



# Life After AmeriCorps VISTA Guide



**VISTA**  
Volunteers in Service to America

Dear AmeriCorps VISTA Member or Alum:

You have joined a 50+ year legacy of serving your country and helping organizations alleviate poverty in communities nationwide. In return, we want to help you.

Serving with AmeriCorps VISTA can be the catalyst to launch a career, switch to a new field, or start a new chapter post-retirement. We know that you gain valuable skills and experiences through service, which will help you transition to the next step. Serving in AmeriCorps VISTA provides you with a unique professional edge.

This guide is a tool to assist your transition from service to *Life After VISTA*, in whatever form that may take: continuing your education, finding a job, or serving again. Begin by reflecting on your interests and exploring the "Find Your Fit" section.

We hope you will find this guide useful as you navigate life after AmeriCorps VISTA.

**Thank you for your service.**

AmeriCorps VISTA

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This document contains **clickable links**. If you are not viewing this digitally, refer to Appendix B.

## AMERICORPS VISTA SERVICE TIMELINE

Below is a suggested timeline to prepare for life post-service. It's never too early to start planning for the future. Also included are key reminders related to your service benefits.

### Months 1-3

- Reminder to put loans in deferment or forbearance. Find more details on the **VISTA Benefits Hub**
- Start tracking your accomplishments
- Create a spreadsheet of personal and professional contacts
- Follow AmeriCorps VISTA on **LinkedIn** and other social media channels
- Add your VISTA service to the experience section of your LinkedIn profile

### Months 3-6

- Participate in professional development **webinars**
- Continue tracking accomplishments and contacts
- Research graduate or professional schools

### Months 6-9

- Attend Career Fairs
- Continue tracking accomplishments and contacts
- Set up informational interviews
- Consider whether another year of AmeriCorps service is right for you
- Check the **VISTA Campus Job Board** and subscribe to email notifications
- If interested in federal employment:
  1. Participate in **HRU.gov** webinars
  2. Create profile on **USAJobs.gov**
  3. Build a master federal resume
  4. Search for positions of interest

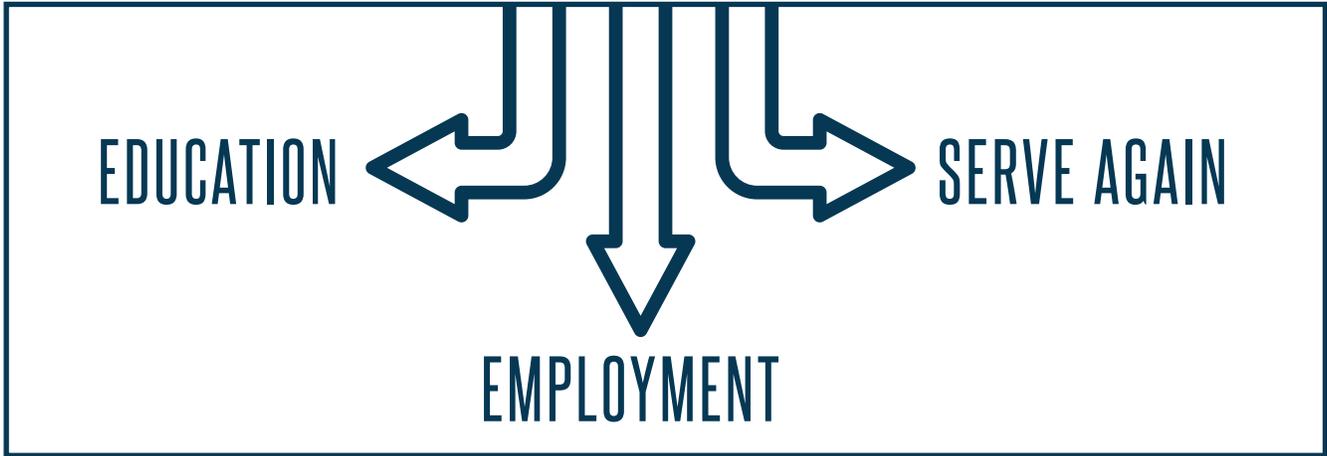
### Months 9-12

- Start applying for jobs
- Continue tracking accomplishments and contacts
- Make sure your VISTA accomplishments are reflected in your resume
- Explore **AmeriCorps Alums** to connect with the AmeriCorps network
- Complete Future Plans Form via **My.AmeriCorps.gov** (available 90 days before ending service)
- Month 10: last chance to change from the education award to the cash stipend
- Make any necessary revisions to your **health benefit**
- Complete Member Exit Survey (available 30 days before service exit date)
- Complete **Close of Service Travel Voucher** (if applicable, available 15 days before ending service)

### Post Service

- Download your VISTA Verification of Service letter from **My.AmeriCorps.gov**
- Complete **Interest Accrual form** (if applicable)
- Update email address on **My.AmeriCorps.gov**
- **Share your experience and stay involved**
- Use your Education Award within 7 years of completing service

## FIND YOUR FIT



It's okay to not know what you want to do. What's important is figuring out what you are interested in before you go looking for it. There are many resources available to assist you with this process.

- Try a personality assessment tool, like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument, to help you clarify your values, skills, and interests.
- Search online for free career assessments to determine how your values, skills, and talents can guide you toward certain professions.
- Describe your dream career in a few words, browse careers by industry, or take a quick survey to match your interests and training with the type of work you might enjoy on **My Next Move**, a search and explore tool sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Want to work for the federal government, but are not sure where to begin? Check out this **Find Your Fit** tool on GoGovernment.org.

Need more assistance? Consider working with a career counselor or coach. Visit the **National Career Development Association's** website to find someone near you. Many of them have a sliding scale fee structure and can work with your budget.

Discover the resources available to AmeriCorps Alumni.

[AmeriCorps.gov/Alumni](https://www.AmeriCorps.gov/Alumni)

- Use Your Ed Award
- Find a Job
- Communicate Your Service Experience
- Continue Civic Engagement
- Explore AmeriCorps Alumni
- Access Alumni Support Services



TIP:

# Try journaling

It's wise to try and capture the transformational power of VISTA as you're going through it. Send yourself an email with highlights from your day to keep a record of your developing skills, contacts, and accomplishments.



## EDUCATION

As an AmeriCorps VISTA member, you opted to receive either an end-of-service cash stipend or the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award as your post-service benefit.

Remember: If you initially chose the education award, you may change your election to the stipend any time before the end of your tenth month of service on My.AmeriCorps.gov under the "End of Service Benefit" section. If you initially chose the cash stipend, you may not change to the Education Award.

### Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Resources

The Education Award is a valuable benefit for AmeriCorps VISTA members. It can be used to repay eligible student loans or pay for educational costs at qualified colleges and universities.

Use **the Education Award site** on NationalService.gov to learn more about the award, form a strategy on how to use it, and discover other post-service opportunities related to school and student loans.

For a comprehensive look at how you can use either benefit toward your education, refer to the *VISTA Member Handbook*, Chapter 6: Education Benefits.

### Five important facts to know about the Education Award:

1. It must be used within 7 years of your close of service date.
2. The award is subject to taxes at time of use.
3. **Some institutions** match the Education Award or offer financial aid benefits (scholarships, tuition waivers, in-state tuition, etc.). If the school you want to attend does not currently offer any benefits, ask them to consider offering benefits to AmeriCorps alums.
4. Your award can be used for qualified educational expenses such as: tuition, books, room and board, transportation, and other costs. View the full list of qualified educational expenses **here**.
5. Qualified international schools, adventure/outdoor programs, and technical/trade schools may also accept and/or match the education award.\*

### End-of-Service Cash Stipend Education Options

If you elected the end-of-service cash stipend, you may be eligible for these education benefits:

- Deferment of eligible student loans
- Payment of accrued interest on deferred loans by the U.S. Department of Education

\*Qualified institutions are defined as those that currently participate in the Department of Education's "Title IV schools" and G.I. Bill approved programs.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR END-OF-SERVICE BENEFIT

At the start of service you selected your end-of-service benefit and therefore, you may have put your student loans in forbearance. Now that you have completed service, the chart below tells you how to access your end-of-service benefits.

IF YOU CHOSE...	BENEFIT DETAILS	FORBEARANCE & DEFERMENT INSTRUCTIONS
<p><b>AmeriCorps Education Award*</b> (Only for those not choosing the end-of-service stipend)</p> <p>*This is available within two weeks after close of service (COS), and you will be notified via email.</p>	<p>The Education Award is equal to the amount of the Pell Grant and can be used to repay eligible student loans and pay future educational expenses; it must be used in 7 years.</p>	<p>Access your online Education Award account via <a href="http://My.AmeriCorps.gov">My.AmeriCorps.gov</a>. Requests are submitted electronically to your lender or Title IV school.</p> <p>If your loans are in Forbearance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click "Create Interest Payment Request" in your <a href="http://My.AmeriCorps.gov">My.AmeriCorps.gov</a> account under "My Education Award."</li> <li>2. Certify and submit the form.</li> <li>3. Form is automatically forwarded to loan holder to complete and returned to the National Service Trust.</li> <li>4. You can track the status of your request and see when a payment has been made in your <a href="http://My.AmeriCorps.gov">My.AmeriCorps.gov</a> account.</li> </ol> <p>To make a payment with the Education Award:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click "Create Education Award Payment Request."</li> <li>2. Complete and submit the form.</li> </ol>
<p><b>End-of-Service Stipend*</b> (Only for those not choosing the AmeriCorps Education Award)</p> <p>*This is disbursed in the last two living allowance payments.</p>	<p>Member end-of-service stipend is currently valued at \$1,800 pre-tax.</p> <p>Leader end-of-service stipend is currently valued at \$3,000 pre-tax.</p>	<p>If your loans are in Deferment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For federally backed student loans that are deferred, accrued interest is automatically paid by the U.S. Department of Education.</li> <li>2. Contact the U.S. Department of Education for information about the accrued interest payment on your deferred loan.</li> </ol> <p>VISTA alumni who chose the stipend may also be eligible for up to 15% cancellation on certain types of loans. To determine which student loans may be eligible for this type of cancellation, contact the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800-433-3243 or visit <a href="http://www.studentaid.ed.gov">www.studentaid.ed.gov</a>.</p>



# Employment

## SEARCHING & APPLYING

Searching and applying for jobs can be overwhelming, as there are many job search sites. There are many resources available to help you find different types of jobs. These sites will help you view job listings and discover different types of positions and organizations that may pique your interest.

We recommend starting your search process after you've been serving for at least six to nine months. By then, you should have a general idea as to what you're interested in doing after service. It will also prepare you for a more active search in the last three months of your service term.

Please note: We highly recommend you do not leave service early to accept a job offer, for the following reasons:

- Completing your service term shows your commitment to an employer.
- Your project may not be able to replace you if you terminate early.
- You risk losing all or part of your end-of-service benefits.
- You receive Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) only after successfully completing a full term of service.

**Here's a summary of select resources and why you might want to explore using them:**

### **AmeriCorps Alums**

This organization supports national service alumni and offers virtual career/grad school fairs throughout the year. Use local chapters to connect with alums from all streams of service.

### **Employers of National Service**

This initiative connects AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with over 500 employers from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

**Glass Door**

Job and recruiting site that allows you to see which employers are hiring, what it's really like to work or interview there according to employees, and how much you could earn.

**Google for Jobs**

Search for "Jobs near me" or use a specific location or field (e.g., "teaching jobs") and the Google search engine will generate an extensive list of postings from other job search companies and from across the web.

**GovLoop**

An online community connecting people working for and pursuing careers in government and that offers tools and trainings.

**Go Government**

A one-stop shop for how to find and apply for federal government jobs.

**Idealist**

A global clearinghouse of nonprofit and volunteering resources.

**Indeed**

The site enables you to search jobs posted on thousands of websites.

**LinkedIn**

This professional networking site allows users to create profiles and connections to each other through an online social network.

**Peace Corps Career Link**

Hundreds of postings from employers who understand the value of service and who are looking for candidates with Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE).

**The Muse**

Online career resource that offers a behind-the-scenes look at job opportunities with hundreds of companies, original career advice from prominent experts, and access to coaches for career help.

**USAJobs.gov**

The official website for federal employment.

**VISTA Campus Job Board**

Federal employers looking for candidates with NCE can post here along with other organizations looking to hire AmeriCorps VISTA alumni.

## NETWORKING

Networking is a key component of any job search. At its core, networking is about making connections with people. It's about sharing useful resources and information. Ideally, you are keeping up with former professors, co-workers, bosses, neighbors, family friends, and others from various aspects of your life in your network. It's an exchange – a give and take. You help people in your network and when you need help, they should be there for you.

Before you start setting up coffee appointments, do some exploration so you're more certain about what you're looking for and who you want to connect with. Go through your contacts to determine who you know working at organizations of interest to you. In addition, seek opportunities of interest such as lectures, social gatherings, and meet-ups; this will increase your chances of meeting other individuals to add to your network.

### Perfect Your “Elevator Pitch”

Use this guidance to become more comfortable talking about your service experience to potential employers and contacts.

In 60 seconds or less:

- Connect to the person you're addressing.
- Describe concisely what you've been doing and the impact you've had.
- Make your request (e.g., informational interview).
- Find out the best way to follow-up.

### Sample:

*Hello Ms. Gomez. That was a very inspiring speech you just gave – I learned so much. It especially resonated with me as I've been serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA member with the Food Bank of Springfield. I've had a great experience helping the organization expand its services to reach families in urban food deserts. Since I've been with the organization, I've doubled the number of community garden volunteers and developed new relationships with local businesses. I'm very interested in pursuing a career in food security. Do you have 15 minutes in the next couple of weeks for me to give you a call or stop by your office to learn more about your career path? What's the best way to reach you? Thank you!*



**Tip:** Start a spreadsheet of your new contacts. You don't want to send an email to someone, have them respond, and not remember who they are. As your job search gains momentum, this record will become even more important.



## BEST WAYS TO USE LINKEDIN

**LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.** Whether you've been using this social media platform or not, now is the time to create or update your profile. The free standard account is sufficient to create a searchable profile. It is also important that you stay connected to AmeriCorps VISTA on LinkedIn in order to access real-time job postings, resources, and to connect with other VISTA alums.

- Follow AmeriCorps VISTA to get career advice and learn about job opportunities.
- Create or update your profile to reflect your AmeriCorps VISTA service:
  - Post your service year under "Experience"
  - Include a brief description of AmeriCorps VISTA, such as:

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a full-time, 12-month national service program, whose members help build the capacity of nonprofit organizations and local government agencies to alleviate poverty.

- Make yourself searchable for federal employers.
  - If you are interested in federal employment, make sure to include in your description the following phrase: "Current Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status for federal employment, valid through (INSERT DATE ONE YEAR FROM END OF SERVICE MONTH/YEAR)." That way, if federal employers do a search on LinkedIn for NCE, your name will come up!

## LinkedIn Profile Samples:

### Option 1

List AmeriCorps VISTA as the employer (the AmeriCorps VISTA logo will automatically appear) and include the sponsor in your title.



#### **Volunteer Income Tax Assistant Coordinator–United Way of Yellowstone County**

AmeriCorps VISTA  
Jul 2016 – Jul 2017  
Billings, MT

AmeriCorps VISTA is a 12-month national service program devoted to lifting individuals out of poverty.

Managed United Way's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, responsibilities included overseeing the operations of 3 VITA sites and the recruitment, training, and management of over 75 volunteers.

Evaluated and presented on VITA's impact; evaluation included recruitment and marketing strategies and overall management of the program.

### Option 2

List your organization as the employer and include "AmeriCorps VISTA" in your title. Your organization's logo will auto-populate in the image field. If your supervisor also gave you a title, you can combine them, for example, "AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Coordinator."



#### **AmeriCorps VISTA–Volunteer Recruitment and Management Systems Specialist**

Volunteer Houston  
May 2015 – May 2016  
Houston, TX

Managed Volunteer Houston's online presence during a year of service with AmeriCorps, a federal program in which members make a one-year commitment to building the capacity of a community organization.

Created a new marketing plan for the Volunteer Connection platform focused on simplifying the user experience and increasing awareness of the platform among local residents and nonprofits.

Developed a mobile app (available on iOS), redesigned the website, modified the user registration process, and launched a search marketing campaign.

Partnered with a national software development company to build the app pro bono.



# The Resume

## THE BASICS

A well-crafted resume is essential to securing a job interview. Investing the time to carefully capture and curate your experiences, skills, and talents is critical to putting together a stellar resume. Here are some basic tips, as well as suggestions on how to highlight your national service experience.

### GET STARTED

*Create a master resume that is a comprehensive summary of your experiences, accomplishments, and talents.*



**Tip:** Keep a list of your accomplishments somewhere easy to access, like your smartphone. Record stories and quantifiable information (\$ raised, # of partnerships created/volunteers recruited, etc.) Then turn this information into resume bullets!



## essentials OF RESUME WRITING

1. Tailor your resume to each job.
2. Use consistent formatting.
3. Be clear and concise.
4. Quantify your accomplishments.
5. Incorporate key words from the job announcement.
6. Use no more than 2 pages.
7. Don't be afraid of white space.
8. Have adequate margins (no larger than 1" and no smaller than .8").
9. Proofread, proofread, proofread!
10. Submit as a .pdf, not a Word document.

## ANATOMY OF A RESUME

Trends come and go in resume writing. The following recommendations are based on current research. The key to a winning resume is to keep it clean and concise. Include keywords and achievements that are relevant to the position for which you are applying.



### KEY COMPONENTS

- Header
- Professional experience
- Education

### OPTIONAL COMPONENTS

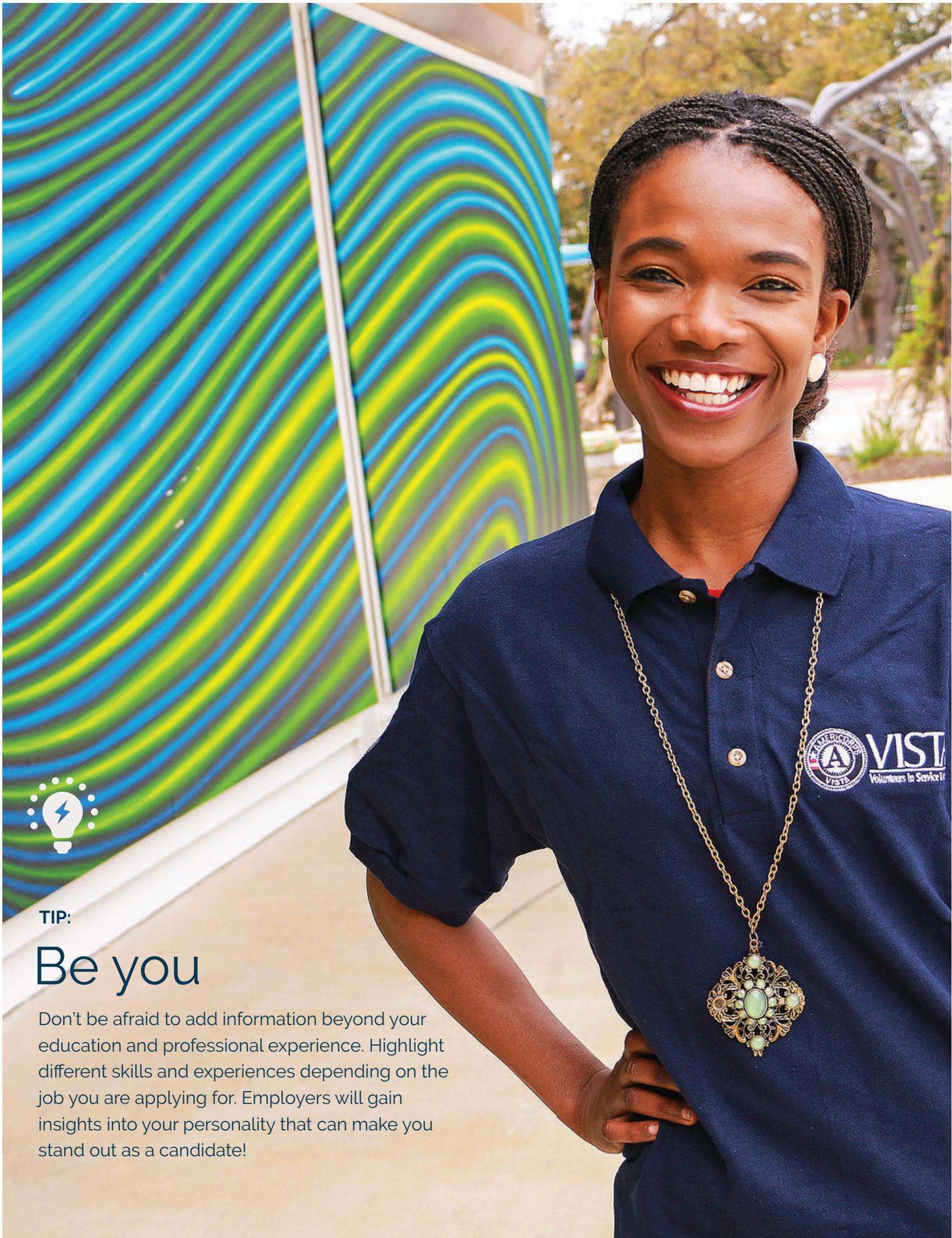
- Profile
- Summary
- Notable skills
- Technical skills
- Language skills
- Volunteer/community experience
- Trainings/certificates
- Awards/honors
- Publications/presentations



### THINGS TO leave off YOUR RESUME

1. Objective statement
2. Unprofessional email address
3. Your photo
4. Fancy designs or fonts
5. Acronyms
6. Full paragraphs
7. Use of first person, "I"
8. Implied or out-of-date skills
9. "References available upon request"
10. Typos

**6 seconds** = The average amount of time recruiters spend reviewing an individual resume. Make it count!



TIP:

## Be you

Don't be afraid to add information beyond your education and professional experience. Highlight different skills and experiences depending on the job you are applying for. Employers will gain insights into your personality that can make you stand out as a candidate!

## CREATING YOUR HEADER

When someone is viewing your resume, your name should stand out – make sure the font is large and the layout is clean. Also, keep these points in mind:

- It is no longer essential to include your mailing address on a resume.
- If you want it to be clear to recruiters that you are local, include the address. An alternative is to include city/state/zip.
- If you don't live in the area but are trying to relocate, ask a friend or relative if you can use their local address on your resume.
- Try to limit your header to two lines.
- Consider including your LinkedIn address.

## SAMPLE RESUME HEADERS

### Isabelle Martinez

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1234 Main Street, Springfield, IL 62701 | isabellem@email.com | 217-400-2323

### JUSTIN WU

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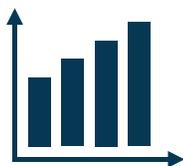
WASHINGTON, DC 20009 ◦ JUSTINW@EMAIL.COM ◦ LINKEDIN: IN/JWU23 ◦ 202-400-4322

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**Tip:** Make sure to hyperlink your email and LinkedIn profile to make it easier for employers to contact you.

## CRAFTING YOUR BULLETS



### QUANTIFY YOUR EXPERIENCE

- \$ raised or budget managed
- # of partnerships developed
- # of events managed
- # of volunteers recruited
- % of increase in volunteers participating or dollars raised



### DEMONSTRATE YOUR QUALITIES AND SKILLS

- Leadership
- Project management
- Problem solving
- Adaptability
- Technology
- Languages
- Collaboration
- Critical thinking



## INCLUDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed new systems, databases, platforms
- Led teams, projects, initiatives
- Wrote, designed, edited publications
- Coordinated, created, established new partnerships
- Organized, revamped, implemented trainings

### Use active voice and strong verbs to describe your skills and experience.

#### ORIGINAL:

Responsible for helping recruit volunteers and train them.

#### BETTER:

Recruited and trained volunteers.

#### EVEN BETTER:

Recruited and trained volunteers to provide job development services for homeless veterans.

### Quantify whenever possible

#### ORIGINAL:

Organized and managed all logistical details for annual fundraiser.

#### BETTER:

Organized and managed all logistical details for annual fundraiser with over 300 donors in attendance.

#### EVEN BETTER:

Organized and managed all logistical details for fundraiser with over 300 donors in attendance, which raised 20% of the agency's annual budget.



**Tip:** As you advance through your career, your earlier experiences should be edited down to 1-3 bullets or eventually omitted, especially if the experiences are not relevant to the position you are seeking.

## TRANSLATING YOUR SERVICE EXPERIENCE

### The Importance of Using Strong Verbs

Here is a list of useful verbs you can use in your resume to translate the skills you developed, accomplishments and activities you completed, materials you created, responsibilities you held, and more during your year of service.

### You Were a Team Builder and a Leader

During your year, did you organize an initiative? Oversee a steering committee? Manage volunteers?

- Aligned
- Facilitated
- Motivated
- Recruited
- Chaired
- Fostered
- Operated
- Regulated
- Controlled
- Guided
- Orchestrated
- Shaped
- Coordinated
- Headed
- Organized
- Supervised
- Cultivated
- Hired
- Oversaw
- Taught
- Directed
- Inspired
- Planned
- Trained
- Enabled
- Mentored
- Produced
- Unified
- Executed
- Mobilized
- Programmed
- United

### You Transformed Something

Does your organization finally have a Facebook account? Did you give them a web redesign? Did you create a new system your service site can use to track all of their volunteers?

- Centralized
- Modified
- Reorganized
- Streamlined
- Clarified
- Overhauled
- Replaced
- Strengthened
- Converted
- Redesigned
- Restructured
- Transformed
- Customized
- Refined
- Revamped
- Updated
- Influenced
- Refocused
- Revitalized
- Upgraded
- Integrated
- Rehabilitated
- Simplified
- Merged
- Remodeled
- Standardized

### **You Assessed and Addressed Needs in Your Community**

Did you lead the community through a needs assessment process? Develop and launch a brand new project? Create a new system?

- Administered
- Built
- Charted
- Created
- Designed
- Developed
- Devised
- Founded
- Engineered
- Established
- Formalized
- Formed
- Formulated
- Implemented
- Incorporated
- Initiated
- Instituted
- Introduced
- Launched
- Pioneered
- Spearheaded

### **You Saved the Organization Time or Money**

Were you able to create cost-effective and/or time-efficient sustainable solutions?

- Conserved
- Consolidated
- Decreased
- Deducted
- Diagnosed
- Lessened
- Reconciled
- Reduced
- Yielded

### **You Were a Resource Generator**

Did you generate new and valuable resources like in-kind donations or funding for your organization? Did you bring in new stakeholders and build new partnerships?

- Acquired
- Forged
- Navigated
- Negotiated
- Partnered
- Secured

### **You Were a Research Machine**

During your year, did you research best practices? Identify common trends? Generate analytics?

- Analyzed
- Assembled
- Assessed
- Audited
- Calculated
- Discovered
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Explored
- Forecasted
- Identified
- Interpreted
- Investigated
- Mapped
- Measured
- Qualified
- Surveyed
- Tested
- Tracked

### **You Utilized Your Verbal and Written Communication Skills**

Did you develop a curriculum or conduct a training? Make presentations to community members? Author a curriculum or develop language for marketing collateral?

- Authored
- Briefed
- Campaigned
- Co-authored
- Composed
- Conveyed
- Convinced
- Corresponded
- Counseled
- Critiqued
- Defined
- Documented
- Edited
- Illustrated
- Persuaded
- Promoted
- Publicized
- Reviewed

### **Showcase Your Success!**

What did you achieve during your year of service? Did you meet the objectives set by your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)? Reach any milestones?

- Attained
- Awarded
- Completed
- Demonstrated
- Earned
- Exceeded
- Outperformed
- Reached
- Showcased
- Succeeded
- Surpassed
- Targeted

## TRANSLATING YOUR VISTA SERVICE TO A RESUME

Refer to the resume on the following page to translate VAD activities into powerful and concise resume bullets.

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities	
<p><b>Goal of the Project:</b> The Youth Healthy Habits VISTA will expand opportunities for underserved youth who live within a food desert area. These opportunities will include the development of an outdoor learning lab, curriculum development, community organizing and build implementation.</p>	
<p><b>Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/28/2017 – 08/28/2018 )</b> Establish a steering committee to formulate ideas and to help lead the effort to build the community garden and outdoor learning lab.</p> <p><b>Member Activity:</b> Member Activities: 1. Visit with local community organizations to build interest and identify individuals. 2. Create timeline and goals for committee success and deadlines for task. 3. Facilitate the election of a committee chairperson.</p>	
<p><b>Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/28/2017 – 08/27/2018 )</b> Research and visit groups in the region with community gardens and outdoor learning.</p> <p><b>Member Activity:</b> 1. Identify trends in community gardens nationwide through research. 2. Visit community garden projects in the region to gain better understanding of their goals and objectives. a. Create partnerships with other non-profit agencies who specialize in this area. 3. Research best practices on outdoor learning information into a toolkit for future projects. 4. Engage and educate local farm community and seek involvement. 5. Engage with Halls Cross Roads Elementary School on project involvement.</p>	
<p><b>Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/28/2017 – 08/27/2018 )</b> Collaborate with local architecture firm on design and construction needs.</p> <p><b>Member Activity:</b> 1. Identify what would be needed in a phased layout of the garden, design the space. 2. Research cost for outdoor learning modules within the garden. a. Grasp understanding of construction principles, community spaces and aquatics. 3. Involve multiple stakeholders in the project for feedback and host community interest conversations.</p>	
<p><b>Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/28/2017 – 08/27/2018 )</b> Identify and seek funding opportunities.</p> <p><b>Member Activity:</b> 1. Identify foundations and companies interested in outdoor learning and community gardens. 2. Steward and apply for grant funding. a. Set up meetings and tours with possible funding agencies. b. Better understand the grant-writing process for each funder and priorities. 3. Find best practices in revenue avenues the garden could produce.</p>	
<p><b>Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/28/2017 – 08/27/2018 )</b> Develop a curriculum toolkit with partners agencies.</p> <p><b>Member Activity:</b> 1. Research existing curricula for outdoor learning. 2. Research trends in environmental education. 3. Materials already in use or in development stages. 4. Create working draft curriculum for the community garden and outdoor learning lab as a pilot program.</p>	

# TRANSLATING YOUR VISTA SERVICE TO A RESUME

Refer to the sample VAD on the previous page to create resume bullets from your VAD.

## Sabrina H. Martinez

123 Street, Springfield, IL 12345 | [SHMartinez@gmail.com](mailto:SHMartinez@gmail.com) | 545.123.4567 | [Linkedin.com/in/SHMart16](https://www.linkedin.com/in/SHMart16)

### Professional Experience

#### AmeriCorps VISTA Outreach Coordinator

August 2017 – Present

#### Boys & Girls Club of Springfield County – Springfield, IL

- Plan and manage organization's first community garden initiative, serving over 1,000 Boys & Girls Club youth and community members in designated food desert.
- Research, develop, and design youth gardening and healthy habits curriculum to be implemented in five elementary schools within Springfield County.
- Develop copy and graphics for outreach materials.
- Establish the organization's social media presence on Facebook and Twitter to engage community; create system for staff to post and schedule weekly updates.
- Successfully raised over \$42,000 in funding and in-kind donations for the garden project through grant-writing; managed budgets and maintained financial records.
- Planned, tracked, and supervised the activities of over 100 volunteers for five build days.

#### Sales Associate

May 2017 – August 2017

#### H&M – Chicago, IL

- Provided excellent customer service to over 3,200 guests over the course of 3 months.
- Demonstrated time management and organizational skills by processing and displaying inventory.

#### Marketing/Public Affairs Intern

May 2016 – August 2016

#### American Red Cross – Madison, WI

- Solicited in-kind and cash donations from over 50 local businesses in Dane County.
- Wrote and edited articles for bi-weekly newsletter distributed to 1,000 individuals.

### Education

#### University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

May 2017

Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies

#### School for International Training, Buenos Aires, Argentina

February – June 2016

### Community Leadership

#### Orientation Lead, University of Wisconsin – Madison Student Life

August 2016 – December 2016

- Recruited, hired, and trained over 300 peers to be small group facilitators and resources for 1,000 new students and their families.

#### Construction Volunteer Coordinator, Habitat for Humanity Springfield

June – August 2016

- Instructed 10 teams of volunteers on roof maintenance and weatherization.

### Specialized Skills

Proficient in Adobe CreativeSuite, Social Media Management – familiar with Hootsuite, Facebook and Google Analytics, Proficient in Spanish, CPR certified

## ADDITIONAL RESUME SAMPLE

Consider alternative templates for your resume.

# Michael Thompson

### Contact Information

✉ [mike1234@gmail.com](mailto:mike1234@gmail.com)

☎ 603-333-1234

🌐 [LinkedIn.com/in/miket](https://www.linkedin.com/in/miket)

📍 Concord, NH

### Skills Summary

- Web Development
- Written & Verbal Communication
- Volunteer Management
- Peer Teaching/Mentoring
- Salesforce, MailChimp, Hootsuite
- Microsoft Suite

### Education

#### University of New Hampshire May 2017

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Communication: Business Applications

Academic Honors:

- University Honors Program
- Summa cum laude (GPA 3.93)
- Dean's List (all semesters)
- Wilburn Sims Award (2016)
- Tad Ackman Scholarship (2015)

### Professional Development

*New Hampshire Association for  
Volunteer Administrators*

Public Relations Committee Member  
October 2017 – Present

*Governor's Conference on Volunteerism*  
May 2017

*VISTA Course: Volunteer Mobilization*  
September 2018 – November 2018

### Professional Profile

Resourceful and dedicated communications professional with experience working with developmentally disabled populations within civically responsible organizations. Proficient in donor and volunteer management. Proactive problem solver.

### Work & Volunteer Experience

#### AmeriCorps VISTA Outreach Coordinator

***NH Council on Developmental Disabilities / June 2017 – Present***  
*AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members commit to serve 12 months working to advance local solutions, while building valuable nonprofit management and community development skills.*

- Manage communications to donors and volunteers through email marketing, website updates, and social media.
- Formalize volunteer program by updating all outreach materials.
- Develop curriculum and provide training for 75 volunteers and 2 staff with developmental disabilities.
- Conduct donor research using Salesforce to help fund future Council initiatives.
- Create and edit flyers/brochures for educational and promotional purposes.

#### Website Editor

***Village Ski & Snowboard / December 2016 – June 2017***

- Edit copy and improve overall usability on website.
- Increase daily web traffic by 30%.

#### Web Content Specialist

***University of New Hampshire / August 2016 – December 2016***

- Converted all UNH webpages in Drupal resulting in a highly streamlined, user-friendly, and consistent design.

#### Honors Peer Mentor

***University of New Hampshire / August 2015 – December 2015***

- Assisted 340 first year students in the UNH Honors Program in transitioning to college life.
- Provided resources specific to their academic needs.
- Informed students of services available at UNH.

## COVER LETTERS

**Always submit a cover letter.** You can create a general template and tailor it for each job that you are applying to. Save your cover letter as a PDF and submit it along with your resume.

Keep in mind that a cover letter serves as a writing sample to the employer and provides another way for you to stand out among other applicants.

### Top 5 Essentials for Cover Letters

1. Address it to the person doing the hiring (if you're uncertain, reach out to the organization for the point of contact or use "Dear Hiring Manager:").
2. Keep it brief and upbeat.
3. Demonstrate to the employer how your skills and experience can help meet the organization's needs.
4. Reiterate your knowledge about the organization and the industry.
5. No typos!

### Basic Cover Letter

Dear Hiring Manager:

**INTRO** - Start with an attention statement. This is your opportunity to tell the employer how you heard of the position and/or mention a personal connection you have with the organization.

**BODY** - This paragraph should demonstrate two things: 1) Why you are a good fit for the job, and 2) why you want to work for this specific employer. Bullet points make for an easy read!

**WOW FACTOR** - Demonstrate what you know about the employer; their mission, recent achievements, etc., and link that knowledge to your own skills and achievements relevant to doing the job.

**CONCLUSION** - Restate why you're a good fit and mention any additional relevant information such as your NCE status. You can also transition by stating: "I look forward to hearing from you" along with including your contact information.

**SIGN-OFF** - Simple and formal ending.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Parker

123.456.7890

## Basic Cover Letter

INSERT DATE

INSERT NAME

INSERT ADDRESS

Dear Hiring Manager:

I recently learned about the Marketing Coordinator position at the Springfield Food Bank through one of your community partners, Food Emporium. I am excited to submit my resume as I believe my skills and experiences match well with your organization's needs and overall mission.

In my current role as an AmeriCorps VISTA member, I help provide access to healthy food throughout Springfield County. Over the past year, I have done this through a variety of ways:

- Designed and delivered 5 webinars and 10 in-person workshops for over 100 volunteers
- Created and posted content for social media channels and email marketing, increasing our donor base by 20% and active volunteers by 40%
- Developed outreach materials to educate over 15 local businesses about the food desert issues in Springfield County

My experience is well suited to your goal of increasing overall awareness in the community about the important work of the Food Bank. In addition, I've worked in food service for five years and currently enjoy maintaining a garden plot in my own neighborhood.

I've attached my resume for your review. I would welcome the opportunity to join the dedicated staff at the Springfield Food Bank.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Liz

Liz Adams

123.456.7890

[Linkedin.com/in/liz123adams](https://www.linkedin.com/in/liz123adams)



**TIP:**

## Add a Personal Touch

A handwritten signature adds a nice touch. You can do this digitally by signing a blank piece of paper and scanning into your computer. Or you can download a scanner app on your smartphone to create an electronic signature.





## INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Think about the interview process in terms of before, during, and after the interview. There are certain steps you want to take to prepare yourself for each phase of the interview process.

### BEFORE

#### Research the employer from the inside:

- Read the organization's website thoroughly. If you're applying for a job in a specific department, research that department's subpage.
- What can you learn about their mission and culture?
- What can you learn about their current priorities or initiatives?

#### Research the employer from the outside:

- Google the company's name and see what you find. Is it good news, bad news, have they been featured locally/nationally/internationally? If so, what for?
- What are the trends in this industry?
- Is the organization financially viable? Is the company reputable? Use online resources such as **Guidestar.org** and the **Better Business Bureau** to find out.

#### Find out who you know:

Use your online and in-person networks to find out if you know someone who works there. LinkedIn is a great tool for this task, as you can learn how many degrees of separation you have from someone. If you do have a connection, reach out and let the person know you have an interview. Try to get any insights into the mission and culture of the organization.

Find out who will conduct the interview and research them. How long have they been at the organization? What is their previous work experience? Where did they go to school? Are they members of any organizations that you are also a member of? Do they have similar interests? Use this information as a conversational tool and to better inform your questions.

### **Prepare Your Questions (both questions you will be asked and questions you want to ask):**

- Google "common interview questions."
- When the interviewer asks if you have any questions, your answer should be "yes." Prepare 3-5 **thoughtful questions** to ask the employer during your interview.
- Reread the job announcement and have examples ready to demonstrate you have the experience required to do the job.
- Be prepared to offer responses for specific scenarios as this is a common interview technique. For example, you have just been asked to complete three different assignments that have the same deadline. How do you prioritize your tasks? **OR** Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a colleague and had to come to a resolution.

The reason employers ask these questions is because they want insight into your thought process. Do you crack under pressure or can you handle multiple deadlines? They want to know how you will handle yourself. Past behavior is a strong predictor of future behavior.

Prepare a succinct description of your service experience accomplishments, and focus on the outcomes. Example:

*My role at Volunteer Houston was to recruit volunteers and agencies to use our Volunteer Connection Platform to stay engaged. I conducted an analysis of how we could improve the Platform's performance, and over the course of my VISTA term, we revamped our website, launched a Google AdWords campaign, and became the first Volunteer Center in the country to develop a mobile app for finding volunteer opportunities. I'm proud to say we increased our registrations by over 50%.*



**Tip:** Take the position description, copy it into a Word document, and write out examples of your experience underneath each of the qualifications from the job announcement.

### For in-person interviews:

- Plan your route ahead of time and arrive early.
- Use a firm handshake.
- Don't text, chew gum, or wear strong perfumes/cologne.
- Put your mobile phone on "do not disturb."

### For phone or video conferencing interviews:

- Test your setup.
- Make sure you have good lighting and quiet space.
- Test your audio connection.
- Keep your computer or phone plugged into a charger.
- Practice with a friend.
- Don't forget to dress as though you are attending the interview in person, especially if you're going to be in front of a video camera.



**Tip:** If you're in the early stage of your career, make sure to prepare examples from different experiences and not just your time as an AmeriCorps VISTA member, even if that experience is from other volunteer work, short-term jobs, or school. No one wants to hear, "And when I was an AmeriCorps VISTA member. . ." over and over again.

## DURING

- Anytime you can insert yourself into the role when answering a question, do so. That way, the employer actually envisions YOU in the role. For example, "Can you tell me a little bit more about the position and what I might be doing on a daily basis?"
- Let them know how much you've researched the company through the questions you ask, "I noticed in your company's mission statement that you aim to end poverty by 2020. What are some of the ways in which this position would help achieve that goal?"
- Articulate to the interviewer why you are the right fit for the job and how AmeriCorps VISTA alums make great employees.

When answering the question, "Why should I hire you?" remember that serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA member instills certain attributes that are highly valued by employers. What you learn through serving for one year with AmeriCorps VISTA is invaluable. Employees in entry level positions are rarely given the types and ranges of responsibility that come with being a VISTA member. Do not underestimate what you have gained through your service experience.

There are certain questions that are illegal for employers to ask. Know what they are. Employers may not ask you questions related to the following topics:

- Age
- Race, ethnicity, or color
- Gender or sex
- Country of national origin or birth place
- Religion
- Disability
- Marital or family status or pregnancy

If you are asked any of these questions during an interview, you can opt to end the interview or decline to answer the question. **Learn more** about how to handle illegal or inappropriate interview questions.



**Tip:** Be sensitive to the length of time scheduled for your interview. If it is your turn to ask questions and it is past or almost past the allotted interview time, acknowledge to your interviewer that you are aware of the time. For example, "I realize that we only have a minute left, but I do have one more question."

## AFTER

Follow-up:

- Always send a thank you email within 24 hours.
- Keep it short and simple: acknowledge the individual(s) you interviewed with, reiterate something you like about the company, remind the employer of your unique skills and experiences.
- If you haven't heard back from the employer, don't be afraid to follow-up 2-3 weeks after your interview.

## **Thank You Letter/E-mail**

Dear Mr. Patel:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you and your team yesterday afternoon.

One of my favorite things about the Central Homeless Shelter is the commitment of your staff to its mission. The innovative partnerships you are creating are clearly making a difference in providing safe and affordable housing to our community's veteran population.

I would welcome the chance to bring my five years of experience as a graphic designer and my passion for ending veteran homelessness to your organization.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,  
Calvin

Calvin Hobbes  
202.222.3333  
chobbes@zmail.com



# Federal Employment

## Understanding Your Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) Benefit

As a national service participant, you are a great candidate to work for the federal government. Not only can your **Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE)** benefit help you get hired more quickly and with less hassle, but once you're in the job, your time serving as a VISTA member may count toward leave accrual (= more vacation days, sooner!) and retirement. Read below to access resources to help you navigate the federal hiring process and fully understand your NCE benefit.

Once you've successfully completed service, you will receive one year of Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) for employment in the federal government.

This special hiring path enables you to apply for federal jobs with the advantage of not having to go through the standard public competitive selection process. That means that you can be appointed to federal positions that may or may not be available to the general public. In addition, your application could be processed faster than others.

NCE does not guarantee you a federal job, but it does make it easier for federal hiring managers to bring you on board. NCE is good for one year after close of service, but there are specific reasons it can be extended for an additional two years – for a total of three years post-service. Please note that the hiring agency—not the Corporation for National and Community Service—makes this determination.

### Reasons for extension:

Federal agencies may extend your NCE status if, after you have completed service, you are:

1. In the military service, or Peace Corps service
2. Studying at a recognized institution of higher learning
3. In another activity which, in the agency's hiring view, warrants extension\*

\*This could be a paid or unpaid position that helped you gain skills and experiences required for the job for which you are applying.



**Watch:** YouTube Video Describing the VISTA Non-Competitive Eligibility Benefit

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## FEDERAL TRACK

To explore NCE further, here are **additional resources** available on the VISTA Campus.



**Fact:** Currently, VISTA is the only AmeriCorps program that receives the Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) benefit, along with service in the Peace Corps.

### Virtual Sessions for Federal Applicants

If you are serious about landing a federal job, participate in virtual sessions available on HRU.gov (click resource center, recruitment policy studio, then job seekers) to help you understand how to search and understand job opportunity announcements, learn a step-by-step process for building a federal resume, and get interviewing tips.

### Counting Service toward Federal Leave and Retirement

AmeriCorps VISTA Alumni can count their service year(s) towards vacation accrual and retirement once employed with the federal government. VISTA alumni may make a FERS (Federal Employee Retirement System) service credit deposit payment for any period of VISTA service (excluding training time), regardless of when the service was performed. Paying the service credit deposit will make this volunteer time creditable toward federal retirement. VISTA alumni who become federal employees must contact the Human Resources/Benefits personnel at their federal agency to initiate the deposit process and to make sure they are accruing vacation at the appropriate rate. Learn more about applying VISTA service towards federal benefits/retirement at the **OPM website**.

### To apply your VISTA service toward federal retirement, complete the following steps:

1. Obtain a copy of your VISTA Verification of Service letter through your My.AmeriCorps.gov account.
2. Provide the letter to your employer's Office of Human Capital/Human Resources, and be sure to advise them that you would like to make a service credit deposit.
3. Your Human Capital representative will advise you concerning your submission of your VISTA letter, along with the appropriate form for Application to Make Service Credit Payment, and will submit it to the Office of Personnel Management.

## FEDERAL TRACK

If you're interested in working for the federal government, you will need to build a "federal" resume. If you have active Non-Competitive Eligibility and meet the minimum qualifications for a position, a federal hiring manager could hire you directly using a traditional resume. However, most of the time, you will need to submit an application through USAJobs.gov, which usually requires a federal resume.

### Differences between Traditional and Federal Resumes

	TRADITIONAL	FEDERAL
<b>LENGTH</b>	1-2 pages	Multiple pages
<b>DATES LISTED</b>	Optional to include month	Must include month AND year
<b># OF HOURS WORKED</b>	Not included	Must include how many hours/per week for each position
<b>SALARY</b>	Highly recommended to NOT include	Optional, include grade level if you have previously worked for the gov't
<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	Not included	Must include name and contact information for current and former supervisors (have option for person not to be contacted).

The key to creating a successful federal resume is to use the "Resume Builder" tool on USAJobs. First, you must create a profile and then you can opt to "upload or build resume." Choose "build" to ensure you do not leave out any required information (for example, month and year must be included in order to calculate amount of time worked at each position).

Here are three key resources to help applicants build resumes and navigate the overall federal hiring process:

- **Go Government** – One-stop shop for how to find and apply for federal government jobs created by the Partnership for Public Service.
- **GovLoop** – An online community connecting people working for and pursuing careers in government.
- **HRU.gov** – Comprehensive Federal Human Resources (HR) career development website for current employees and applicants.



**Tip:** "Reviewers can only give credit for times that are clearly defined. If someone puts 2015 for their work experience, they will only get credit for a single month. Some agencies won't give credit at all. You need to list the month AND the year. This is one of the most common issues I see in resumes." ~ Twana C, HR Specialist

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## HIGHLIGHTING YOUR NON-COMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY STATUS

To make sure your Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status stands out, insert a sentence in your cover letter and on your resume to better ensure the federal hiring manager knows s/he can onboard you using this unique hiring path.

### North Dakota Social Services

Dept. 2020 PO Box 1234

Fargo, ND 58108

04/2016 - 04/2017

Hours per week: 40

AmeriCorps VISTA

#### Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

Qualified for Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE), having successfully served as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Active NCE from April 17, 2017 – April 17, 2018.

- Co-wrote 14 grant applications, resulting in \$130,750 raised
- Established master grants tracking list, the first records management system for the organization
- Implemented application plan and process to standardize VISTA site recruitment procedures



**Tip:** You may have to educate federal hiring managers about how they can use NCE to hire you. See the USAJobs homepage under "Explore Hiring Paths" and click on "**Peace Corps/VISTA Alumni.**" Share this link with employers.

# FEDERAL RESUME SAMPLE

Sample traditional and federal resume comparison courtesy of the Partnership for Public Service's **Go Government Application Tips.**

## SABRINA H. MARTINEZ

111 President Drive  
Washington DC 20005 US  
Mobile: 202 200 2222  
Email: [SH.Martinez@gmail.com](mailto:SH.Martinez@gmail.com)

Country of Citizenship: United States of America  
Veterans' Preference: No  
Highest Grade: GS-02-07, 06/20XX-08/20XX

**Availability:** Job Type: Permanent, Temporary, Recent Graduates  
Work Schedule: Full Time

**Desired Locations:** US-DC-Washington/Metro  
US-VA-Arlington  
US-VA-Alexandria

**Work Experience:** **Department of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs)** Washington, DC US **9/20XX – 8/20XX**  
**Grade Level:** GS 07  
**Hours per week:** 40  
**Public Affairs Assistant**  
**Supervisor:** John Smith (XXX-222-2222)  
**Okay to contact this Supervisor:** Yes

- Supervised ten contractors on communications, ensured project was delivered on time and budget
- Contacted and pitched media for program publicity resulting in four newspaper articles and two interviews
- Researched public affairs best practices in private sector and government, resulting in five adopted measures that improved agency performance
- Facilitated biweekly team meetings and conducted monthly diversity training presentations for 20 to 30 internal staff members
- Participated in team brainstorm sessions to analyze organizational problems and improve efficiency

**Department of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs)** Washington, DC US **9/20XX – 8/20XX**  
**Grade Level:** NA  
**Hours per week:** 20

**Intern**  
**Supervisor:** John Smith (XXX-222-2222)  
**Okay to contact this Supervisor:** Yes

- Wrote 15 articles about foreign education initiatives in Bureau newsletter and press releases
- Drafted 20 memoranda for the Undersecretary of State
- Assembled financial and budget information for use in Educational and Cultural Affairs internal materials
- Assisted with administrative tasks such as filing documents and organizing meeting logistics

The General Schedule (GS) is the predominant pay scale for federal employees.

Don't forget to include past salary or GS Level.

Include the number of hours worked per week.

Great way to highlight subject area expertise.

Note: do not use abbreviations, write out Educational and Cultural Affairs not ECA

# FEDERAL RESUME SAMPLE

**U.S. Consulate (Department of State)**  
Madrid, Spain

**6/20XX – 8/20XX**  
**Grade Level:** NA  
**Hours per week:** 45

**Political and Economic Section Intern**  
**Supervisor:** Jane Doe (XXX-111-1111)  
**Okay to contact this Supervisor:** Yes

- Researched and wrote five regional economic and political briefs for US Ambassador's Madrid consulate district visits
- Collaborated with 15 professionals in regional chambers of commerce, banks' nongovernmental organizations, and government offices to compile briefs enabling a shared understanding of material
- Synthesized information from external research and interviews
- Provided administrative support through sorting mail, filing documents, and answering multi-line phone system
- Utilized Spanish language skills and political and cultural knowledge in a variety of settings

**ABC Afterschool Program**  
Philadelphia PA US

**9/20XX-4/20XX**  
**Salary:** 15 USD per Hour  
**Hours per week:** 40

**Program Coordinator**  
**Supervisor:** John Doe (XXX-000-0000)  
**Okay to contact this Supervisor:** Yes

- Developed and monitored program goals and policies resulting in the highest recorded performance in ten years
- Oversaw three mentoring programs in limited resource communities to promote a safe and healthy youth development
- Recruited, trained, and managed 25 adult mentors and 20 youth
- Developed marketing and training materials for use in programs and mentoring initiatives
- Wrote and managed two program grants, hired three outside contractors for grant implementation
- Coordinated weekly ten-minute presentations on mentoring initiatives
- Communicated daily in Spanish with program participants and their families

## Education:

**B.A., (May 20XX), Marble House College, Philadelphia, PA 19019 US**  
**35 Semester Hours**

**GPA:** 3.50 out of 4.0

**Major:** Economics, Spanish Language (double major)

### Relevant Coursework, Licenses and Certifications:

Macro Economics, Micro Economics, Statistics, Public Policy Process

## Language Skills:

**English**  
Spoken: Advanced  
Written: Advanced  
Read: Advanced

**Spanish**  
Spoken: Advanced  
Written: Advanced  
Read: Advanced

Federal Resumes require you to include # of semester hours to ensure eligibility.

# FEDERAL RESUME SAMPLE

**Affiliations:** National Spanish American Member (20XX – present)  
Foundation

**References:** Name: George Washington  
Employer: Marble House University  
Title: Professor, Spanish Language  
Phone Number: XXX-333-3333  
Email Address: [g washington@pastpresidents.org](mailto:g washington@pastpresidents.org)  
Reference Type: Personal

Name: James Madison  
Employer: Department of State  
Title: Director of Foreign Affairs  
Phone Number: XXX-444-4444  
Email Address: [jmadison@pastpresidents.org](mailto:jmadison@pastpresidents.org)  
Reference Type: Professional

## Additional Information:

### Skills:

- Grant writing experience (awarded “Dream Catchers Award” by Community and Recreation Services, Delaware County Government, Dec. 20XX)
- Regional expertise in Balkan, Post-Soviet, and Western European political issues (including extensive regional travel)
- Proficient in Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook)

Use this section to highlight relevant class projects, volunteer work, and other leadership roles that may not be on your private sector resume.

Be specific in the programs you are proficient in.

### Class Projects

Western European Economy: Then and Now, April 20XX

- Completed a 75 page capstone paper including in-depth economic analysis of past and present financial concerns of Western Europe
- Conducted research on historical implications of changes in economic wealth in Western Europe
- Presented research in a twenty-slide PowerPoint to 50 students and ten staff in the economics department

### Leadership and Service Roles:

Tri-College Institute, **Diversity Workshop Facilitator**, Oct. 20XX-May 20XX

- Developed twelve forums for dialogue between diverse student groups
- Built five partnerships between student groups through cultural programming

Marble House Business Society, **President**, Sept. 20XX-May 20XX

- Recruited four executive committee members, planned meetings
- Managed a membership base of 40+ students
- Organized club involvement in business related workshops/events

Tucker Recreation Association, **Basketball Coach**, Nov. 20XX-Feb. 20XX

- Taught twelve, ten-year-old boys the fundamentals of basketball, sports ethics, and mental focus
- Coordinated travel logistics for away competitions

Habitat for Humanity, **Volunteer**, New Orleans, LA, March 200X

- Contributed to rebuilding a home in St. Bernard Parish, New Orleans

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## FEDERAL RESUMES SAMPLE

### **Other Roles at Marble House College:**

War News Radio, **Weekend Co-Host**, Aug 20XX-May 20XX

- Recruited executive committee members, planned meetings
- Managed a membership base of 40+ students

Spanish Department, **Representative**, Sept. 20XX-May 20XX

- Represented 100+ students at language department meetings
- Partnered with a local high school to plan and execute an hour-long Spanish song and dance course of 30 students

## WRITING YOUR VISTA SERVICE IN A FEDERAL RESUME SAMPLE

**JACOB PRICE**  
111 President Drive  
Washington DC, 20005  
Mobile: 202 200 2222  
Email: [jacob.price@email.com](mailto:jacob.price@email.com)

### AmeriCorps VISTA

Champlain College  
123 South Street, Burlington, VT 05402  
Supervisor: XX (123-456-7890), may contact

08/2016–08/2017  
40 Hours per Week  
Salary: \$1,018 per Month

### Duties and Responsibilities

#### *Outreach and Recruitment*

- Served as primary liaison between Champlain College and the Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes; worked with college and school administration, teachers, PTA, and other stakeholders.
- Contacted community organizations, helped them develop projects for America Reads participants, and matched college students with appropriate placements.
- Recruited applicants for America Reads, using a variety of outreach techniques including tabling, job fairs, and classroom presentations.

#### *Program Management and Administration*

- Provided on-boarding training to AmeriCorps members about policies and procedures, tracking hours, and reported hours and grant deliverables to the Vermont Campus Compact program administrator.
- Recorded and verified America Reads work-study hours and reported them to the campus work study administrator.

#### *Meeting and Travel Coordination*

- Arranged travel, meals, transportation, and hotels for staff and students participating in service trips.
- Coordinated logistics for student volunteer activities, including scheduling meeting rooms, arranging transportation, and procuring supplies.

#### *Leadership and Supervision*

- Provided day-to-day supervision of mentors in the AIM mentoring partnership, including providing students with feedback and areas for improvement, resolving conflict between mentors and school administration, and providing official performance evaluation when required.

#### *Training and Professional Development*

- Developed and presented trainings on tutoring English Language Learner students.

### Key Accomplishments

- Developed and managed lunch/recess time mentoring partnership between Champlain College and the Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes, resulting in 10 mentors providing over 275 mentoring hours in 09/10 academic year.
- Recruited and placed more than 20 college students in six community institutions through the America Reads program, which provides tutoring to academically at-risk children.
- Conducted research project with campus staff on the motivations for volunteering among Champlain students, including designing and distributing a survey. Performed quantitative and qualitative analysis on survey results, which informed 2020 Strategic Plan and campus marketing campaign for the Center for Service and Civic Engagement. The research was presented at the New England Campus Compact Regional Conference and published in *The Journal of the First Year Experience and Students in Transition*.



## SERVE AGAIN

Serving more than one term with AmeriCorps VISTA has its advantages.

1. You can do a lot more with TWO education awards (Note: The limit is two full education awards, so you would need to opt for the cash stipend if serving for more than two terms).
2. Consider becoming a **VISTA leader**. Refer to [NationalService.gov/VISTA](http://NationalService.gov/VISTA) to see the differences between VISTA members and leaders. For a deeper dive, check out **Chapter 10** of the VISTA Member Handbook to learn more about the role of a leader and the type of training you would receive.
3. Expand on the work that you've already started and continue to deepen your ties to the community.
4. Apply to serve in another location and extend your VISTA adventure!

Individuals can serve up to the following number of terms for each program (the amount of time per term for each program varies):

- AmeriCorps VISTA – 5 years total, usually 5 terms
- AmeriCorps State and National – 4 terms
- AmeriCorps NCCC – No term limit but no more than 2 consecutive terms

### Additional Service Options:

1. Become an **NCCC Team Leader** (no upper age limit).
2. Consider direct service with **AmeriCorps State and National** (full and part-time positions available).
3. Interested in international service? Check out the **Peace Corps** and/or **Peace Corps Response** (3-12 month, high impact international assignments).

## STAY CONNECTED AND GET INVOLVED

- Update your email address on **My.AmeriCorps.gov**
- Follow us on Social Media:
  - Facebook: **AmeriCorpsVISTA**
  - Twitter: **@AmeriCorpsVISTA**
  - LinkedIn: **AmeriCorps-VISTA**

### Share your service story and support AmeriCorps VISTA

1. Help inspire the next generation of AmeriCorps VISTA members by signing up for our **“Be an Ambassador”** campaign and give a talk to a class at a high school, community college, or university. Visit [NationalService.gov/VISTAAmbassador](http://NationalService.gov/VISTAAmbassador).
2. **Create/share videos** of you during your service or reflections after service.
3. **Submit your story** to [vistaoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:vistaoutreach@cns.gov).
4. Send us a photo from your service showing the AmeriCorps VISTA logo to [vistaoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:vistaoutreach@cns.gov) or tag on social media using **#IamVISTA**.

### Use the network

Over one million individuals have served with AmeriCorps. Use the resources available to connect you with this powerful network: **AmeriCorps Alums, Employers of National Service, LinkedIn**, your sponsor, etc.

### Display your AmeriCorps VISTA pride

Whether on social media, on your resume, in your online bio, or in real life, display the “A.” Keep wearing your polo or t-shirt and use an AmeriCorps VISTA mug/pen/tote bag as you go through your daily life. When sitting in a coffee shop, walking down the sidewalk, or riding on the city bus, you never know when someone will recognize the “A,” and where that can lead.

### Don't have gear anymore?

Purchase hats, t-shirts, mugs, bags, and more through **National Service Gear**.



**Fun Fact:** National Service Gear is run by Industries for the Blind and 80% of their direct labor staff is visually impaired. Purchase their gear and continue to give back.

**Please, don't forget us!** Once you land that job, include your AmeriCorps VISTA experience in your company bio. All of these actions help increase the awareness of AmeriCorps VISTA online and across the country.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!**

## APPENDIX A: HOW TO ACCESS YOUR VERIFICATION OF SERVICE LETTER

You will have access to your Verification of Service letter after you complete your VISTA service term. This letter provides proof of your dates of service and NCE eligibility status. Include this letter when applying to federal positions and meeting with potential federal employers.

1. Go to **My.AmeriCorps.gov**.
2. Enter your username and password.
3. Click on "My Service Letter" from the left-hand column.
4. Select the appropriate "Service Term" from the first drop down menu.
5. Select "VISTA Verification of Service" from "Letter Type" drop down.
6. Enter recipient or leave blank
7. Print or save as a PDF

*If you have any difficulties accessing your letter, contact the VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) through the National Service Hotline, 800-942-2677.*

Corporation for National and Community Service  
NationalService.gov



To Whom It May Concern:

This is to verify that the following individual served full time as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer In Service To America) for the term of service indicated below:

Name:  
\*Dates of Service:  
\*\*Stipend or "deemed" value of Education Award: \$/per month

AmeriCorps VISTA, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), places individuals in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to support efforts to alleviate poverty. Since 1965, more than 200,000 VISTAs have served low-income communities in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

While AmeriCorps VISTAs are authorized, trained and supported throughout their service by the VISTA program and CNCS, the sponsoring organization operates the service project. Should you wish to gather information about the VISTA's service activities or performance, you should contact the sponsoring organization directly.

**INFORMATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYERS**

**Federal Employment Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE):**  
VISTAs who successfully complete a year of service have noncompetitive eligibility for federal hire for a period of one year after completion of the VISTA's service (dates listed above). This is in accordance with Executive Order No. 11105 as applied to service under Title I of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) of 1973, or under Title VIII of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. See 42 U.S.C. § 5055(d); 45 C.F.R. § 2556.340. An employing agency may extend the period for two more years to a total of three years if the former VISTA, after the qualifying service, is in the military service or studying at a recognized institution of higher learning, or is engaged in another activity which, in the opinion of the appointing authority, warrants an extension.

**Federal SCDs for Leave, RIF and Retirement:**  
Having enrolled on or after October 1, 1975 for an enrollment period of at least one year under Title I of the DVSA, the former VISTA should receive credit for the purpose of computing federal Service Computation Dates (SCD). See 42 U.S.C. § 5055(c). VISTA service shall not be credited toward completion of any probationary or trial period. This service is creditable to SCD for Leave and SCD for Reduction in Force (RIF) upon hire. This service is also potentially creditable for CSRS/FERS retirement under the same conditions that apply to a creditable period or periods of non-deduction service. Both CSRS and FERS employees may make a service credit deposit for VISTA service. (Federal HR - see CSRS and FERS Handbook Ch. 20 Section 20A.2.1-2)

\*Indicates period of service which is creditable for SCD for Leave and SCD for RIF, and potentially creditable for CSRS/FERS retirement.  
\*\*Indicates payment to be used for computation of civilian service credit deposit.

If this office can be of further assistance, please contact us at 800-942-2677 or VISTAverify@cnsc.gov.

Sincerely,  
  
Eileen Conoboy  
Acting Director, AmeriCorps VISTA

250 E Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20505  
202-606-8000 | 800-942-2677 | TTY 800-833-3722

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SERVICE

## APPENDIX B: RESOURCE LINKS

- Pg. 3      LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/americorps-vista/>  
Webinars: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/vista-webinars>  
VISTA Campus Job Board: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/jobs>  
HRU.gov: [https://hru.gov/Studio\\_Recruitment/Studio\\_Recruitment.aspx](https://hru.gov/Studio_Recruitment/Studio_Recruitment.aspx)  
USAJobs.gov: <https://www.usajobs.gov>  
AmeriCorps Alums: <http://www.americorpsalums.org>  
Health benefit: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/chapter-8-healthcare-benefit-support-0>  
Close of Service Travel Voucher (VISTA Member Handbook Chapter 7):  
<https://www.vistacampus.gov/chapter-7-travel-transportation-support-1>  
My.AmeriCorps.gov: <https://My.AmeriCorps.gov>  
Interest Accrual form: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/chapter-6-benefits-toward-education>  
Share your experience and stay involved: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/alumni>
- Pg. 4      My Next Move: <https://www.mynextmove.org>  
Find Your Fit: [http://gogovernment.org/government\\_careers/index.php](http://gogovernment.org/government_careers/index.php)  
National Career Development Association: <https://www.ncda.org>  
AmeriCorps.gov/Alumni: <https://www.americorps.gov/alumni>
- Pg. 6      Education Award site: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward>  
Matching Institutions:  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-american-corps-education-award/matching-institutions>
- Pg. 8-9    AmeriCorps Alums: <http://www.americorpsalums.org>  
Employers of National Service:  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/employers-national-service>  
Glass Door: <https://www.glassdoor.com>  
Google for Jobs: <https://www.google.com> (enter "Google for Jobs")  
GovLoop: <https://govloop.org>  
Go Government: <http://gogovernment.org>  
Idealist: <https://www.idealists.org>  
Indeed: <https://www.indeed.com>  
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com>  
Peace Corps Career Link: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/returned-volunteers/careers/career-link>  
USAJobs.gov: <https://www.usajobs.gov>  
VISTA Campus Job Board: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/jobs>
- Pg. 27    GuideStar: <http://www.guidestar.org>  
Better Business Bureau: <https://www.bbb.org>

## APPENDIX B: RESOURCE LINKS

- Pg. 28 Thoughtful questions: <https://www.thebalance.com/questions-to-ask-in-a-job-interview-2061205>
- Pg. 30 <https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-answer-inappropriate-interview-questions-2061334>
- Pg. 32 Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE): <https://www.vistacampus.gov/after-vista/career>
- Pg. 33 HRU.gov: [https://hru.gov/Studio\\_Recruitment/Studio\\_Recruitment.aspx](https://hru.gov/Studio_Recruitment/Studio_Recruitment.aspx)  
Chapter 12: End of Service: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/chapter-12-end-service>
- Pg. 35 Peace Corps/VISTA Alumni:  
<https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/peace-corps/>
- Pg. 36 Application Tips: [http://gogovernment.org/how\\_to\\_apply/index.php](http://gogovernment.org/how_to_apply/index.php)
- Pg. 41 Chapter 10 AmeriCorps VISTA Leaders:  
<https://www.vistacampus.gov/chapter-10-ameriacorps-vista-leaders>  
NCCC Team Leader:  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriacorps/ameriacorps-nccc/ameriacorps-nccc-team-leader>  
AmeriCorps State/National: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriacorps>  
Peace Corps: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/apply>  
Peace Corps Response:  
<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/is-peace-corps-right-for-me/peace-corps-response>
- Pg. 42 Social Media Links  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ameriacorpsvista>  
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ameriacorps-vista>
- Be an Ambassador: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/vistaambassador>  
Create/share videos AND Submit your Story: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/share-your-story>  
National Service Gear: <http://nationalservicegear.org>



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.



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[AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA](http://AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA)