You do not receive a salary or wages, but you do receive a bi-weekly living allowance calculated in correlation with the poverty level of the county you are serving in. For more information on the sections below, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Living Allowance: This is meant to cover basic living expenses and is tied to the poverty rate in the community where you serve. In Wisconsin, the stipend is a daily rate of \$36.70 or approximately \$513.93 bi-weekly before taxes are taken out. For more information about the VISTA living allowance, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.



End of Service Awards: Upon successful completion of a year of service, VISTAs have a choice of a \$6,495 AmeriCorps Segal Education Award or a \$1,800 Cash Stipend. The education award is valid for up to 7 years and can be used towards future education expenses or to pay off federally backed student loans. The Cash Stipend is unrestricted and is paid out to members in their last two living allowance deposits. For more information about VISTA End of Service Awards, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Health Coverage: The AmeriCorps Health Benefits Plan provides basic health coverage for things that come up during your year of service. The AmeriCorps Health Benefits Plan is not insurance, but rather it is a basic health benefit package; the plan does not cover pre-existing conditions or routine dental care. Please note, the plan does not satisfy the individual responsibility requirement of the Affordable Care Act. VISTA members are strongly encouraged to maintain outside coverage through a family healthcare plan, coverage purchased through the ACA Health Insurance Marketplace or coverage through their state Medicaid or Medicare program. VISTA members who maintain additional coverage will be eligible for a healthcare allowance to be reimbursed up to \$7,350 to cover out of pocket health expenses such as your annual deductible or co-insurance costs, co-payments for office visits, prescriptions, etc. For more information about VISTA healthcare options, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Relocation Assistance (if eligible): VISTAs who are relocating more than 50 miles to serve are eligible to receive relocation assistance in terms of a settling in allowance of \$750 and a relocation allowance. The relocation allowance is calculated at 34 cents per mile, zip code to zip code from your home of record to the project site. The settling in allowance is paid in addition to your first living allowance, and the relocation allowance is paid by direct deposit six to eight weeks into your year of service. For more information about VISTA relocation assistance, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Student Loan Deferment/Forbearance: VISTA members can place their federally backed student loans into deferment during service. AmeriCorps will also pay any interest that accrues on the loans during your service term. For more information about VISTA student loan deferment/forbearance, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Childcare Benefits (if eligible): Contingent on having a child under 13 in care, meeting an income threshold, needing child-care assistance to complete the VISTA assignment, and having a financial liability to pay necessary child-care expenses. For more information about VISTA childcare benefits, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Time Off: VISTA members receive 10 personal days, 10 sick days and follow the holiday schedule of their organization. For more information about VISTA leave, please visit, <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>.

Background Check: All members go through a federal background check which includes fingerprinting.

Educational Policy: VISTA members are allowed to take educational classes during their year of service. However, a VISTA member should discuss their study plan ahead of time with their site supervisor and their class schedule cannot interfere with their work schedule.

Outside Employment: VISTA members are allowed to hold part time jobs during their year of service. However, a VISTA member should discuss their jobs ahead of time with their site supervisor and fill out an outside employment form. The part time job cannot interfere with their VISTA service.



Examples of Typical Interview Questions

Why do you want to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA member?

Why do you want to serve with this specific position?

What interests you about the position you applied to? How does it contribute to your professional and personal goals?

How do you keep yourself organized?

What do you enjoy about working as part of a team?

Tell us about a stressful or challenging work experience. How did you handle it? Be specific.

Tell us about an experience when you encountered conflict. How did you handle it? Be specific.

Share an example of a time where you needed to demonstrate flexibility. What did you learn? Be specific.

Give us an example of a project you were responsible for starting. What did you do? What were the results? What would you have done differently? Be specific.

Tell us about a time that you made a mistake. What was the outcome and, most importantly, what did you learn?

Questions?

Contact Serve Wisconsin Program Officer, Ruhamah Bauman, at 608-225-6629 or email ruhamah.bauman@wisconsin.gov. For more information about Serve Wisconsin, please visit, <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/>.

