

*"Don't doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
- Margaret Mead*

AmeriCorps VISTA

The purpose of VISTA, as outlined in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 is:

... to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate and alleviate poverty ... in the United States by encouraging and enabling persons from all walks of life, all geographic areas, and all age groups, including low-income individuals ... to perform meaningful and constructive volunteer service in agencies, institutions, and situations where the application of human talent and dedication may assist in the solution of poverty and poverty-related problems.

Program Objectives

The Domestic Volunteer Service Act describes three specific objectives of the program to achieve this purpose:

- ◆ To strengthen local agencies and organizations to carry out the purpose of the program
- ◆ To encourage volunteer service at the local level
- ◆ To generate the commitment of private sector resources.

The AmeriCorps Mission

Getting Things Done - Above all, AmeriCorps helps communities meet their needs through service. Every AmeriCorps program becomes a powerful program model for communities to use in their problem solving.

Strengthening Communities - AmeriCorps unites individuals from all different backgrounds—and organizations of all kinds—in the common effort to improve our communities.

Encouraging Responsibility - AmeriCorps encourages members to explore and exercise their responsibilities to their communities, their families, and themselves during their terms of service and throughout their lives.

Expanding Opportunity - AmeriCorps helps those who help America. AmeriCorps members receive awards that further their education or to pay back their student loans. AmeriCorps members also benefit from professional development and specialized training.

Role of the Sponsoring Organization

The sponsoring organization is responsible for developing a project plan that incorporates the use of AmeriCorps VISTA members to build long-term solutions to poverty-related issues within a local community. Each project must achieve the following:

- ◆ Engage residents of the low-income community to ensure that it is responsive and relevant to the low-income residents served.
- ◆ Leverage community resources (including part-time community volunteers) from public and private sectors
- ◆ Expand the capacity of the community and organization to sustain the project when AmeriCorps VISTA members finish their terms of service

For More Information:

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