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Nebraska VISTA Program Applications

Summary: The Corporation for National & Community Service, Nebraska State Program Office welcomes applications for the AmeriCorps*VISTA program **from innovative, high performance and outcome driven** agencies, organizations and institutions who share the VISTA mission of providing long term, sustainable solutions to poverty.

Agency Description: The Corporation for National and Community Service www.cns.gov is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its core programs, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. As the nation's largest grantmaker for service and volunteering, the Corporation plays a critical role in strengthening America's nonprofit sector and addressing our nation's challenges through service.

Program Title: AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) www.vista.gov

Program Description: VISTA is a highly professional and rigorous volunteer service program which provides full-time national service members to agencies, institutions and organizations to create and expand programs that ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty. VISTA projects focus solely on building permanent capacity and infrastructure through the work of VISTA members in nonprofit and other agencies and organizations to more effectively alleviate poverty.

Eligible Organizations: Project sponsors may be federal, state, or local agencies or private, non-profit organizations, educational institutions. Project sponsors direct the project, supervise VISTA members assigned and provide professional administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project. The beneficiary of any VISTA initiative is the poverty community. The goal for every VISTA program is the **sustainability** of the VISTA member's outcomes by the sponsoring organization.

VISTA Members: Nearly 10,000 VISTA members across the country generate the commitment of private sector resources, encourage volunteer service at the local level and strengthen local agencies and organizations. Members elect to serve their community and commit to a one year term of full time service, be available for service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and live at the economic level of the people they serve. **Members provide no direct client services and are prohibited from performing any activities or duties at their sites 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 services for contracts.** VISTA members are national service professionals building organizational capacity and perform no direct client service, clerical, staff support or physical labor.

Applicant Requirements: The Nebraska State Program Office welcomes applications for VISTA projects with a minimum of four (4) full time VISTA members. If an applicant is unable

to administratively support this number of full time members, collaborative partnerships by two or more organizations are considered. Applicants for VISTA resources are expected to contribute financially towards the success of the program and VISTA member's service and the investment is negotiable. The maximum duration of any VISTA program is three years however projects are awarded for a single year and **may be** considered for renewal depending on program performance, the availability of resources, and priorities of the Corporation for National and Community Service. VISTA is not an entitlement and any award should not be construed to be beyond the one year duration.

National Service Priorities: The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act enacted in 2009 calls for engaging citizens in a lifetime of service and directed at finding community solutions to some of our nation's most pressing and persistent challenges. The Corporation's goal is to build on this momentum and foster higher levels of innovation, collaboration, and impact in America's service and voluntary sector. These efforts will include:

1. Service as a solution – Targeting resources to tackle national priorities from increasing high school graduation rates to fostering economic opportunity, the Corporation will identify where service has an important role to play and target resources to tackle those issues.
2. Expanding opportunities to serve – connecting with citizens from diverse communities, backgrounds, and perspectives, providing easily accessible service opportunities to fit their needs, and engaging them in a lifetime of service.
3. Building enduring capacity – enabling individuals, organizations and communities to become more effective at addressing pressing challenges and better able to use service as a lasting solution.
4. Embracing innovation – investing in models that work, finding new ways of doing business, and serving as a source of ideas for local communities. All across America, groups are finding solutions to local problems, and the Corporation's challenge is to scale these opportunities to achieve our national priorities.

Project Requirements: To be considered for a VISTA Program sponsorship applications should meet and detail these minimum requirements.

- Reflect National Service priorities as stated under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act.
- Clearly demonstrate the grasp and application of national service in the context of the VISTA program.
- Reflect the VISTA poverty mission in all proposed activities and demonstrate how ultimately the project benefits the poverty community.
- Provide a high quality professional VISTA member volunteer experience.
- Articulate clearly defined goals directed towards building sustainable organizational capacity specifically designed to alleviate poverty and the problems of low-income communities.
- Define the program's plan for sustainability of the VISTA project and member's outcomes upon completion of the year of service.
- Clearly state the applicant's financial commitment towards the project.

How to Apply: Interested applicants may receive full instructions and apply online through the submission of a concept paper at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/index.asp>. **Applicants should thoroughly acquaint themselves and articulate their understanding of VISTA activities and priorities. The concept paper should demonstrate the understanding and grasp of national service in general and the purpose and application of the VISTA program specifically.** Only applications submitted electronically via the CNCS eGrants system are considered. The submission of an application does not assure approval or commitment of VISTA resources. Each application is evaluated on its merits and is subject to the availability of resources.

Application Deadline: Open

For Further Information Contact: Corporation for National & Community Service, Nebraska State Program Office at avolovich@cns.gov.