



11/27/2017

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the AmeriCorps VISTA program sponsored by the City of Atlanta's Office of Housing and Community Development. Through its [Promise Zone](#) designation, the City is provided with up to five (5) VISTA service members to Westside neighborhoods in addressing issues of poverty. With this opportunity, we seek to deploy service members to organizations that are operating on the ground within the City's [Westside Promise Zone](#) (WPZ). During their year of service, VISTAs will aid their assigned project sites in addressing the anti-poverty and revitalization goals set forth through WPZ. Projects are designed to engage VISTAs in activities that assess, develop, implement, and/or evaluate strategies carried out by organizations and agencies in their efforts to achieve social and economic change.

The City acknowledges the valued contributions that community-based and public service organizations play in addressing the needs of the City's most vulnerable populations. To this end, the WPZ AmeriCorps VISTA program offers an additional resource to assist in building capacity for these service providers. In partnering with nonprofits and other community stakeholders, it is the City's aim is to engage VISTAs in place-based initiatives impacting jobs, economic opportunities, education, housing, public safety and infrastructure. Therefore, we welcome responses to all organizations addressing these priorities within the Westside neighborhoods of Ashview Heights, the Atlanta University Center Neighborhoods, Castleberry Hill, English Avenue and Vine City.

Enclosed you will find additional information the VISTA program, roles and responsibilities associated with becoming a sub-site and how to submit your request for a service member. As we embark on a second year of the WPZ AmeriCorps VISTA program, we are excited to learn more about the efforts taking place inside of the community. Most importantly we welcome this opportunity to partner as we continue to work towards the transformation of our City.

In service,

Rodney Milton, Assistant Director – Neighborhood Revitalization
AmeriCorps VISTA Site Supervisor

A. OVERVIEW - WESTSIDE PROMISE ZONE

In June 2016, the City of Atlanta received a federal Promise Zone designation to promote revitalization efforts in a cluster of the City’s Westside neighborhoods. The Westside Promise Zone (WPZ) is comprised of five neighborhoods, which include Ashview Heights, Atlanta University Center, Castleberry Hill, English Avenue and Vine City. The City’s Office of Housing and Community Development within the Department of City Planning administers the WPZ program and provides WPZ partner/stakeholder coordination, certifies grant applications and places AmeriCorps VISTAs to support capacity building for WPZ partners. Efforts associated with WPZ are intended to address the six goals and priorities identified in the diagram illustrated below. Subsequently, VISTA service projects are also selected based on their ability to support the WPZ placed-based model.



Westside Promise Zone Goals & Priorities

Through our partners VISTA members will advance the priorities of the Westside Promise Zone.

- Remove Barriers to work by increasing job readiness & linking residents to living wage employment.
- Grow WPZ’s economic vitality by sustaining existing and attracting businesses, investments and residents
- Create a cradle to career pipeline by expanding early learning, providing K-12 enrichment and increasing HS graduation rates.
- Build a community with a range of affordable housing options to support varying incomes.
- Promote safety by bolstering police presence, improving community/police relations and engaging youth
- Improve spaces where residents find it safe, convenient and appealing to spend time in the public sphere.



There are six priorities related to the Promise Zone, however, the focus of the VISTA Program will be on four of the six, Creating Jobs, Improving Educational Opportunities, and Expanding Access to Affordable Housing, Reducing Violent Crime. This is to ensure that program outcomes are aligned across the Promise Zone and AmeriCorps VISA. The table below describes the areas of interest in which the AmeriCorps VISTA program will support using sponsoring sites.

WPZ Goals	Activities
<p>Creating Jobs Remove Barriers to work by increasing job readiness & linking residents to living wage employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand adult education and workforce programs, including Adult Basic Education/literacy, soft skills work readiness, hard skills training in targeted high-growth industries, and placement assistance. - Expand youth career readiness and jobs programs (subsidized work experience, YouthBuild, education programs for youth in the juvenile justice system), creating opportunities for youth to contribute to household income. - Promote the hiring of neighborhood residents on development projects and within growth industries in/near the WPZ, including through Section 3 and other local hiring initiatives in collaboration with developers and employers.
<p>Improve Educational Opportunities Create a cradle to career pipeline by expanding early learning, providing K-12 enrichment and increasing HS graduation rates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help ensure that children age 0-5 are socially, cognitively and emotionally prepared to enter kindergarten ready to learn, by increasing enrollment in high-quality early learning programs and supporting parent development. - Provide intensive enrichment support to children to improve their learning and academic performance, including wraparound services and programs for children and families, and work with APS in support of their reform agenda. - Provide intensive, personalized support and intervention with middle- and high-school students at risk of dropping out of school, addressing barriers to students succeeding in school and encouraging enrollment in higher education.
<p>Expand Access to Affordable Housing Build a community with a range of affordable housing options to support varying incomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide existing homeowners and other property owners within the WPZ whose buildings may have fallen into disrepair with access to rehab programs, foreclosure prevention and other homeownership resources. - Offer financial incentives and training to promote homeownership and support first-time homebuyers, especially within the WPZ where homeownership is low. - Create new, high-quality, mixed-income housing within the WPZ to retain existing residents and attract new residents to what will increasingly be a thriving, economically diverse, in-town neighborhood.
<p>Reduce Violent Crime Create a neighborhood that both feels and is safe for its residents, businesses, and visitors, which includes bolstering police presence, strengthening the community/police relationship and engaging youth at risk of slipping into criminal behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage at-risk youth by expanding programming targeting at-risk and court-involved WPZ youth and increasing participation in APD and other youth programs including Youth Crime initiatives, the @Promise Center and Urban League programs. - Develop/appoint public safety working groups with police/stakeholders, create new crime watch groups, promote engagement in programs like APD Citizens Police Academy and APD Next Door phone app, and Citizen’s Court Watch.

B. AMERICORPS VISTA PROGRAM SUMMARY

The AmeriCorp VISTA program is administered through the Corporation of National Community Service with the mission to strengthen and supplement efforts in low-income communities to eliminate and/or alleviate poverty. To this end, VISTA engages volunteers from all walks of life, all geographical areas, and all age groups in a year of full-time service where service members assist in building capacity in nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Core principles include 1) a focus on poverty; 2) building sustainable solutions; 3) supporting community empowerment; and 4) building capacity.

VISTA members are volunteers in service to America who serve a one-year term at an assigned project site that is operating in areas experiencing high levels of concentrated poverty. The area of focus for this application is the City’s Westside Promise Zone, which has the authority to deploy up to five (5) service members. In utilizing VISTA members to advance Promise Zone outcomes, sites within the designation are invited to submit requests which identify their organization’s need to either 1) build systems and processes that contribute to poverty reduction; 2) developing new programs and partnerships that assist in building capacity for designated sites; and 3) implementing evaluative structures to help sustain the work of the agency.

C. BECOMING A WPZ VISTA SUB-SITE

As mentioned, the AmeriCorps VISTA program enlists the participation of service members who dedicate a year of volunteerism in support of organizations working to eliminate or alleviate poverty. In exchange for their service, VISTA members need support and guidance, which is provided by their sponsoring site. While the VISTA is assigned to a project to assist an organization with capacity-building efforts, the organization hosting the VISTA must also be prepared to carry the responsibility to make the year of service successful.

As such, approved sub-sites are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, which details the requirements of the sub-site. Listed below are general duties in which selected sites will be asked to fulfill.

Sub-Site Supervisor Expectations

- Participation in the VISTA member’s On-Site Orientation and Training;
- Completion of Sub-Site Supervisor Orientation;
- Delivering administrative support (office space, telecommunications, supplies, etc.)
- Monitoring use of sick and leave days;
- Maintaining an emergency fund in the amount of \$500;
- Providing other monetary incentives relating to the VISTA member’s service year (e.g. travel reimbursements, gift cards, professional development training opportunities)
- Acknowledging AmeriCorps VISTA and CNCS in materials and media including, websites and other social media, print and/or broadcast publicity; business cards, and public meeting events;
- Participate in supervisor meetings and site visits conducted by the Sponsoring Organization (City of Atlanta Office of Housing and Community Development), CNCS State Office, or CNCS Headquarters;

- Conduct 1:1 weekly advisory meetings with VISTAs
- Complete quarterly reports and end of term evaluations

D. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

The Westside Promise Zone AmeriCorps VISTA program is administered by the City’s Office of Housing and Community Development. For inquiries related to this application or for further details on the Westside Promise Zone initiative, please contact promisezone@atlantaga.gov or call 404-546-7117.

E. APPLICATION TIMELINE

Outline below is the expected timeline in which VISTA sub-site applications will be received, evaluated and selected. Additional this information is provided so that the applicant may identify the period in which service members will be assigned. Such details are intended to help the applicant in providing an accurate scope of work for their proposed service project. The Year 2 WPZ VISTA program is scheduled as follows:

- Application Release Date November 15
- Outreach and Engagement Period November 15 – December 15
- Deadline for Application Submission December 18
- Review Period December 18 – 29
- Selection Notification By January 3, 2018
- MOU Execution By February (Pending State Approval)
- Sub-Site Orientation By March 2018
- VISTA Recruitment March – May 2018
- POS Orientation (if applicable) June/July 2018
- VISTA Onboarding July 2018

F. EVALUATION RUBRIC

Evaluations will be based on the following criteria:

Capacity of Organization – The applicant must demonstrate the ability to meet the program requirements related to hosting a VISTA at their site. Each applicant should also successfully describe their ability to provide supervision to VISTAs along with detailing the organization’s overall structure. Organizations should also adequately describe the resources that will be made available to support VISTAs during their year of service.

Project Description – Each project described by the applicant shall be evaluated based on the description of activities provided. Staff will make a determination on whether projects meet goals set forth through the Westside Promise Zone designation. Projects must also describe activities that are eligible under the VISTA program.

Performance Measures – The applicant must adequately describe the method for which the VISTA’s project activities will be measured and capture for reporting purposes.