

# Important VISTA Policies & Procedures

For additional policies and more information, view the [Campus Compact VISTA Handbook](#) on our website and/or the searchable [CNCS VISTA Handbook](#).

## Restrictions for VISTA Members

Prohibited Activities ([link](#))

Education Restrictions – VISTAs are allowed to attend school as long as classes are not during their service hours. They must receive approval with their supervisor and Campus Compact before enrolling or before being accepted into the role.

Employment Restrictions – VISTAs can work part-time, up to 16 hours per week. They must complete a [form](#) and get approval from their supervisor, Campus Compact, and CNCS BEFORE working. Their work cannot interfere with their service hours and their employer cannot be their VISTA host site or a partner organization. View the VISTA Handbook on our website for more details.

Political Restrictions- VISTAs cannot engage in any political activity or advocacy during while serving. It is to be reserved for their off-duty hours only. While on duty or perceived to be identified with the VISTA program, VISTA members cannot show partisanship or work to direct resources (financial or human) to influence elections or legislation (e.g., lobby), engage in voter registration, or provide voter transportation to the polls. VISTAs cannot solicit or accept monetary contributions for a partisan political campaign, pro-labor or anti-labor organizing, or run for a partisan elected office.

Fraternization – Relationships between VISTA members and the staff members (including volunteer and contracted personnel) of the Corporation, sponsoring organization, and project site that are exploitive or that have the appearance of partiality, preferential treatment, or the improper use of position for personal gain, are prejudicial to the morale of VISTA members and will not be tolerated. View the VISTA Handbook on our website for more details.

Drug Free Work Place- The Drug Free Workplace Act requires you, as a sub-grantee of a Federal program to give notice about the Act to your employees and members and to conduct a drug free awareness program. If one of your employees or members is arrested for or convicted of a drug offense, he or she must notify you in writing within five days and you must take appropriate action (including suspension and referral to a drug rehabilitation program, or release for cause consistent with the AmeriCorps' rules on termination and suspension of service). You must report the conviction in writing within 10 days to Campus Compact of Oregon, which must then notify the Corporation in writing. If VISTA Programs do not comply with this law, grants are subject to suspension, termination, or debarment proceedings.

Displacement of Employed Workers: AmeriCorps VISTA members are prohibited from performing activities or duties that would otherwise be carried out by employed workers, or would supplant the hiring of, or result in the displacement of, employed workers, or would impair existing contracts for service

Administrative Duties: Unless needed for specific VISTA service activities, the project may not include administrative duties that support general organizational goals such as clerical responsibilities, answering phones, or data entry. If needed, the general duties should be very limited. For example, a VISTA's entire VAD should not comprise of data entry as that is not a sustainable activity. They can create the database, and test it by doing some limited data entry but once created and fine-tuned, the activity is turned over to a staff person to finish the data entry and maintain.

Direct Service: Projects cannot be direct service but instead must build the capacity of communities to address their own challenges.

### **Allowable VISTA Activities**

Each VISTA member makes a yearlong, full-time commitment to serve on a specific project at an institution of higher education, a nonprofit organization or public agency. VISTA members do not provide direct services, such as tutoring children. Instead, they focus their efforts on building the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that fight illiteracy, increase educational access and success, and otherwise assist low-income communities. VISTAs develop programs to assess and meet community needs, write grants, build sustainable partnerships, and recruit and train volunteers. Once your VAD is approved, all objectives and activities listed are allowable. If you need to edit your VISTA's activities, please contact the VISTA Program Manager.

### **Service Hours**

VISTAs are required to serve full-time and are responsible for serving their community a full 365 days. They must serve full-time based on the standard business hours for your organization. This is a requirement. As a supervisor, you are responsible for approving timesheets and personal leave for your VISTAs.

### **Leave Benefits**

VISTAs should request approval at least one business day in advance from you for personal leave and provide notice when possible of medical and emergency leave requests. Members cannot take leave in the first three months or last month of service, unless it is an emergency or family matter.

Members receive the following leave benefits:

- 10 Medical Days (illness, doctor's appointments, medical)
- 10 Personal Days (personal time and religious observance)
- 5 Emergency Days (must request leave from VISTA Program Manager)
- Jury Duty

Members will adhere to the Campus Compact holiday schedule:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Either Christmas Eve or the Day after Christmas
- New Year's Day (observed)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

- VISTA's may move Christmas and/or the Day before or After Christmas to use leave as for religious observances

### **Working From Home**

This cannot be approved until 90 days of service in order to ensure you know your VISTA can responsibly work from home. VISTAs must submit a [teleservice form](#) with justification about why they want to work from home that includes a signature from their supervisor, the Campus Compact VISTA Program Manager, and our grant officer. VISTAs alternative site must meet the requirements on the teleservice form. If approved, your VISTA must ask you if they can work from home throughout the year and they may only serve away from their site two times per pay period.

### **Review & Approve Forms**

Timesheets – Timesheets are due to Campus Compact two times per month. Your signature must verify that the VISTA's hours are correct, their activities listed are accurate, and they amount of leave time is documented. The VISTA Leader will review to make sure they are serving full-time.

Member Development Plan – Due in October, this document will help you and your VISTA discuss their personal and professional goals for the year and strategize how you will support them to reach their goals. This is done together.

Winter Service Plan – Due in October, this document will help you and your VISTA discuss their plans during the winter. Since members are required to serve full-time throughout the year, VISTAs will need to determine if they'll continue to serve at their site (if open), take time off, or serve at an alternative partner site (if site is closed) during the winter and holiday season.

Evaluations – Mid & End of Term Evaluations are important components of the VISTA Program. It gives you the opportunity to intentionally sit down and discuss performance as it relates to the VAD. It is also a great time to check in about management styles, your working relationship, and the your VISTAs personal and professional goals.

Quarterly Reports- All reports are collected through survey monkey. We'll ask VISTAs to complete a template to review with you, receive approval, and then submit via survey monkey. Quarterly reports include narratives, community partners, quantitative impact, and an email submission of capacity building documents created.

### **National Days of Service**

VISTA Members are required to serve during two national days of service. We encourage members to develop partnerships and create service projects to support the community. If this is not doable, they can serve at an existing project.

### **VISTA Benefits**

Campus Compact of Oregon and/or the Corporation for National and Community Service will cover all VISTA benefits, other than the site specific benefit you identified for your VISTA. Benefits include the following:

- Living Allowance of \$11,676 paid two times per month (three business days after the 15<sup>th</sup> and last business day of the month)

- VISTAs moving more than 50 miles to serve receive a \$550 settling-in allowance and relocation support up to \$1,000
- Health Benefit
- Life Insurance
- Child Care
- Protection of Public Assistance
- Education Award (\$5,730) or Cash Stipend (\$1,500)
- Loan forbearance and interest accrual payment on qualified student loans
- Federal Non-Competitive Eligibility for one year after service

### **AmeriCorps VISTA Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Guidelines**

The following Standards of Conduct have been developed to provide VISTA Members and site supervisors with standards regarding required behavior and disciplinary steps for improper conduct while serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA Member with Campus Compact of Oregon. Any behavior which affects a Member's ability to perform in their service assignment, or that is not in the best interest of the host site, the VISTA project, or Campus Compact will be subject to review by the site supervisor and VISTA Program Manager and disciplinary action may be taken.

If a VISTA Member violates the Standards of Conduct, progressive discipline steps will be implemented. However, in some cases, depending on the severity of the violation, site supervisors may forgo verbal and written warnings and request that the VISTA be removed from the project by CNCS. Site supervisors and the Program Manager are responsible for determining the severity of the violation and for determining the appropriate disciplinary action.

**The Campus Compact of Oregon VISTA Program requires that AmeriCorps VISTA Members comply with the following Standards of Conduct. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disciplinary action:**

- Be honest, act respectfully, and model integrity
- Follow site supervisor's and Program Supervisor's instructions
- Perform project responsibilities to the best of one's ability
- Comply with the rules, standards, and expectations of the host site
- Adhere to dress codes and grooming standards of the host site
- Notify site supervisor of intent to be late or absent within 30 minutes of scheduled start
- Request permission from site supervisor to participate in activities that are not part of the VISTA's regular service
- Follow all AmeriCorps VISTA policies and procedures and do not participate in AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities
- Do not use inappropriate or disrespectful language (i.e. profanity, name calling, etc.)
- Do not falsify time logs or other program records
- Do not engage in any activity that may physically or emotionally damage other VISTA Members, students, clients, partners, site supervisors, staff, or other people from the community

### **Disciplinary Guidelines for Violations of the Standards of Conduct**

First Offense: Verbal warning, followed up with email to VISTA for record

Second Offense: Written warning or request to work with Campus Compact of Oregon to put member on performance improvement plan

Third Offense: Request to CNCS to remove the VISTA from the project

***Supervisors – Keep record of all behavioral and performance issues. Always address these issues with your VISTA Member and follow-up your conversation with an email.***

**In the case of severe violations of the Standards of Conduct, Campus Compact of Oregon may request that CNCS remove the VISTA from the project without issuing warnings to the VISTA Member. In addition to the Campus Compact guidelines listed above, CNCS may terminate a VISTA member based on conduct (termination for cause) for the following reasons:**

- Conviction of a criminal offense under federal state, or local statute or ordinance
- Violation of any provision of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, or a Corporation regulation, policy, or guideline
- Failure, refusal, or inability to perform prescribed project duties as outlined in the project application or assignment description and as directed by the sponsoring organization to which VISTA is assigned
- Involvement in activities that substantially interfere with performance of project duties
- Intentional false statement, omission, fraud, or deception in obtaining selection as a member
- Any conduct on the part of the VISTA that substantially diminishes their effectiveness as an AmeriCorps VISTA member, including, but not limited to, acting in an unprofessional manner, failing to comply with sponsoring organization requirements, or skipping mandatory training sessions
- Unsatisfactory performance of assignment
- Unauthorized leave or absence (AWOL)