

AmeriCorps*VISTA

In just one year they have mobilized more than 2,800 volunteers and inspired 1,400 people (including 800 youth) to volunteer for the first time. They have helped design & engineer solar hot air collectors to help families reduce their energy costs. They have developed and coordinated financial literacy training and free tax clinics. **They are volunteers with the AmeriCorps VISTA program.**

VISTA members play an essential role in boosting the growth, vitality and health of our communities by helping to address key social issues and supporting residents who need it most. The foundation leverages full-time VISTA members to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty by building sustainable programs and increasing the capacity of our local nonprofit organizations and communities.

PROGRAM >

VISTA members help nonprofit agencies develop, expand & coordinate services and programs designed to help low-income people become more self-sufficient and address poverty-related issues within communities. The foundation works with the VISTA national service program to match local volunteers with critical projects at 20 sites in central Minnesota.

Recent results include:

- *Developing work skills training for recent immigrants.*
- *Expanding long-term mentoring programs for youth.*
- *Coordinating volunteer-provided transportation and assistance that allows older residents to continue living in their homes.*
- *Creating and piloting an aftercare support program for women transitioning out of a domestic abuse shelter.*

PROCESS >

VISTA members make a full-time, one-year commitment. Selected projects sites recruit a qualified candidate from a pool of local and national candidates, reimburse the VISTA member for mileage and provide the necessary office support for the first year. VISTAs commit to being available at any time and cannot attend school or hold outside employment while serving.

The program provides members with the following benefits:

- *in-service training*
- *monthly living allowance of about \$891*
- *basic health coverage*
- *service-related travel reimbursement*
- *\$1,500 stipend or \$5,350 education award upon completion*

PARTICIPATE >

Selection to the VISTA program is a competitive process. Nonprofit or government agencies typically apply in January for a VISTA to start in August. Interested volunteers can apply by submitting an online application at <https://recruit.cns.gov> or by contacting the Initiative Foundation or a participating VISTA site.

