ShareCorps Host Site Application Instructions: Program Year 2024-2025

Ohio Association of Foodbanks
100 East Broad Street, Suite 501, Columbus, OH 43215

Proposals are to be submitted no later than 5:00pm on January 5, 2024. Please submit all applications to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks ShareCorps team at mallen@ohiofoodbanks.org. You will receive a confirmation e-mail within one business day that your application has been received. If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail, please contact Maureen Allen at (614) 221-4336 ext. 230.

Background

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger. The association represents Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and, in partnership with the State of Ohio, distributes tens of millions of pounds of food yearly through the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program. The association recognizes that hunger is often an adverse outcome of poverty and has developed its AmeriCorps VISTA initiative, ShareCorps, into a nationally recognized anti-hunger and anti-poverty project.

The association, in cooperation with AmeriCorps (formerly the Corporation for National and Community Service or CNCS), has developed ShareCorps as a way to expand the capacity of organizations to provide services to Ohioans in poverty. As an intermediary organization, the association serves as the project sponsor for various AmeriCorps VISTA projects statewide, providing ongoing program management and technical assistance to its partner organizations. As the lead agency, the association has demonstrated the capacity to serve as a mentor agency for other community-based and grassroots organizations, offering these agencies an opportunity to increase their capacity and develop sustainable programs that would otherwise not be available. ShareCorps projects maintain the association's emphasis on addressing not only the problem of hunger, but the root cause of hunger, which is poverty.

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America)

AmeriCorps VISTA is a federally-funded program that places members in community-based agencies, full-time for one year, to help implement goals and objectives identified by the community and sponsoring agency. The role of the VISTA in the poverty problem-solving process is focused on mobilizing human and other resources to increase the capacity of low-income communities.

VISTA members do not provide direct service. Direct service can mean working directly with clients, manual labor, administrative tasks not created by the member, etc. VISTAs are system builders that involve local communities and organizations in the planning and implementation of strategies and programs, with the eventual goal being for the community to operate and sustain the strategies and programs on their own without the assistance of the VISTA member. ShareCorps members may be particularly helpful with building capacity through solicitation of donations (cash and in-kind), recruitment and mobilization of volunteers engaged in the fight against poverty, and research, development, and implementation of innovative anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs.

<u>Appropriate tasks for AmeriCorps VISTA members</u>

AmeriCorps VISTA members *should*:

- ✓ Build partnerships with local and public schools and private sector organizations/businesses
- ✓ Recruit, screen, train, and coordinate volunteers
- ✓ Write grant applications for funding and other resources
- ✓ Solicit donations and other in-kind support for the project
- ✓ Publicize the project
- ✓ Create community events to support the project
- ✓ Mobilize resources in and outside of the community in support of the project
- ✓ Promote project sustainability

AmeriCorps VISTA members *should not*:

- ✗ Displace paid staff nor supervise employees of organization
- ✗ Do one-on-one literacy tutoring or teaching
- ✗ Be directly responsible for evaluating the AmeriCorps VISTA project, the sponsoring agency, or other related agencies. They can, however, assist in the evaluation process in a supportive role, e.g., interviewing, gathering of information, etc.
- ✗ Have the direct lead in drafting/negotiating agreement between the sponsoring agency and other organizations or individuals relative to designated aspects of the AmeriCorps VISTA project
- ✗ Be solely responsible for mobilizing financial or material support for the sponsoring agency; they can assist, however, in generating this support
- ✗ VISTA members are prohibited from participation in religious instruction or proselytizing and from participation in political activity (partisan or non-partisan) while on duty or perceived to be on duty

<u>Who Can Apply to Become a Host Site?</u>

The association is looking for non-profits with current 501(c)(3) status or government agencies in Ohio to host one or more full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members for one year. In order to qualify for a VISTA member, applicants must have the capacity to provide on-site supervision, dedicated work space, computer and any other equipment necessary to complete required tasks, mileage reimbursement for any travel required by the site, and an environment that conforms to all relevant workplace-related health and safety laws. Interested organizations must complete the following application. Limited slots are available; therefore, this is a competitive process and we will reserve some slots for foodbank specific initiatives.

AmeriCorps requires the association to pay a cost-share, which is the living allowance for a portion of our members. The estimated living allowance for Program Year 2024-2025 is approximately $22,819 per member. The association will cover the majority of this allowance, but does seek to recover a portion of this from participating sites at a cost of **$1,500 per member**.

These costs may vary from year to year based upon the cost of living increase provided to the VISTAs from AmeriCorps, which is set by Congress. If you have questions or concerns about this fee, please contact Maureen at mallen@ohiofoodbanks.org.

ShareCorps VISTA members may be used for the following types of projects:

<u>Food Security/Food Access</u> – The VISTA member can work to develop or enhance programs, services, or approaches that improve food security, increase access to fresh foods, increase access to nutrition education, or similar anti-hunger initiatives.

<u>Capacity Building</u> – VISTA members strengthen, expand, and increase the reach of anti-poverty organizations and programs by working on projects with staff and volunteers, rather than directly with people in need. For instance, recruiting volunteers, planning a fundraiser, developing a database, writing a curriculum, creating a program, etc.

Host sites are selected through a competitive application process. Host sites are expected to outline specific activities to provide more opportunities for healthy eating and living (access to fresh food, nutrition information, etc.) and/or strengthen, expand, or develop anti-poverty programs to help people in need. Each host site will develop concrete goals to demonstrate the impact of their VISTA project. Other host site selection criteria includes: the organization's ability to recruit, supervise, and support VISTA(s); whether the project description is realistic and focused on capacity building; the number of VISTA members requested; and the organization's performance as a previous host site, if applicable.

<u>Program Overview</u>

- VISTA members serve full-time for one service year. If, for any reason or point in time, a VISTA member must discontinue service a host site cannot receive a replacement VISTA and must wait until the next application cycle to apply for a new member.

- All VISTA members receive a modest living allowance, health coverage, and the choice of either an education award or an end-of-year stipend upon completion of service. They may be eligible for childcare benefits or a relocation allowance if moving >50 miles to serve.

- ShareCorps members are eligible for a $200 monthly housing allowance if applicable to their living situation, which the association pays directly to their landlord.

- VISTA members are provided with professional development opportunities and may attend nearly all association trainings and events free of charge.

- VISTA members are required to participate in a Pre-Service Orientation prior to beginning their service. Host sites must ensure that members complete required tasks on time.

- Host site supervisors, identified as part of this application, may be required to attend a virtual sub-site VISTA supervisor training.

- Recruitment will follow host site selection. The Project Description filled out as part of this application will be used by the association to post the position to the AmeriCorps online application database.

  - The association will use the AmeriCorps website as its main recruiting tool. Host site organizations also should recruit within their communities for VISTA members. The association has a team of two staff members charged with helping the host site to recruit members. They will conduct initial pre-screening questionnaires. Once a VISTA member is identified as interested in your program and eligible to serve, the association will submit the application to your organization for the final interview. VISTA members are generally considering more than one program, so interviews must be conducted quickly in order to obtain the volunteers with the best qualifications.

- All VISTA members are required to submit bi-weekly timesheets and a monthly report, along with any supporting documentation upon the request of the association.

Timeline

VISTA Basics Webinar ([Register Here](#)) *For organizations or individuals new to VISTA*	November 29, 2023 from 10–11 AM
In-Depth VISTA Application Workshop Webinar ([Register Here](#))	December 7, 2023 from 10–11:30AM
VISTA Host Site Application Due	January 5, 2024
Award Notification to host sites from association	February 2024
Recruitment Begins	March 2024
Supervisor Training	Virtual TBD
VISTA member selection and paperwork due to association	TBD
VISTA member begins service at host site	Summer 2024

Please note: This timeline is contingent upon approval for funding by AmeriCorps.

Application Checklist

When submitting your completed application, please remember to also include:

- Documentation of your organization's tax exempt status (501(c)(3) IRS determination letter, unless a government agency) – *only required for new applicants*

- Letter of support for your application to be a host site from your organization's executive director *OR* your organization's board chair

More Resources

In addition to the sample VISTA Assignment Description, Project Tagline, and Project Listing on the following pages, view this on-demand presentation about recent successful VISTA projects to get more ideas about how VISTA can support your organization!

OHIO
ASSOCIATION OF
FOODBANKS