SerVermont AmeriCorps VISTA

Request for Proposals

Service Year: August 2026 – August 2027

Letter of Intent Deadline:
Friday, February 6, 2026, 12 PM

Application Deadline:
Friday, March 13, 2026, 12 PM

SerVermont

Agency of Human Services

280 State Drive

Waterbury, VT 05671-1000

http://servermont.vermont.gov/

ABOUT SERVERMONT

SerVermont's mission is to promote, support, and recognize volunteerism and community service throughout Vermont. SerVermont administers the federally funded AmeriCorps State program, sponsors and manages an AmeriCorps VISTA program, manages volunteers in disasters, and works with other national service and local partners to address pressing challenges in Vermont through service. SerVermont was established by Executive Order 05-98 on November 30, 1993, by Governor Howard Dean. The Governor appoints individuals to serve three-year terms as members of the SerVermont Commission. All streams of national service (AmeriCorps State, National, VISTA, and NCCC, as well as AmeriCorps Seniors) are present throughout the State of Vermont. SerVermont is an affiliated board of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, and we work towards the agency's mission to improve the health and well-being of Vermonters through national service.

VISTA UMBRELLA PROJECT

AmeriCorps VISTA members are made available through SerVermont through a VISTA Supervision Grant from the AmeriCorps Agency, formerly the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency that oversees National Service. SerVermont has administered the VISTA Umbrella Project on behalf of AmeriCorps since 2011 and is currently the only VISTA project in Vermont. The statewide SerVermont VISTA project seeks to end poverty in Vermont by building capacity in organizations that address homelessness, provide job training, invest in food security, provide nutrition education, and promote disaster resiliency. In the 2026-2027 Program Year, SerVermont is anticipating the availability of up to 21 VISTA member positions.

Every VISTA Project Host Site must fall within the **VISTA Programming Framework**:

- **Anti-Poverty Focus - T**he purpose of VISTA is to support efforts to eliminate poverty. The goal of every project must be to help individuals and communities move out of poverty, not simply make poverty more tolerable. The project should focus on long-term solutions rather than short-term services.

- **Community Empowerment -** VISTA Project Sponsors and Host Sites must ensure that their project engages residents of the low-income community in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating the project. The project must be responsive and relevant to the lives of residents in the community, and should tap into inherent community assets, strengths, and resources.

- **Sustainable Solutions -** As originally designated in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act and reinforced in the Serve America Act, VISTA members are a short-term (one-year) resource who serve to build the long-term sustainability of anti-poverty programs. All VISTA projects should be developed with a goal to phase out the need for VISTA members and strengthen the ability of the project to continue without them. VISTA projects typically last three years, occasionally longer. From the beginning of the project planning process, the sponsor and community must think about how to use the VISTA project to phase in other resources and systems to replace the VISTA resource.

- **Capacity Building -** Through activities such as fundraising, establishment of volunteer recruitment and management systems, community outreach, and partnership development, VISTAs help sponsors achieve lasting solutions to poverty. In order to build capacity, **VISTAs do not perform direct service**. Direct service is defined as activities that immediately address individual clients' needs, and these activities are usually focused on short term goals. **Ideally, VISTAs work their position out of existence and create systems that remain long after their service ends.**

Furthermore, VISTAs are prohibited from engaging in activities that would supplant the tasks of or displace paid staff, contractors, or existing volunteers. This includes activities related to the development and management of other AmeriCorps grants and programs.

Every **VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)** must be guided by one or more of the following objectives:

1. To expand the capacity of communities to develop and sustain effective **programs** that address various issues related to poverty (i.e. housing, economic development, education)
2. To strengthen the **operating systems** of programs that support individuals and families facing poverty-related obstacles in their lives (e.g., build volunteer systems, design data systems, institute program documentation procedures, refine program operating systems, improve the quality of services, etc.)
3. To increase **financial and in-kind resources** available to programs that support individuals and families facing poverty-related obstacles in their lives.
4. To increase **community participation** in programs with a special focus on meeting the needs of individuals and families facing poverty related obstacles in their lives.

5. To increase the **coordination** between poverty-focused programs and other appropriate community services.
6. To increase **community commitment** to and involvement in programs that support individuals and families facing poverty-related obstacles in their lives.

2026-2027 SerVermont AmeriCorps VISTA Priority Areas		
Focus Area	Objective	Programming Area
Economic Opportunity	Housing	Transitioning individuals into or helping them remain in safe, affordable housing with a special focus on flood recovery, veterans and those displaced due to COVID-19 related unemployment. Organizations focused on eviction prevention are encouraged to apply.
	Employment / Workforce Development	Improving or creating job skills training programs that lead to increased employment.
	Federal Benefit Access	Increasing awareness of and access to federal benefit programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, and others
Healthy Futures	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.
	Access to Health Care	Connecting economically disadvantaged individuals to preventative education and treatment/recovery services regarding the COVID-19 pandemic or opioid crisis, to include mental health services.
Environmental Stewardship	Energy Efficiency	Connecting underserved populations to renewable energy and energy efficient practices
	Awareness & Stewardship	Building community resilience
Education	School Readiness	Learning recovery for economically disadvantaged children.
	K-12 Success	In student educational and behavioral outcomes in low-achieving schools.

	Post Secondary Support for Career and College.	Career and Technical Education (CTE) to help students gain the skills they need to compete for employment and college access and success for low-income students.
Veteran and Military Families	Economic opportunity	Employment and homelessness prevention/reduction.
	Education	School readiness, success in K-12 education, and post-secondary career and college success.
	Healthy Futures	Access to health services, including substance abuse prevention and recovery and mental health services.
Disaster Services	Disaster Services	Support communities in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters.

Placement Priority: SerVermont is especially interested in partnering with organizations with a focus on disaster mitigation, recovery and resilience, in addition to organizations that address housing security and support workforce development initiatives.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SerVermont announces the availability of AmeriCorps VISTA members for new and existing Host Sites through a state competition for the 2026-2027 AmeriCorps VISTA program year. SerVermont administers an annual Request for Proposals (RFP) process to determine where AmeriCorps VISTA members will be placed in the upcoming program year.

Any eligible applicant seeking to apply for an AmeriCorps VISTA member(s) through the SerVermont VISTA Umbrella Project must respond to this RFP and all related deadlines.

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

SerVermont's single point of contact for this competition is Caitlin Perrier, VISTA Program Director. Caitlin can be reached at (802) 585-6835 and/or Caitlin.perrier@vermont.gov

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within Vermont (e.g., cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and Tribes.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this RFP, and related AmeriCorps documents. Organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible to apply.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Successful applicants will be expected to host an AmeriCorps as proposed in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations at both the federal and state level.

SerVermont AmeriCorps VISTA Host Sites must:

a) Pay a cost-share and training and technical assistance fee to SerVermont. First year sites pay $6,000 and the amount increases by $1,000 each year not to exceed $8,000. Please note, scholarships may be offered on a case-by-case basis.

b) Read, maintain copies of, and follow the law, regulations, and policies governing the AmeriCorps VISTA program of the AmeriCorps Agency as stated in the VISTA Supervisor's Manual (provided by VISTA HQ at http://vistacampus.org/, or by the State upon request) and follow all policies instituted by the State.

c) Develop an acceptable VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) for the AmeriCorps VISTA member on the form provided by the State for approval prior to assignment of a VISTA member. The VAD will set forth the activities and tasks that the member will focus on during service. To add tasks or alter the VAD, the Host Site will need to get written permission from the State. (See also 2.w.)

d) Facilitate AmeriCorps VISTA member selection by disseminating advertisements, interviewing prospective applicants, contacting applicant references, selecting an appropriate applicant, and ensuring that a complete VISTA application is received by the State by the required date.

e) Select a Site Supervisor for approval by the State; ensure that the Site Supervisor, prior to assuming supervisory duties, attends an orientation facilitated by the State; ensure that the Site Supervisor selects an appropriate designee to perform required duties if the Site Supervisor is not available; and inform the State immediately if the Site Supervisor changes and make sure that the new Site Supervisor attends the required supervisor orientation. The Site Supervisor must be a paid staff member and the person who directly

supervises the VISTA.

f) Make every reasonable effort to ensure that the health and safety of the AmeriCorps VISTA member is protected during the performance of the VISTA member's assigned duties. Project Site shall not assign or require the VISTA member to perform duties which would jeopardize the VISTA member's safety or cause the VISTA member to sustain injuries.

g) Provide day-to-day supervision of the activities of the VISTA member.

h) Ensure that the Site Supervisor meets with the VISTA member for one-hour supervision meetings at least weekly, to give direction and support, solicit input, and inquire about the general well-being of the VISTA.

i) Ensure that the VISTA member completely fills out required weekly reports (timesheets) and monthly data reports and ensure that they are submitted and approved on time. The Site Supervisor shall keep copies of all timesheets at the site. Site Supervisor shall track member use of personal leave [ten (10) days annually] and medical leave [ten (10) days annually].

j) Provide mileage reimbursement and/or public transportation costs to the VISTA member for service-related activities (e.g., off-site travel to service-related meetings events, as well as training sessions, meetings, events, etc. sponsored by the AmeriCorps, or the State) as well as cover approved travel-related expenses.

k) Ensure that the VISTA member participates in all training sessions required by AmeriCorps, and the State/SerVermont. This includes allowing the VISTA member time off from the Project Site and ensuring that the VISTA member has transportation to and from the training. If a VISTA misses a required training, meeting, or event, the Host Site may be responsible for reimbursing the State or AmeriCorps.

l) Ensure the successful retention of the VISTA throughout the program year by communicating timely notifications to SerVermont in the event of any grievances or challenges faced at the Host Site. Additionally, the Host Site will not make any job offer or encourage partner agencies to make any job offer to a current VISTA that would interfere with successful completion of their service term.

m) Provide materials and office supplies related to the performance of the

member's assignment and provide adequate working space to permit the VISTA member to perform their assigned duties outlined in the Site's most current VAD approved by the State and AmeriCorps.

n) Keep at least five hundred dollars ($500) per member emergency fund for situations such as travel funds for emergency leave and living allowance advancement if VISTA member's check is delayed.

o) Notify the State immediately regarding unscheduled departure of the VISTA member from the Host Site and unscheduled changes of status and condition of the VISTA member, such as arrest, hospitalization, and absence without leave. Notify the State if the member will be away from the site for more than five consecutive business days for any reason, including attending conferences or using personal leave.

p) Allow the VISTA member to participate in local emergency disaster relief efforts if needed. The Host Site will need to release the member from service at the site if the member's assistance in an emergency disaster relief effort is requested by SerVermont or AmeriCorps. If none of those entities has requested member participation, then the Host Site will need to get permission from the State before allowing a member to participate in disaster relief.

q) Allow and encourage the VISTA members to participate in Dr. Marin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service activities; and encourage members to participate in other Days of Service (e.g., Green Up Day) should activities be organized in the communities where the VISTA member is in service.

r) Assist in reviewing performance of the VISTA member when requested by the State and/or AmeriCorps.

s) Maintain such records and accounts and make such reports and investigations concerning matters involving the VISTA member and the project as AmeriCorps or State may require. The Host Site agrees to retain such records as AmeriCorps or State may require for a period of **three (3) years** after completion or termination of the project, or longer if required for administrative proceedings and/or litigation purposes, and to provide access to such records to AmeriCorps and/or State for the purposes of litigation, audit, or examination. Records should include timesheets; mileage reimbursement; number of volunteers recruited, and number of hours served; names of donors, items donated, value; names of grantors, amounts of grants; and other relevant

documents related to VISTA member service.

t) Ensure that the Site Supervisor prepares, with input from the VISTA member, all required reports and submits complete reports, including all required documentation, to the State on time.

u) A sponsor may, at its discretion, provide support for housing for AmeriCorps members serving in the VISTA program. While there is no maximum threshold set for the amount of assistance, it should be based on the actual costs members paid for housing (reimbursable costs) and should be consistent with the member's commitment to live among and at the economic level of the people served. Moreover, a sponsor's support for housing must be offered equally to all AmeriCorps members at the site who are serving in the VISTA program. Support for housing can be provided in the form of a one-time security deposit or as monthly rent, mortgage payments, or help with utility bills. Inform the member that the subsidy might increase the amount of reportable income for tax purposes; and ensure that the site follows all laws, regulations, and policies of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the State of Vermont.

v) If providing a housing subsidy, child care subsidy, or any other subsidy on behalf of the member, inform the State of the amount, frequency of payment, and to whom the payment is made. All housing support must be provided as a reimbursable expense directly to a member or paid directly to the landlord, leasing agent, mortgage holder, utility company, etc. A sponsor or others may not offer money directly to a member to supplement the member's living allowance.

w) Ensure that the service of the member does not deviate from the most current, approved VISTA Assignment Description (VAD). If changes to the VAD are needed, contact the State who will review the proposed changes and make a determination if those changes fit within the rules and regulations of VISTA and the objectives and regulations of the State. (See also 2.b.)

x) Ensure that the Site Supervisor conducts an on-site orientation for the VISTA member, pursuant to the written On-Site Orientation plan, and pertaining to the current VAD during the first weeks of service.

y) Ensure that the member does not receive any cash benefit from the site. Members receive a living allowance, based on the poverty level, from AmeriCorps.

z) Inform the State if the member enrolls or plans to enroll in any class and ensure that the member understands that obligations to service supersede class requirements. VISTA Members who wish to take classes must receive approval from AmeriCorps and State prior to doing so.

aa) All notices and communications required to be given to the State by the Host Site, except as otherwise specifically provided, shall be directed to SerVermont VISTA Program, c/o SerVermont, 280 State Drive Waterbury, VT 05671.

bb) Notify the State at least sixty (60) days prior to completion of service if the Host Site and Member intend to extend the term of the VISTA member's service beyond twelve (12) full months.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Meet the scope of services for performance as a VISTA Host Site and meet the objectives and goals as outlined in the host site application and VISTA Assignment Description.

METHOD OF AWARD AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. The State may award one or more grants and reserves the right to make additional awards to other compliant applicants or re-open the RFP at any time if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the State.

Consideration shall be given to the applicant's project approach and methodology, qualifications and experience, ability to provide the services within the defined timeline, and/or success in operating similar projects, as applicable.

The process for selecting SerVermont VISTA Host Sites is as non-competitive and collaborative as possible, while also ensuring that our member slots are filled, and members are recruited in a timely manner.

SerVermont's goal is to place VISTAs where they are most needed while considering:

1. **Capacity**: Placing members at sites that have the capacity to recruit, train, and supervise members with a high level of effectiveness.

2. **Priority Areas**: Sites which most directly and relevantly address the current priority areas will be more likely to receive VISTA member(s). Current priority

areas are listed above.

3. **Impact**: Placing members at sites where the efforts of their service will make a positive impact in the community by alleviating poverty.

4. **Geographic Distribution**: Placing members throughout the state in concentrations that mirror population and poverty-based need concentrations.

5. **Performance Measurement**: Sites are required to measure the impact of their VISTA member in accordance with AmeriCorps policies. Sites which do not have the capacity to measure their member's progress will not be granted a VISTA member. All sites will be accountable for meeting their measures, and documenting progress in the manner which VISTA requires for that measure. This will require additional time to manage.

GRANT AWARD NEGOTIATION

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State may select one or more applicants with which to negotiate a grant award, based on the application review and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the State. In the event the State is not successful in negotiating a grant award with a selected applicant, the State reserves the option of negotiating with another applicant, or to end the proposal process entirely.

COST OF PREPARATION

Applicants shall be solely responsible for all expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP and shall be responsible for all expenses associated with any presentations or demonstrations associated with this request and/or any proposals made.

INTENT TO APPLY

Applicants are **required** to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for an AmeriCorps VISTA to SerVermont via email to Caitlin Perrier at Caitlin.perrier@vermont.gov by Friday, February 6, 2026 at 12 PM. After this date, LOIs may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Letters of Intent should include the following:

1. Name of organization
2. Contact person
3. Contact information including address, phone and email

4. The geographic region that will be served by the VISTA
5. Number of VISTA slots you intend to apply for
6. The Priority Area(s) and objective(s) the position will address
7. A brief summary (2-3 paragraphs) of the VISTA project, including the capacity building activities that the VISTA member will engage in and the poverty alleviation element of the project

Returning Host Sites should use the Letter of Intent to indicate if they intend to continue as a host site in the following year and any major changes to the position.

APPLICATION

The application should follow all application instructions and provide reviewers with a clear and compelling understanding of the proposed VISTA assignment, the need in the community and at the organization, and recent and relevant data at the national, state, and local level that support the need and the VISTA assignment. Reviewers should be able to envision what AmeriCorps VISTA members will be doing daily in program delivery, and what the overall goals and outcomes are for the program. Applications should propose activity under at least one of the Focus Areas as outlined in the instructions.

Attachments to Include with New Application
It is not necessary to include these attachments if you are a returning site unless there have been changes in staff/board membership that should be updated for our records.

- Job Description of Site Supervisor
- Resume or C.V. of Site Supervisor
- Letter of Support from Board or Advisory Committee. Must support placing a member at the site and paying the cost share. This letter should be current and signed by an authorized representative.
- List of Board of Directors. Must be current, dated, and contain board member's affiliation.

Please follow the Application Instructions contained within the Application.

PRE-BID MEETING, APPLICATION INFORMATION SESSION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SerVermont will host an optional pre-did meeting and question and answer session for new host sites on Tuesday, January 20 from 11 AM – 12 PM. **Please contact Caitlin to obtain the meeting link.**

Additionally, an optional Application Information on Wednesday, February 11 from 1 PM 2 PM. **Please contact Caitlin to obtain the meeting link.**

Further Technical Assistance on the Letter of Intent Application will be available on a rolling basis to organizations that have submitted Letters of Intent from February 6 to March 13, 2026**.**

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

Applications are due to SerVermont by **March 13, 2026 at 12 PM.** They must be submitted via email to Caitlin Perrier at Caitlin.perrier@vermont.gov.

MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must meet the minimum insurance requirements required by the state, as outlined in state Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants. A link to Attachment C can be found here: Attachment C.

APPLICATION AND RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

Request for Proposals Released	Monday, January 5, 2026
Optional Pre-Bid Meeting	Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 11 AM
Letter of Intent Deadline	Friday, February 6, 2026
Optional Application Information Webinar	Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 1 PM
Site Application Deadline	Friday, March 13, 2026
Sites Notified of Selection	Friday, March 20, 2026
Required Webinar for All New Supervisors	Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 1 PM (alternate time may be requested)
Recruitment Forms Due	Friday, April 3, 2026
VISTA Assignment Descriptions Due	Friday, April 17, 2026
Ongoing Recruitment	April – July
Recruitment Deadline	Friday, July 10, 2026
Supervisor Orientation	Tuesday, July 21, 2026, 10 AM (Hybrid)
First Day of Service for VISTAs	August 10, 2026