



VISTA eGrants FAQs

General Information

What is eGrants? What is My AmeriCorps?

The VISTA program and AmeriCorps must track VISTA projects and members serving with sponsoring organizations such as yours. To help with this task, AmeriCorps has two online systems:

- eGrants is used by programs to track and report on their VISTA projects
- My AmeriCorps (also known as the Portal) is used by AmeriCorps and VISTA members to manage service experiences

AmeriCorps has linked the two systems to allow for more efficient tracking of projects and members. Even though they are linked, they still retain some separate user roles that allow you to do different things depending on which role(s) you have.

How do I get access to eGrants/My AmeriCorps?

To access either eGrants or My AmeriCorps, you need an eGrants account. To get one, go to <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>, click the link labeled “Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account,” and follow the instructions provided. You will need to have your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN, also often called a “tax ID number”) available to create your account. Your organization’s Grantee Administrator will then log into eGrants, activate your account, and assign you one or more user roles depending on the type of data you need for your position (e.g., VISTA grant or member management data).

What is the difference between the VMSU and the eGrants Help Desk? How do I get in touch with them?

The VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) includes VISTA staff members who are specifically trained to help members use the Portal. Members can contact the VMSU at 800-942-2677, or [submit a question online](#).

The eGrants Help Desk provides technical support to program staff using eGrants and My AmeriCorps. You can contact the Help Desk by calling the AmeriCorps Hotline at 800-942-2677, by [submitting a question online](#), or by clicking the "Contact Help Desk" link found at the bottom left-hand corner of the page when you are logged into eGrants.

Roles and Privileges in eGrants and My AmeriCorps

What are user roles?

User roles are collections of tools and privileges assigned to different eGrants/My AmeriCorps users depending on the type of VISTA grant or member management data they will be using.

What are the user roles available for VISTA program staff?

The eGrants/My AmeriCorps roles available for staff of VISTA programs are:

- Grantee Administrator (eGrants and My AmeriCorps)
- Grantee with access to budget (eGrants only)
- Grantee without access to budget (eGrants only)
- Grantee Recruiter (My AmeriCorps only)
- VISTA Grantee Member Management (My AmeriCorps only)
- Grantee Travel Profile (My AmeriCorps only)

What can users with each of the roles do?

The sponsor resources section of americorps.gov has a job aid, "What's My Role?—eGrants/My AmeriCorps User Roles for VISTA Programs," that details the tools and

privileges available to users with each of the VISTA-specific roles in eGrants and My AmeriCorps.

Can I have more than one user role?

Yes. For example, you might want to have both the Grantee Recruiter and VISTA Grantee Member Management roles so that you can recruit VISTAs and manage their member records after they are placed with your sponsoring organization.

How do I know which role(s) I need for myself or my staff?

You can use the “What's My Role?—eGrants/My AmeriCorps User Roles for VISTA Programs” job aid to figure out which role(s) you and/or your colleagues need.

How do I know what eGrants/My AmeriCorps roles are assigned to me?

When you log into eGrants, click on “My Account” to can see what role or roles you were assigned.

In addition to VISTA members, I also oversee AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps National members. Will I need different user roles in eGrants and My AmeriCorps to manage them?

Yes. To learn more about the roles you will need and how to use them, visit the My AmeriCorps training and technical assistance pages for (respectively) AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps National programs.

How do I add a user so that I can assign a role to them?

You will need to have new users apply for access to your organization’s eGrants/My AmeriCorps site. They can do so by going to <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>, clicking the link labeled “Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account,” and following the instructions provided. They will need your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN, also often called a "tax ID number") to create their accounts.

Once a user creates an account, your organization's Grantee Administrator will log into eGrants, activate the newly created account, and assign the individual one or more roles on the "Edit User Role/Permissions" page (found on a Grantee Administrator's "My Account" page).

What does it mean when I "approve" a new user and what happens if I don't?

It means you are activating their account to allow access to your organization's eGrants/My AmeriCorps site and assigning the roles needed for the individual to accomplish their work. If you do not approve that person, they will not be able to access eGrants or My AmeriCorps.

How do I get the Grantee Administrator role assigned to me?

If you do not have an eGrants account, follow the instructions above in the "General Information" section to get one. Once you have an account you can ask the current Grantee Administrator to log into eGrants and assign you the Grantee Administrator role as well.

Can we have more than one person with Grantee Administrator access?

Yes, an organization can have multiple users with the Grantee Administrator role. It is recommended that more than one person have this role as a backup.

How do we select who receives notification emails from the systems, or turn them off if a user doesn't want them?

Users may receive automatic notifications from eGrants/My AmeriCorps depending on the role(s) they are assigned. The Grantee Administrator can select or deselect roles depending on who does or doesn't want to receive the notifications. The administrator does this by using the "Edit User Role/Permissions" page found on their "My Account" page in eGrants.

How do I deactivate a user?

The Grantee Administrator can deactivate a user's account by clicking to remove the checkmark from the account's "Active" setting on the "Edit User Role/Permissions" page in eGrants.

Can VISTA leaders use eGrants/My AmeriCorps?

Yes, leaders can be assigned the Grantee Recruiter role to help recruit VISTA members. However, even though the role comes with the ability to accept and reject applications from applicants, VISTA leaders are not permitted to do so as this is the responsibility of sponsor staff and should not be assigned to leaders.

General Usage

I have a large program with many members and site supervisors spread over a wide area. Is there a confidentiality protocol I can ask folks sign to help ensure appropriate use of the systems?

Many large sponsoring organizations have internal policies specifying that site supervisors only be assigned the Grantee Recruiter role, with staff at the parent organization retaining and using higher level roles. You may also wish to check in with your organization's information technology department to see if they can make any recommendations for designing and implementing a security protocol.

Can I get any information about my VISTA alumni from the systems?

eGrants and My AmeriCorps store data indefinitely, so you can certainly retrieve the records of members who served with you in the past. If you hope to contact your alumni, however, you may find that many have moved or stopped using the phone numbers and email addresses displayed in the systems.

Can I download or export the records of current applicants or members?

No, not at this time.

How do I help a VISTA member who is having trouble using the Portal?

VISTA members who need assistance using the Portal should contact the VISTA Member Support Unit at 800-942-2677, or [submit a question online](#).

How will I know if a VISTA member completes a required or requested task in the Portal?

Once a VISTA completes a task or updates information in the Portal, it is immediately saved and made available to you and others with the appropriate user roles. Whether and how you receive a notice about it depends on the task the VISTA member is performing. Sometimes you will receive an email if something is awaiting your input or approval. Other times, the member's record will appear in one of your workbaskets. You will need to check your eGrants account from time to time to see if you have anything requiring your input or review for that member.

If you change from one role to another and then back again, do you lose any of the information you had access to previously?

No, all information is stored in the system. Your user role simply defines what information you are allowed to access. If any information you could see before you changed roles is missing when you revert to your original role, chances are that another staff person has acted on the information already. Consequently, it will no longer appear in your workbasket.

Technical Issues

What browser works best for viewing and working in eGrants and My AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps recommends Internet Explorer as the browser of choice for working with eGrants and My AmeriCorps. Be sure that you have JavaScript enabled.

I forgot my password. What do I do?

On the eGrants login page at <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>, click on the "Forgot your password? Get help" link for assistance.

Who do I contact if I'm having technical difficulties?

You can contact the eGrants Help Desk by calling the AmeriCorps Hotline at 800-942-2677, by [submitting a question online](#), or by clicking the "Contact Help Desk" link found at the bottom left-hand corner of the page when you are logged into eGrants.

Working with Member Records

How can I customize the display of member data in the search and edit member information view?

You can click on the table headings to sort the member records by name, date, and other criteria.

What if a member's name is misspelled or they change their name?

You cannot edit a member's name, and neither can the Regional Office nor the member. It must be changed by the staff of the eGrants Help Desk. Contact the Help Desk by calling the AmeriCorps Hotline at 800-942-2677, by [submitting a question online](#), or by clicking the "Contact Help Desk" link found at the bottom left-hand corner of the page when you are logged into eGrants.

Can I change a member's Education Award selection?

No, only the member can make this change. Also note that a member cannot change from the cash stipend to the Education Award, and a member can only change from the Education Award to the cash stipend prior to the end of the tenth month of service.

Is there a simple way to delete all the old member applicants stored in Pending Applications?

When you select a VISTA applicant for a position, their application should be removed from the workbasket. Similarly, rejecting an applicant should also remove the application from your workbasket. If that does not occur, contact the eGrants Help Desk by calling the AmeriCorps Hotline at 800-942-2677, by [submitting a question online](#), or by clicking the "Contact Help Desk" link found at the bottom left-hand corner of the page when you are logged into eGrants.

Can I delete out-of-date member records?

No. Records of former members remain archived in your eGrants account. This allows you to track former members and analyze member data, such as early-exiting members. It can be a useful tool for assessing your project and also help you stay in touch with former members or use them as resources in your recruitment efforts.

Sponsor Verification Report

Who receives the emails reminding staff to complete the Sponsor Verification Report?

The email is sent to users with the Grantee Administrator and VISTA Grantee Member Management roles.

When completing the Sponsor Verification Form, how do I know what my program code is?

You can find your program code (also known as "project code," "project number," or "grant number") on your eGrants "My Account" page and on the Memorandum of Agreement your project signed with AmeriCorps. If you are unable to find it in either of those places, contact your Regional Office.

Does the Sponsor Verification Report track a member's use of personal and/or sick time?

Individual project supervisors are required to track the amount of personal/sick leave used by their members. The Sponsor Verification Report does not track such leave.

Close of Service/Future Plans

What role(s) do I need to view and sign members' Future Plans Forms?

You will need either the Grantee Administrator or the VISTA Grantee Member Management role.

When do members receive notification of the need to complete the Future Plans Form?

Members will receive an email 90 days before their last day of service, prompting them to complete their portion of the Future Plan Form online within 60 days (i.e., 30 days prior to their last day of service). If the form is needed earlier (e.g., in the case of early exit), you can contact your Regional Office or the VMSU, and they will "unlock" the form so the member can use it.

Can I also get a copy of the Close of Service notification that's sent to members so I can remind them?

No. The email notification will go to the member only.

Do I need to help members with the travel section of their Future Plans Forms?

No. If the members have questions about the travel section of their Future Plans Form, they should contact the VMSU for assistance.

What should I do if a VISTA member makes an incorrect selection on the Future Plans Form (e.g., they select "exit" instead of "re-enroll")?

If you have the Grantee Administrator and/or VISTA Grantee Member Management roles, you can change the information for the member. You should also notify your Regional Office of the mistake.

Can I view the content of a member's completed Future Plans form?

You will not have access to a member's Future Plans Form after you complete your portion of it. The member will see your ratings, but you will not see the member's responses to your ratings.

Do VISTA members see supervisor feedback on their Future Plans form upon termination?

Yes.

I have a large, multi-site project. As the sponsor, do I complete the Future Plans Forms for members, or do the site supervisors complete them?

Each program has a different system for completing the Future Plans Forms. Some allow only staff at the sponsoring agency to complete the forms; others allow site supervisors to do so. You will have to decide what works best for your program.

How do members re-enroll into another program?

Select re-enroll as the recommendation on the Future Plans Forms for members who want to serve another year in your program. For members who want to serve a second or third year but not with your program, select terminate. This reopens their application in My AmeriCorps, which they will then use to apply to other programs.

How do I terminate a member early?

Contact your Regional Office for assistance. A member ending service early will lose the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award and needs to be made aware of this and other consequences. If the member insists on terminating early or has no other alternative, the Regional Office will then "unlock" the Future Plans Form to enable the member to complete it.

Can I request a member's extension through eGrants?

Yes. Select extension as your recommendation for the member on their Future Plans Form.

How do I request a transfer for a member who needs to relocate?

Contact your AmeriCorps Regional Office immediately. There is a process for members who need or want to relocate and serve elsewhere.