



AMERICORPS VISTA
PROJECT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
PART VI.2 SUPPORT GRANT VISTA PROJECT BUDGET

Updated December 2024

VI.2 SUPPORT GRANT VISTA PROJECT BUDGET

Introduction

This document, Part VI.2, Support Grant VISTA Project Budget, provides detailed instructions for completing Budget Section 1 and Budget Section 2 in an already started eGrants application.

About Support Grant VISTA Projects

A Support Grant VISTA project is a project in which:

- AmeriCorps awards a certain number of VISTA positions to a sponsor and the sponsor provides certain benefits directly to the VISTA;
- The sponsor provides local operating and logistics costs;
- The sponsor requests grant funds to provide:
 - Supervision for the VISTAs, Leaders, and summer associates; AND/OR
 - Project staff travel expenses incurred for subrecipient monitoring; AND/OR
 - Service-related transportation expenses of VISTAs, Leaders, and Summer Associates; AND/OR
 - Costs for implementing training events for VISTAs when it is in the interests of the VISTA program

To be eligible to receive a grant for supervision, for service-related transportation and/or for training costs, you must demonstrate that:

- The expenditure is necessary and appropriate to ensure that a VISTA, Leader, or summer associate has available support necessary to carry out the purpose of the VISTA program and to effectively perform the service to which the VISTA, Leader, or summer associate is assigned; and
- The need for support cannot be met within your organization's own structure and resources.

While there is no specific match requirement, applicant organizations should indicate the type and level of resources they will provide to support the project. Examples of resources provided by applicant organizations include personnel costs, and supplies. Please include these resources whether they are financial contributions or in-kind contributions.

Application Process

Log in to eGrants. In eGrants, you will need to:

- Select "View All." A screen will appear that lists all the applications that are in "Grantee Initial Entry" status that are associated with your account.
- Find your application using the Application ID. It will be listed as "VISTA State" or "VISTA Headquarters" under the Programs column.
- Select "Edit" next to your listing.
- In the Application Info section, choose the correct Program Type by selecting "Support Grant" from the Program Type dropdown menu. Check the box next to Cost Share as appropriate. Consult your AmeriCorps Regional Office if you are uncertain.

- Once you select the program type and cost share type and click save, the Budget Sections 1 and 2 will be created and added to the application.

The Budget includes two sections: Budget Section 1 deals with volunteer support expenses incurred by the project.

Budget Section 2 pertains to volunteer expenses incurred by members, including living allowance and end-of-service award. Applicants for Support Grant VISTA Projects are required to complete both sections.

As you prepare your budget:

1. Your detailed budget narrative must provide a full explanation of the proposed costs including their purpose and the basis of your calculation.
2. Whenever possible (e.g., Project Personnel Expenses, Local Travel, Long Distance Travel line items) present your calculations in the form of an equation, e.g., Two (2) VISTAs traveling @ \$25/trip for 2 trips = \$50; or Salary \$35,000 @ 30% devoted to program = \$10,500.
3. Do not include fractional amounts (cents).
4. Your budget entries should reflect a twelve-month project period.
5. While you can add line items to document the resources that your organization will provide to support the VISTA project (personnel, in-kind donations, etc.), it is recommended you do that in the narrative sections and not in the budget.

Please refer to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ([2 CFR §200](#))

Programs must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and OMB circulars for grant management, allowable costs, and audits, including providing audits. Recipient organizations that expend \$1,000,000 or more in total federal awards in a fiscal year shall have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the Single Audit Act, as amended, [31 U.S.C. 7501](#), et seq., and [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F](#).

Budget Section 1. Volunteer Support Expenses (Required)

You are required to complete this section for funds that you are requesting from AmeriCorps.

Enter information into the "CNCS Share" box for resources you are requesting from AmeriCorps. Enter information into the "Grantee Share" box for resources your organization is contributing. Do not enter any information into the "Member Support" box.

Project Personnel Expenses

Complete this line item to apply for grant funds for the salary costs of supervising VISTAs, Leaders and/or Summer Associates assigned to your project.

Supervision support funds can be directed to more than one staff member of your organization or a subrecipient, but **all listed personnel must directly supervise VISTAs, Leaders, and/or Summer Associates** in: recruitment and selection, preparation of individual assignment descriptions, orientation to the project, day-to-day oversight, preparation of service verification documents, and/or preparation of project progress reports. Supervision support funds may not be used to pay for preparation of Concept Paper, Project Application, or Continuation applications. **Staff other than the project supervisor(s) may be not reimbursed with VISTA grant dollars.** All staff listed in the budget must adhere to AmeriCorps' National Service Criminal History Check requirements, regardless of whether they are paid with VISTA or non-VISTA funds.

Information about each supervisor should be listed along with a position title, salary amount, and the percentage of time devoted to VISTA supervision.

Click "add a new budget item" and complete the requested information to apply for supervision support funds:

- For "Position/Title" enter the current or intended title of the individual(s) devoted to supervision.
- For "Qty" enter the number of individuals who match this exact title, salary and who will spend the same percentage of time devoted to supervision. You should complete new line items for individuals with different characteristics.
- For "Annual Salary" enter the annual salary for one individual.
- For "% Time" enter the percentage of time that each person listed above will spend on supervision. The percent listed should not exceed the percentage of actual time devoted to supervision by each individual.
- Click into the box called "CNCS Share." Refer to the "Total Amount" calculated by eGrants and enter the portion of the amount that you are requesting from AmeriCorps. For example, if the "Total Amount" field shows \$10,000 and you wish to request that AmeriCorps will fund half of these supervision costs, then you would enter \$5,000 in the "CNCS Share" box.
- For "Grantee Share" refer to the "Total Amount" calculated by eGrants and enter the portion of the amount that your organization will provide. The amounts entered in "Share" and "Grantee Share" must add up to equal the "Total Amount."

Note: Organizations with multiple supervisors with different salaries, titles or other differing characteristics should create separate line items.

Personnel Fringe Benefits

Complete this line item to apply for grant funds for the costs of personnel benefits for the individuals who will be supervising VISTAs, Leaders and/or Summer Associates.

Fringe benefits are allowable VISTA support grant line items only for individuals listed above in "Project Personnel Expenses" and who are receiving salary support from AmeriCorps. Allowable benefits include FICA, Health Insurance, Retirement, and Life Insurance. Benefit items should only include the items that are paid by the organization to other staff.

The percentage of benefits paid must be less than or equal to the percentage of salary support being requested. To determine the maximum percentage of salary support that can be requested, refer to the relevant "Project Personnel Expenses" line item pop-up window and divide "CNCS Share" by "Total Amount." This percent can be multiplied by each fringe benefit's total cost to determine the maximum amount that can be requested from AmeriCorps.

Information about each fringe benefit request should be listed along with a description; total fringe benefit annual amount; the percentage of time devoted to VISTA supervision; and the percentage of the overall fringe benefit costs being requested from AmeriCorps.

Click "add a new budget item" and complete the requested information to apply for fringe benefit support funds.

Example: An individual will spend 20% of their time devoted to VISTA supervision and the applicant organization is requesting grant funds from AmeriCorps for 50% of the costs of salary support for that time. In total, this applicant is requesting VISTA support grant funds to pay for 10% ($0.20 * 0.50 = 0.10$) of the annual supervisor salary. Thus, they may only request CNCS Share to cover up to 10% of total annual fringe benefits:

Item: Health Insurance for Supervisor 1

Description of personnel fringe benefits:

- Annual Health Insurance costs for Supervisor 1 are \$4,000.
- 20% of Supervisor 1's time will be spent supervising VISTAs.
- We are requesting that AmeriCorps provide grant funds to cover 50% of the costs for Supervisor 1's annual health insurance costs of this time, or 10% ($20% * 50% = 10%$).

Total Amount: $=(\$Total\ annual\ fringe\ costs) * (\% \text{ of time supervising VISTAs})$
 $= \$,4000 * 20\% = \800

CNCS Share: $=(\$Total\ amount) * (\% \text{ requested from AmeriCorps})$
 $= \$800 * 50\% = \400

Grantee Share: $=(\$Total\ Amount) - (\$CNCS\ Share)$
 $= \$800 - \$400 = \$400$

NOTE: Grantees must complete National Service Criminal History Checks on the supervisors who receive part or all of the salary from AmeriCorps federal funds. You can find more information on the [AmeriCorps website](#).

Local Travel

Complete this line item to apply for grant funds for the costs of travel incurred for local subrecipient monitoring by the individuals who will be supervising VISTAs, Leaders and/or Summer Associates.

Local travel support funds may be requested by your organization for full or partial funding to cover travel expenses incurred for local subrecipient monitoring, but only in those cases where such support is necessary for compliance and for the effective functioning of the VISTAs, Leaders, or summer associates on the project and where such support for project staff travel cannot be met within the your organization's own structure and resources.

Grants for project staff travel are in the amount of the costs of public transportation or, where public transportation is not adequate, in the amount of the Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rate. The POV mileage reimbursement rate should be at least the rate applied to all travel within your organization and no greater than the federal mileage rate. If there is no standard rate within your organization, then the federal mileage rate should be applied. (Current federal mileage rates can be found at: www.gsa.gov/mileage)

Your organization will be responsible for any expenses incurred for such travel over the agreed amount.

Click "add a new budget item" and complete the requested information to apply for local travel support funds for project staff:

For "Purpose" enter information about the purpose of local travel, including position title of project staff. (e.g. Project Supervisor travel to monitor local sites A, B and C.)

For "Calculation" enter a description in the form of an equation. (e.g., 1 Supervisor traveling @ \$25/trip for 2 trips = \$50. Include costs for transportation and other related expenses, such as bus passes to local sites, mileage rates, etc.)

Enter information into the "CNCS Share" box for resources you are requesting from CNCS. Enter information into the "Grantee Share" box for resources your organization is contributing. Do not enter any information into the "Member Support" box.

Long Distance Travel

Complete this line item to apply for grant funds for the costs of travel incurred for long distance subrecipient monitoring by the individuals who will be supervising VISTAs, Leaders and/or Summer Associates.

Long distance travel support funds may be requested by your organization for full or partial funding to cover travel expenses incurred for subrecipient monitoring, but only in those cases where such support is necessary for compliance and for the effective functioning of

the VISTAs, Leaders, or summer associates on the project and where such support for project staff travel cannot be met within your organization's own structure and resources.

Grants for project staff travel are in the amount of the costs of public transportation or, where public transportation is not adequate, in the amount of the Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rates. The POV mileage reimbursement rate should be at least the rate applied to all travel within your organization and no greater than the federal mileage rate. If there is no standard rate within your organization, then the federal mileage rate should be applied. (Current federal mileage rates can be found at: www.gsa.gov/mileage)

Your organization will be responsible for any expenses incurred for such travel over the agreed amount.

Click "add a new budget item" and complete the requested information to apply for project staff travel support funds:

For "Purpose" enter information about the purpose of project staff travel, including position title. . (e.g. Project Supervisor travel to monitor sites A and B)

For "Calculation" enter a description in the form of an equation. (e.g., 1 Supervisor traveling @ \$250/trip for 2 trips = \$500. Include costs for transportation and other related expenses, such as bus passes, mileage rates, hotel expenses, etc.)

Enter information into the "CNCS Share" box for resources you are requesting from CNCS. Enter information into the "Grantee Share" box for resources your organization is contributing. Do not enter any information into the "Member Support" box.

Equipment/Supplies/Contractual Services

Equipment, supplies, and contractual services are not allowable costs for VISTA Support Grants.

Other Volunteer Support Costs

The Communications, Printing and Logistics line items are not allowable costs for VISTA Support Grants.

Audits

Audits are allowable costs if your organization meets OMB threshold requirements. The current requirement sets forth that a single or program-specific audit is required if a recipient organization expends \$1,000,000 or more in a year in Federal awards. If an audit is required because your organization meets the threshold, VISTA grant funds may be provided on a pro-rated charge that is determined among the federal programs involved. You may forecast the amount of audit costs based on your funding history and contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office if the amount changes.

Information about audits can be added to this section.

Click "Add a New Budget item" to enter audit information. For "Item" enter information about the audit, including the total amount and the portions of funding that your organization receives from various federal agencies.

Example: If an organization received 50% of their federal funding from Health and Human Services, 40% of federal funding from the Department of Education, and 10% of federal funding from AmeriCorps, then a reasonable allocation of costs might be to charge the audit according to the percent of federal funds received (10% for AmeriCorps in this example). This applicant might request AmeriCorps to cover up to 10% of total annual audit amount:

Item: Our total audit costs are \$4000. 50% of our funding is from HHS, 40% is from DOE, and 10% will be from AmeriCorps. We are requesting that AmeriCorps provide funds to cover costs for 10% of total audit costs.

Total Amount: = (\$Annual audit costs) * (% of funding from CNCS)
= \$4000 * 10% = \$400

CNCS Share: = (\$Total amount) * (% requested from CNCS)
= \$400 * 100% = \$400

Grantee Share: = (\$Total Amount) - (\$CNCS Share)
= \$400 - \$400 = \$0

Indirect Costs

VISTA Support grants do not provide funding for indirect costs. However, VISTA grantees that have projects funded by other federal agencies under Interagency Agreements (IAAs), and that have an approved indirect cost rate may enter their indirect costs under Grantee Share. If indirect costs are budgeted, the grantee must enter the supporting information into eGrants using these instructions: [eGrants Indirect Cost Rate \(IDCR\) User Instructions](#).

Budget Section 2. Volunteer Expenses (Required)

You must complete certain budget line items in this section. Your proposed budget should be sufficient to allow you to perform the tasks described in your proposal narrative. You may wish to add line items to document the resources that your organization will provide to support the VISTA project.

Full Time (Federal)

Only complete this line item to apply for non-cost share positions. For information about cost share, contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office.

Click "add a new budget item" under Full-time (Federal) and complete the requested information to apply for VISTAs or Leaders.

For Description/sites, use a project site name and county (e.g., Crawford County Financial Fitness/Richland County).

For the “# Mbr” field, enter the number of requested members that will serve with that project component.

Select the living allowance rate. Living allowance rates are determined by county. For the current county living allowance rate, contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office.

The total amount should calculate and appear in the “Federal Share” column,

Note: If you propose to have VISTAs serving in different project components at different sites, add a new budget item and provide specific information about that component. For example, VISTAs proposed for three sites in three different counties may receive different living allowance rates, so you would complete a budget item for Site 1, then for Site 2, and then for Site 3. Also, VISTAs and Leaders receive different living allowance rates and should be entered separately. Add as many budget items as needed by selecting “add a new budget item.”

Full Time (non-Federal)

Only complete this section to apply for cost share positions. For information about cost share, contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office.

Click “add a new budget item” under Full-time (non-Federal) and complete the requested information to apply for cost share VISTAs or Leaders.

For Description/sites, use a project site name and issue area (e.g., Crawford County Financial Fitness/Asset Building).

For the “# Mbr” field, enter the number of requested cost share members that will serve with that project component.

Select the living allowance rate. Living allowance rates are determined by county. For the current county living allowance rate, contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office.

The total amount will calculate and appear in the “Grantee Share” column.

Note: If you propose to have VISTAs serving in different project components at different sites, add a new budget item and provide specific information about that component. For example, VISTAs proposed for three sites in three different counties may receive different living allowance rates, so you would complete a budget item for Site 1, then for Site 2, and then for Site 3. Also, VISTAs and Leaders receive different living allowance rates and should be entered separately. Add as many budget items as needed by selecting “add a new budget item.”

Summer Associate (Federal) and Summer Associate (non-Federal)

Only existing sponsors may participate in the Summer Associate program. Unless you have been notified by the AmeriCorps Regional Office that your organization can apply for Summer Associates, you will not use this option in your budget. For information about the Summer Associate program, contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office. Follow the same instructions as above, selecting the living allowance amount(s) provided by your Portfolio Manager.

Education and End of Service Awards

VISTAs have a choice between two end-of-service options, an education award, or a cash stipend, either of which is provided after a successful completion of service. Nationally, about 75 percent of members choose the education award; 25 percent choose the cash stipend. However for the purposes of this project application it is not necessary to estimate the number of VISTAs selecting each option. The budget will calculate the total dollar amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for each of the VISTAs, VISTA Leaders and if applicable Summer Associates.

Health coverage

The total amount of the cost of health care coverage will be auto-calculated using the current dollar amount per VISTA and VISTA Leader.

Travel - Only Applicable to Sponsors in their Second Year or Beyond

Complete this line item to request VISTA support grant funds for service-related transportation for VISTAs, Leaders and Summer Associates serving on the project. Service-related transportation is transportation related to fulfilling the VISTA's day-to-day service duties at the project site. Do not list daily commute, AmeriCorps invitational training travel or relocation travel costs in this section. You may also wish document the resources that your organization will provide to support the VISTA project.

Sponsors are responsible for the costs of service-related transportation for VISTAs, Leaders, and Summer Associates. Support grant funds may be requested by your organization for full or partial funding for service-related transportation of VISTAs, Leaders, or Summer Associates. However, AmeriCorps only awards such support grants in those cases where such support is necessary and appropriate to ensure that a VISTA, Leader, or Summer Associate has available such service-related transportation necessary to carry out the purpose of the VISTA program and to perform effectively the work to which they are assigned, and where your organization is unable to provide such service-related transportation within its own structure and resources.

Grants for service-related transportation are in the amount of the costs of public transportation or, where public transportation is not adequate, in the amount of Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rates. The POV mileage reimbursement rate should be at least the rate applied to all travel within your organization, up to the

federal mileage rate. If there is no standard rate within your organization, then use the federal mileage rate.

You will be responsible for any expenses incurred for service-related transportation over the agreed amount.

A grant for service-related transportation may not be used to:

- Cover relocation costs of a VISTA, Leader or Summer Associate, since those costs are provided directly by AmeriCorps
- Cover the costs of VISTAs, Leaders, or Summer Associates traveling from their residence to and from their service site (i.e., daily commuting costs)
- Cover costs of providing direct services to the beneficiaries of the VISTA project (e.g., delivering meals)

Cover travel costs for training

Click "add a new budget item" and complete the requested information to apply for service-related transportation support grant funds.

For "Item/Description" enter a description of the purpose of the service-related transportation.

For "Calculation" provide a description in the form of an equation that includes costs for transportation and other related expenses for members to travel outside their service location or between sites, such as bus passes to local sites, mileage reimbursement for use of car, etc. For example: 3 VISTAs traveling @ \$2.50/bus trip for 10 trips = \$75.

For "Total Amount" enter the total cost for service-related transportation for the VISTA project.

For "CNCS Share" enter the portion of the "Total Amount" that you are requesting from CNCS.

For "Grantee Share" enter the portion of the "Total Amount" that your organization will provide from its own resources.

Do not enter any information into the "Member Support" box.

Other Volunteer Expenses - Only Applicable to Sponsors in their Second Year or Beyond

Training

AmeriCorps conducts the Virtual Member Orientation (VMO) to ensure the VISTAs' ability to effectively carry out their assignments. AmeriCorps may also provide on-going training through the VISTA Campus, in-person events and webinars.

VISTA sponsors are also expected to provide orientation and training for members as they start service, and to provide training, support, and professional development opportunities for VISTA members during the service term.

In exceptional instances, AmeriCorps may determine that a sponsor may be eligible to receive VISTA grant funds to do so. To be eligible to receive VISTA grant funds to implement member training, AmeriCorps must make a determination that:

- It is in the interests of the VISTA program.
- The sponsor is capable of designing and implementing the curriculum and managing the logistics to ensure that VISTAs have the training necessary to carry out the purpose of the VISTA program and to effectively perform the work to which the VISTAs are assigned.

An applicant interested in conducting a training should contact the AmeriCorps Regional Office.

If VISTA determines that an application for grant funds for a member training is warranted, the applicant requests funds by clicking "add a new budget item" and completing the requested information. Applicants should:

- Describe the purpose of the training
- Identify the number of individuals that will be trained, along with an estimated cost per individual
- Describe any training-related travel needs, such as costs for transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel related expenses multiplied by the number of trips/participant

AmeriCorps determines the amount of the grant for member training based on the actual costs of the training and available funds.

Once you have entered your budget information in eGrants, you will be asked to validate your budget, and eGrants will check your submission for errors that must be fixed prior to submission. You may also receive warnings which will not stop you from submitting.

PRE-AWARD REQUIREMENTS FOR CASH GRANT APPLICANTS

All new applicants applying for support grant resources from AmeriCorps, are required to complete an [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\) online](#) in addition to the project application submission via eGrants.

Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS): The OFMS is required of all applicants for a new period of performance including existing VISTA grants that may be newly augmented with new funds. Applicants must complete the survey and each question requires a response. The survey can be found on the [Manage Your Grant](#) page of the AmeriCorps website, under Pre-Award Resources. This survey is intended to collect information about the capacity of applicants to manage federal grant funds. Per 2 CFR §200.206, AmeriCorps must evaluate the degree of risk posed by an applicant. Information from the survey will be used to assess an organization's operational and financial management capabilities prior to receiving a federal award. Completion of this survey is required but is independent from the competitive grant process. Responding organizations are advised to ensure that the person or persons preparing this form are those responsible for, and with sufficient knowledge of, the organization's operational and financial management functions. The information provided may be used to support future monitoring activities, should the applicant receive federal funds from AmeriCorps.

Once selected, all new grantees to AmeriCorps, are required to complete three (3) pre-award documents and two (2) online training courses prior to award.

Should you be selected for funding, the Office of Grant Administration will send you a separate email regarding the completion and submission of the following documents:

- Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form (SF-1199A).
- Payment Management System Access Form.
- Recipient Contact Sheet; and
- the certification you have taken the two online courses:
 - Funds Management
 - National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) Course

These documents must be completed and returned in a timely manner to before a Notice of Grant Award can be issued from AmeriCorps, should you be selected.

Please visit the [AmeriCorps website](#) for additional resources you may need to effectively manage your grant.

AmeriCorps uses the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) "Payment Management System (PMS)" for the disbursement of grant funds. More information about PMS please visit their [website](#).

All current sponsors submitting continuation applications are required to keep information in the Payment Management System (PMS) up to date and are required to take two (2) online trainings annually.

PMS Forms are as follows:

- **[HHS/PMS Access Form](#)**
- **[Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form \(SF-1199A\)](#)**
 - Copies of the SF-1199A form and instructions for completing this form can be obtained by visiting "[Add/Update Banking Information](#)" section of their website.
- **[Recipient Contact Form](#)**
 - A list of the Entity Type Codes needed for the form can be found on the [Recipient Contact Form.](#), can be obtained by visiting:
https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Recipient_Contact_Form_03-24-20.pdf.

Online Trainings:

All online trainings can be found under the [Manage Your Grant](#) page of the AmeriCorps website, under Pe-Award Resources.

- [Funds Management Training for AmeriCorps Grantees](#)
- [National Service Criminal History Check \(NSCHC\) Course](#)