



Oklahoma | Campus Compact



VISTA Mission: *Building Capacity For and Sustainability of Programs or Systems that are Designed to Alleviate Poverty*

SITE APPLICATION AND INFORMATION, QUESTIONS/ANSWERS (Q&A)

Grant Overview

Grant Sponsor: Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)

Sponsor: The Oklahoma Campus Compact (OkCC) of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

AmeriCorps*VISTA (hereinafter referred to as VISTA) is designed to create and expand programs that leverage human, financial, and material resources to increase the capacity of low-income people in communities across the state for educational and economic improvement. Through placement at institutions of higher education OkCC VISTA members will build relationships with community-based organizations and connect them with campus resources including student volunteers, faculty teaching service-learning courses, community Federal Work Study programs and others. Emphasis is on sustainability of the project by the institution of higher education and the community after the grant has expired.

Available Grants: Funding for VISTA member positions as open at institutions of higher education in Oklahoma (total of 15 positions). In exchange for a year of service, OkCC VISTAs earn a subsistence salary, health insurance, FICA, and a post-service education award of \$4,725 to pay for college tuition or student loans or a stipend of \$1,200. Members receive their paychecks biweekly directly from VISTA. Liability coverage is included for all members.

Start Date: The approval date from CNCS was August 19, 2007. Extensions are available for later starts at the local level. Federal Training Available on a monthly/bimonthly schedule. **Supervisors are required to attend the Federal Training either before or with their VISTA Member.** State Orientation and Training is ongoing. **All Required Federal Training for Site Supervisors and VISTA Members Paid by CNCS.**

Duration: Three years. Extensions are available.

Sites Selected To Date: Cameron University, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma State University-OKC, Rose State College, Tulsa Community College, University of Central Oklahoma, Rose State College, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, and the University of Oklahoma. Sites may host more than one VISTA Member.

CNCS Obligation:

1. Member Base Salary of \$833/Month, Insurance Benefits, Leave Benefits.
2. Payroll Services.
3. Education Award of \$4,725 upon Completion of Year of Service, or Cash Award of \$1,200.
4. Pre-Service Training with Travel.
5. Liability Coverage for all Members.
6. Child Care for Income-eligible Members.
7. Assistance with Recruiting VISTA Members.

OkCC State (Sponsor) Obligation:

1. State Orientation and On-going Training, with Travel Reimbursement for the VISTA member.
2. State Coordinator, Supervision, Technical Support, Etc.
3. Compliance with all CNCS Reporting Requirements.
4. Assist with Recruiting VISTA Members.

Host Institution Obligation:

1. Site Orientation and Supervision for the VISTA member.
2. Office/Work Station; equipment, including computer, email access, phone with voice mail; supplies; parking; etc.
3. Local mileage and per diem as necessary for VISTA Member Activities (Estimated \$350/Year).
4. Campus and Community Orientation.
5. Assist with VISTA recruiting VISTA Members.
6. Monthly reports on VISTA Member Activities.

Note: Since the individuals are paid according to regional poverty wage standards, institutions are encouraged (not required) to consider the additional provision of available housing and/or a meal plan.

Goals/Performance Measurement

Pursuant to VISTA requirements, the project incorporates two goals with performance measures. The goals are designed by OkCC to be broad enough to allow each VISTA site to accommodate local plans and goals at each site.

Goal #1: Community Engagement and Volunteerism

VISTA members will work in cooperation with campus staff to develop, build, and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships between colleges and community-based organizations in their local areas. Members will identify campus and community-based assets and needs, and the resources available to address them, work to establish institutional processes and infrastructure for non-curricular service opportunities, support training and reflection activities for volunteers, and track non-curricular service activities and results.

Goal #2: Service-Learning

VISTA members will support the development of a system to assess community needs and related service-learning course availability. The activities consist of developing a survey to be used as an assessment tool for measuring the needs of community agencies, conducting on-site visits or phone contacts with the appropriate community agencies and orienting them to collaboration with service-learning, increasing the knowledge of service-learning needs among the faculty, staff and students, and tracking the involvement of service-learning with community needs.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Campus VISTA programs should be designed to:

- Add value on campus related to the goals set for the program.
- Address local community needs.
- Build infrastructure for development of service-learning activities.
- Build reciprocal relationships with community partners.
- Be sustainable after the VISTA member is gone.

Suggested Campus Activities/Programs:

- Building data base of community needs and higher education institution resources (known as community mapping).
- Establishing systems to facilitate higher education involvement in community needs.
- Instituting process to increase the number of service-learning courses.
- Strengthening community-based organizations capacity.
- Increasing methods of student participation in community activities addressing literacy and economic growth.
- Initiating and completing planning for activities to be performed by students on Federal Work-Study Programs.

Q&A

Q: Is the OkCC VISTA project limited to public institutions of higher education?

A: No, any Oklahoma Campus Compact member may apply.

Q: Are institutions limited to hosting only one VISTA member?

A: No, an institution may host as many VISTA members for which it qualifies and can satisfy the supervision and reporting requirements.

Q: Must the host site provide a fulltime supervisor?

A: No. While one person must be identified as the site supervisor to provide the supervision, attend the required federal and state training either with or before the VISTA, and manage the reporting requirements, this duty may be in addition to other duties for that individual.

Q: Is every VISTA project required to meet all of the identified project goals?

A: No. The goals were drawn broadly enough to incorporate flexibility at the local level.

Q: If the grant is of 3-year duration, why are VISTA members described in terms of 1-year of service?

A: The living allowance is deliberately set to enable the VISTA member to subsist close to a poverty level. The year of service is rewarded with an educational grant or cash stipend. Although members may serve more than 1 year, the program is designed to incorporate a single year of experience for an individual.

Q: Can the educational award of \$4,725 be applied to student loans owed?

A: Yes. VISTA also provides for student loan forbearance for students wishing to spend a year in service.

Q: Can the local campus select the person it chooses?

A: While the host site supervisor plays a vital role in selection, all candidates must use the OkCC Recruitment process, which includes OkCC approval and submission of an online application through the AmeriCorps On-Line System process <https://my.americorps.gov> in order to be considered in the application. Candidates recommended by the site supervisors will be screened by OkCC, and assisted in the selection process.

Q: How much latitude will the local campus have with regard to the VISTA member's duties and assignments?

A: While the institution will determine the local needs and exercise on-site supervision within the framework of the two state goals, the following considerations should be kept in mind: VISTA members are intended to build infrastructure and capacity, not used in direct service. VISTA members are not students, they should be treated as professionals. Finally, the OkCC is required to conduct regular site visits using a formal evaluation tool, along with informal site visits on an on-going basis to ensure compliance with the state goals.

Q: May the institution provide the VISTA member with a school-owned car, as opposed to reimbursement of the member for local travel in a privately-owned vehicle?

A: Yes. On the other hand, if the institution does not supply a vehicle, it should specify the need for access to a private vehicle in the position qualifications. If private transportation is utilized, reimbursement for local travel is required.

Q: What is the process for determining the schedule for supervisor and VISTA member attendance at the federally-required training?

A: The supervisor must attend the training either prior to or with the VISTA member. No VISTA member may be supervised by someone who has not attended the federal orientation. The VISTA member may not begin service until the member has completed the federal pre-service orientation.

Resources for Further Information

www.americorps.gov/vista

<https://my.americorps.gov>

<http://encorps.nationalservicerresources.org>



**AmeriCorps* VISTA Program
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Education for Community and Economic Development
VISTA MEMBERSHIP POSITION**

OkCC VISTA partners should be interested in capacity building activities, including the development of civic engagement systems and infrastructure. OkCC VISTA members spend a year of service on college campuses collaborating with students, faculty, staff and community partners, supporting community service and service-learning programs, developing strong campus-community partnerships focusing on anti-poverty outcomes, and improving access to college for low-income people.

VISTA Member Requirements

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident.
- Have a high school diploma/GED, or be willing to earn one while serving.
- Be fulltime. Enrollment in education and/or outside employment is prohibited during the year of service.
- Undergo a background check and be fingerprinted.
- While selection is done at the local level, all applicants must apply through the AmeriCorps On-Line System at <https://my.americorps.gov>

Oklahoma Preferences on Qualifications

- Associate or bachelor's degree.
- Demonstrated commitment to and experience in community service or service-learning.
- Experience working with college students.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including conflict resolution and public speaking.
- Strong skills in project and multi-task management, leadership, planning, and time management.
- Computer skills, including database management.
- Valid driver's license and access to a vehicle.

VISTA Benefits

In exchange for a year of service, OkCC VISTAs earn the following benefits:

- Post-service Education Award of \$4,725 to pay for college tuition or student loans or a stipend of \$1,200.
- Monthly subsistence living allowance of \$833.
- Possible relocation allowance, up to \$550, plus assistance with baggage.
- Health Insurance.
- Student Loan Forbearance.
- Non-competitive eligibility for federal employment in the year following service.
- Housing and meal plans may be available at some campuses.

Oklahoma Member Activities

These may vary from campus to campus, and include:

- Attending OkCC VISTA meetings for training, reflection, and team building (required).
- Convening community forums to identify local needs and assets.
- Developing infrastructure for partnerships among campuses, community members, and community organizations addressing anti-poverty outcomes.
- Action planning and assessment of partnerships and partnership activities.
- Recruiting and coordinating placement of students as volunteers with local community agencies.
- Helping to develop and support student service leadership programs.



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SITE APPLICATION

Site Supervisor:	
Institution:	
Address:	
City/State/Zip Code:	
Title:	
E-mail address:	
Phone number:	
Fax number:	
Number of VISTA Members Requested:	
Will your institution provide housing or a meal plan? Please specify.	
Please provide a brief detailed plan for the VISTA that is consistent with Oklahoma Campus Compact Goals. Examples include: offering faculty and student workshops on service-learning, mapping (identifying) community needs that can be met by the VISTA site, developing partnerships that connect the institution with the community in meaningful and reciprocal ways. Remember the work should address needs of those in poverty and be sustainable. (This box will expand)	

The signatures below indicate that all necessary parties on the campus have read, understand, and are willing to sign the official Memorandum of Understanding (to be forwarded after this application is approved) and program stipulations as presented in these documents.

Site Supervisor (include title)

Date

Site Supervisor's Supervisor (include title)

Date

Institution President

Date

OkCC Contacts:

<p>Ms. Gina Wekke, Ex. Dir., Oklahoma Campus Compact and Asst. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education 655 Research Parkway, Suite 200 Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3603 Phone: 405-225-9142 E-mail: gwekke@osrhe.edu Fax: 405-225-9230 Website: http://www.okhighered.org</p>	<p>Ms. Debbie Terlip, Asst. Dir., Oklahoma Campus Compact and Student Relations Liaison Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education 655 Research Parkway, Suite 200 Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3603 Phone: 405-225-9128 E-mail: dterlip@osrhe.edu Fax: 405-225-9230 Website: http://www.okhighered.org</p>	<p>Ms. Risa Johnson, OkCC VISTA State Coordinator Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education P. O. Box 108850 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-8850 Phone: 405-225-9228 E-mail: rjohnson@osrhe.edu Website: http://www.okhighered.org</p>
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