



MTCC VISTA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RECOVERY ACT INITIATIVES FOR JULY 2009-2010

The MTCC AmeriCorps*VISTA project (MTCC VISTA) is a consortium grantee of the Corporation for National and Community service. VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) is a national anti-poverty initiative that places full-time volunteers with local projects. VISTAs are recruited locally and nationally, are college graduates and commit to at least a year of service with a project. VISTAs serve to “build capacity” or create new systems, programs and partnerships that directly serve and benefit people in poverty. VISTAs are trained to be community organizers, and successful work plans should be primarily of a community organizing nature. MTCC VISTA supports the use of campus-community partnerships as a tool to address the following poverty issues: hunger, housing, school performance and disaster preparedness. Additionally, the following areas are current Recovery Act project priorities:

I

MONTANA CAMPUS COMPACT MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

MTCC is launching a student engagement VISTA initiative for the July 2009-2010 VISTA cycle. College campuses seeking to start or expand offices that provide opportunities for students to become actively involved in community service, service-learning and volunteerism may propose to host an AmeriCorps*VISTA member. VISTAs will help build capacity in the form of boards of directors, volunteers, training resources, departmental and community partnerships and funding. Campuses interested in building capacity to host Campus Corps service teams or service-learning members are encouraged to apply. Successful proposals will list strong supervisor support and will demonstrate institutional support. College campuses change when commitment to change exists, and VISTA projects are only successful when there is real local commitment. A limited number of no-cost share first-year scholarships are available to campuses.

II

ORGANIZATIONS SERVING VETERANS

The MTCC AmeriCorps*VISTA Project is seeking organizations that serve veterans, and that are committed to partnering with a nearby college campus to expand services available to this community. Interested organizations should submit an application to become an MTCC VISTA project.

III

WATERSHED AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION

Communities affected by watershed and environmental degradation and that are committed to partnering with a nearby college campus are encouraged to apply for a MTCC VISTA to help alleviate the poverty and environmental damage created by degradation.

IV

ORGANIZATIONS WORKING WITH ENERGY NEEDS

Organizations that seek to capitalize on the shifting economy and the need for new jobs focused in environmental sectors such as energy efficiency, alternative energy, and transportation planning, and that are committed to partnering with a nearby college campus, are encouraged to apply to host an MTCC VISTA to assist with local work.

V

OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT WILL SUPPORT ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- Job creation, particularly green jobs, job re-training, employment assistance, access to benefits for the unemployed;
- Home foreclosure prevention, home loss assistance;
- Weatherization for low-income households;
- Access to health care for the unemployed;
- Financial literacy, access to banking;
- Connecting rural households to broadband access



MTCC VISTA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

This packet contains information to assist staff at member campuses and their community partners in applying to host an AmeriCorps*VISTA project. MTCC Member campuses and collaborations between community-based organizations (schools, nonprofits, government agencies) and member campuses may apply. To find out if your campus is a member of The Montana Campus Compact, or to learn more about the benefits of membership, please contact Dean McGovern (406.243.5177 ext. 4 or mcgovern@mtcompact.org).

- ◆ **Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 3rd, 2009.** Mail proposals (no faxes, please) to:

The Montana Campus Compact
Attention: MTCC VISTA Program
302 University Hall
Missoula, MT 59812-3960

Proposals must include the following:

- Cover page (worksheet)
- Summary (1 page)
- Work Plan
- Letter of support from primary campus or community partner
- Signed program support agreement

Questions? Contact Cody Lillstrom at (406) 243-5451. Technical assistance in preparing this proposal is available through April 2, 2009.

Award Notification/Program Start-up Timeline

February - April 2009	Technical assistance in completing this proposal is available to all campuses and partner organizations
April 3, 2009	Proposals due to The Montana Campus Compact by 5:00 p.m.
April 14, 2009	Notification to sites of approved projects
April 24, 2009 (10:00AM)	Recruitment conference call, all potential sites are welcome to call (888/617.3400 Participant Passcode: 1020263)
April – June 2009	Sites and MTCC Headquarters recruit VISTA members
June 9, 2009	Recruitment Completed (names of members forwarded to Corporation for National and Community Service for approval)
July 14-16, 2009	First training for VISTAs (Pre Service Orientation) and Swearing-in Ceremony (Helena)
July 17, 2009	1 st day of service for MTCC VISTAs
August 10-12, 2009,	VISTA Members and Supervisors attend Community Building Institute Training
September 9-11, 2009	VISTA Members attend In-Service Training (Helena)
September 25-27, 2009	Building Engaged Citizens Conference – All VISTAs attend

I. OVERVIEW INFORMATION

The Montana Campus Compact

The Montana Campus Compact (MTCC) is a statewide, higher education consortium that promotes civic engagement, service from college campuses and campus-community partnerships. The 19 campuses of the Montana Campus Compact initiate, implement, and manage projects that engage their resources in community needs. The MTCC VISTA program is available to member institutions and communities to address the needs of low-income people.

The MTCC VISTA Program

The MTCC VISTA Program provides an excellent opportunity for a campus-community partnership to respond to a community poverty need in one of the following areas: 1) Hunger: the availability of emergency food resources; 2) Housing: the availability of low-income housing units; 3) Mentoring: academic performance; 4) Disaster and Emergency Preparedness: availability of disaster services. The MTCC VISTA Program offers sites the opportunity to build sustainable infrastructure to address poverty problems. Local project sites address poverty problems with a variety of strategies. MTCC requires the use of the 6-step community building process, which engages community members in the needs assessment, strategic planning, implementation and analysis phases of the project. The MTCC VISTA Program improves the capacity of Montana communities to respond to pressing poverty problems.

Who Should Complete This Application?

This packet is for campuses, organizations and partnerships that want to host an MTCC VISTA member for one year, beginning July 17, 2009. Campuses wishing to place VISTA members in partnership positions with community based organizations (nonprofits, government agencies and faith-based organizations) should discuss what campus resources the VISTAs will work to mobilize to meet community needs and create work plans around these goals. Partnership sites between campuses and community organizations need to schedule a face-to-face meeting a minimum of once every three months, to assess progress and check in.

MTCC VISTA Problem Statements

MTCC VISTA Program addresses the following problems:

- ✓ Demand for emergency food resources is greater than supply in Montana.
- ✓ Demand for low-cost housing units exceeds supply in Montana.
- ✓ K-12 students need mentoring to improve their school performance.
- ✓ Demand for disaster and emergency preparedness plans and resources.

II. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The MTCC VISTA Program is based on the following goals and objectives. Campuses and organizations that wish to host VISTA members must address one of the program goals listed below. Each goal is broken into 6 objectives that match with steps of the community building process, and each requires thorough participation of community members:

Mission: To develop a community building process that will enable citizens to address critical community issues.

Goal 1: Increase the availability of affordable housing units, and access to affordable housing

- **Objective A:** Conduct a community needs assessment.
- **Objective B:** Raise community awareness of the poverty problem, via the results of the assessment.
- **Objective C:** Create a community board or group to address the problem.
- **Objective D:** Develop a strategic plan with the community group.

- **Objective E:** Implement the strategic plan (grant writing, volunteer program creation, etc.)
- **Objective F:** Analyze the effectiveness of the implementation process.

Goal 2: Increase the availability of emergency food resources, or reduce the need for emergency food resources

- **Objective A:** Conduct a community assessment.
- **Objective B:** Raise community awareness of the poverty problem, via the results of the assessment.
- **Objective C:** Create a community board or group to address the problem.
- **Objective D:** Develop a strategic plan with the community group.
- **Objective E:** Implement the strategic plan (grant writing, volunteer program creation, etc.)
- **Objective F:** Analyze the effectiveness of the implementation process.

Goal 3: Improve the availability of mentoring resources to improve children’s school performance

- **Objective A:** Conduct a community assessment.
- **Objective B:** Raise community awareness of the poverty problem, via the results of the assessment.
- **Objective C:** Create a community board or group to address the problem.
- **Objective D:** Develop a strategic plan with the community group.
- **Objective E:** Implement the strategic plan (grant writing, volunteer program creation, etc.)
- **Objective F:** Analyze the effectiveness of the implementation process.

Goal 4: Increase the availability of disaster and emergency plans for low-income and high risk communities

- **Objective A:** Conduct a community assessment.
- **Objective B:** Raise community awareness of the poverty problem, via the results of the assessment.
- **Objective C:** Create a community board or group to address the problem.
- **Objective D:** Develop a strategic plan with the community group.
- **Objective E:** Implement the strategic plan (grant writing, volunteer program creation, etc.)
- **Objective F:** Analyze the effectiveness of the implementation process.

How Do VISTA Members Reach the Above Goals and Objectives?

All VISTA projects use the following process to build community infrastructure to address poverty problems. Work plans designed for VISTA Members must reflect the process outlined below.

1. Community assessment

- ⇒ Clearly define the specific poverty problem which the VISTA project was created to address – working with local experts,
- ⇒ Develop and maintain an “map” of campus and community assets/resources in the form of people, places, things and expertise

2. Develop public relations/public education program

3. Develop groups, boards, or support existing group to address community issues

- ⇒ Develop community leadership
- ⇒ Develop collaborative relationships
- ⇒ Recruit groups and boards
- ⇒ Support and strengthen group or board

4. Develop sustainable strategic plan through inclusive collaborative efforts

- ⇒ Vision
- ⇒ Missions
- ⇒ Objectives
- ⇒ Short-term strategies
- ⇒ Long-term strategies

5. **Implement plans and strategies and generate necessary resources (people, places, and things) to address critical community issues**
 - ⇒ Plan, develop, and carry out a strategic plan to **a)** create a volunteer program **b)** carry out fund-raising campaign **c)** other strategies
6. **Evaluate success and measure results**

Sample Projects for VISTA Members

Though each VISTA Member may work on different tasks, all of the tasks will fulfill goal 1, 2, 3 or 4 described above. Some examples of successful VISTA projects include:

- ⇒ Assess community needs related to a specific poverty issue (hunger, housing or school performance);
- ⇒ Develop community advisory boards to address poverty problem;
- ⇒ Raise community awareness of poverty problem;
- ⇒ Help community engage in strategic planning process;
- ⇒ Research and write specific grant proposals to help community implement their strategic plans;
- ⇒ Develop and expand service-related scholarships, including president's scholarships for high schools, college scholarships, and AmeriCorps Education Awards;
- ⇒ Help campuses start antipoverty-focused service-learning courses;
- ⇒ Strengthen the partnerships between community organizations and college campuses;
- ⇒ Expand services to nearby rural areas currently under served by community service Work Study, campus volunteerism and community-based organizations;
- ⇒ Expand campus involvement in local antipoverty initiatives;
- ⇒ Help the community establish a community food pantry, after-school program or affordable housing project.

III. PROJECT SPECIFICS

• Quality Proposals

The Montana Campus Compact offers AmeriCorps*VISTA members to campuses-community partnerships that demonstrate a desire to engage the broader community in an attempt to address social problems and move people permanently out of poverty. Quality proposals will show a genuine partnership between the off-campus community and the potential for impact on work plan goals and objectives. Technical assistance (Cody Lillstrom, MTCC VISTA Program Manager 243.5451) will be available throughout March 2009.

• Supervision

Each VISTA member must be assigned a site supervisor at his/her host site. Site supervisors should complete this application packet. The primary responsibility of the site supervisor is to oversee the VISTA member's work on the proposed project, ensuring that the project progresses toward the stated objectives. Meetings between VISTA members and site supervisors will occur on a weekly basis. The site supervisor will be expected to attend the Community Building Institute with the VISTA, as well as the site supervisor training in June 9-10, 2009 in Fairmont Hot Springs. Throughout the year, Site Supervisors will be invited to attend several other trainings and events.

• Type of positions available

All VISTA member positions are based on full time service, with evenings and weekends as needed, (generally 40-45 hours per week) for one calendar year. **VISTA members may *not* be students*** or hold additional employment of any type. (*unless under the UM Academic Learning Integrated with Volunteer Experience "ALIVE" Program, which is complementary to VISTA service or by taking a single course that helps with the project)

- **Benefits to community organizations and campuses that participate**

Organizations and campuses that participate as host sites will enjoy the opportunity to:

- ⇒ Build community capacity to address poverty problems
- ⇒ Engage community members in strategic planning process
- ⇒ Leverage resources to assist community problem solving
- ⇒ Expand financial resources to assist with grass-root anti-poverty work
- ⇒ Expand campus-sponsored national service (Campus Corps) programming and improve programming quality
- ⇒ Create service-learning and research opportunities for students and faculty
- ⇒ Participate in a growing national movement to renew the public purposes of higher education

- **Benefits to VISTA Members**

All VISTA members are enrolled in the AmeriCorps National Service initiative. As members, they receive the following benefits:

- ⇒ An annual living allowance of \$9996, payroll administered by MTCC;
- ⇒ Cash award of \$1200 upon successful completion of service;
- ⇒ (or) An education award of \$4,725* upon successful completion of service;
- ⇒ Health benefits provided by AmeriCorps*VISTA;
- ⇒ Loan deferment while enrolled in the program;
- ⇒ Child care (if need criteria are met);
- ⇒ \$550 Relocation funds (if relocating from over 100 miles);
- ⇒ Mileage reimbursement (if relocating to serve);
- ⇒ Graduate credit (if enrolled in ALIVE program through The University of Montana);
- ⇒ Professional training opportunities and citizenship development.

- **Expectations of MTCC VISTA host sites**

Organizations and Campuses that serve as VISTA host sites are expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- ⇒ Designate a Site Supervisor to oversee the VISTA project and its progress toward the stated objectives;
- ⇒ Recruit the VISTA member no later than June 5, 2009;
- ⇒ Allow the site supervisor to attend the site supervisor training June 9-10, 2009 at Fairmont;
- ⇒ Allow the site supervisor to attend the Community Building Institute 3-day VISTA and supervisor training, August 10-12, 2009;
- ⇒ Understand that once selected, the VISTA member cannot be replaced for any reason (e.g., if a VISTA member resigns from service early, the host site may not replace him/her);
- ⇒ Pay cost match assessed by the host site's number of years of participation;
- ⇒ Assist the VISTA member with free or low-cost housing, if possible;
- ⇒ Provide a vehicle, if available, to allow the VISTA to attend program training;
- ⇒ Sign MOU;
- ⇒ Participate in the Supervisor Training/Orientation in June 9-10, 2009.

- **Financial Requirements ***

Recovery VISTA Volunteers are not assessed a cost share. Meaning that these members are being provided free of charge to us from the federal government. Though they are free of charge, we are not given any extra money to help support these members. We still expect to offer the Recovery VISTA members the same high quality training and technical support that our standard members receive. With that in mind we are asking MTCC Recovery VISTA Host Sites to provide the MTCC with Program Support. This program support will help the MTCC to administer the same high quality training and support throughout the year that standard MTCC VISTAs receive. If your organization is able to provide program support we are asking that you

agree to pay \$1000 for program support; payable in quarterly installments of \$250. For partnership and fundraising ideas contact Cody Lillstrom (406.243.5451, lillstrom@mtcompact.org).

MTCC bills host site:	Program Support
October 2009	\$250
January 2010	\$250
April 2010	\$250
July 2010	\$250
Total Yearly Cost	\$1000

IV. COMPLETING A PROPOSAL

Organizations that want to apply to be an MTCC VISTA host site need to complete the following five items. Proposals must be received by **April 3, 2009**, at The Montana Campus Compact Headquarters.

1. Cover Page

Please use the enclosed worksheet as your cover page.

2. Summary (Not to exceed 1 page)

Write a one-page summary that clearly describes the poverty problem (related to hunger, housing or school performance) and proposed work plan in narrative form. Include the scope of the project, background information, where the VISTA will work, and the specific issues that will be addressed. Please be concise. Details about day-to-day activities for the VISTA member should be included in the Work Plan. Site Supervisors and the community service director on campus must agree to meet at a minimum every three months, to review progress and check in.

3. VISTA Member Assignment Description (VAD)

The VAD outlines the work that the VISTA Member will complete during the year. The goals and objectives listed in this packet should be stated in the VAD using the exact words. A worksheet is attached to assist you in developing the VAD. A sample VAD has also been included as a guide.

4. Letter of support from primary project partner

Successful VISTA projects are supported by the at-large and campus communities. Please submit a letter from community-based organization or campus that will be involved in the project.

5. Signed Program Support Memorandum Of Understanding

The attached cost match form must be signed by the party or parties (campus or community organization) responsible for cost match. Host sites will be billed quarterly to support project costs.



MTCC VISTA

2009-2010 Recovery Host Site Program Support Memorandum of Understanding

Recovery VISTA Volunteers are not assessed a cost share. Meaning that these members are being provided free of charge to us from the federal government. Though they are free of charge, we are not given any extra money to help support these members. We still expect to offer the Recovery VISTA members the same high quality training and technical support that our standard members receive. With that in mind we are asking MTCC Recovery VISTA Host Sites to provide the MTCC with Program Support. This program support will help the MTCC to administer the same high quality training and support throughout the year that standard MTCC VISTAs receive. If your organization is able to provide program support we are asking that you agree to pay \$1000 for program support; payable in quarterly installments of \$250. For partnership and fundraising ideas contact Cody Lillstrom (406.243.5451, lillstrom@mtcompact.org).

Payment schedule

AMOUNT DUE

<i>MTCC bills host site:</i>	<i>program support</i>	<i>Date Due:</i>	<i>Paid</i>
October 2009	\$250	October 31, 2009	
January 2010	\$250	January 31, 2010	
April 2010	\$250	April 30, 2010	
July 2010	\$250	July 31, 2010	

By signing this form you agree to pay the above amount, by the date due. Checks should be made payable to “The Montana Campus Compact”.

Signature _____ date _____
MTCC VISTA 2007/2008 Site Supervisor
Manager

Signature _____ date _____
Cody Lillstrom, MTCC VISTA Program



COVER PAGE

PROJECT TITLE: _____

SITE SUPERVISOR/TITLE: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Fax:** _____

Email Address: _____

CAMPUS/COMMUNITY PARTNER*: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Fax:** _____

Email Address: _____

(*All proposals require signatures and contact information from host site and partner)

AGREEMENT: Please sign below, if applicable. *(for campus-community partnership sites)*

I, _____ (campus representative) agree to meet regularly, a minimum of every three months, with _____ (community organization representative) and the AmeriCorps*VISTA member placed with our organizations for the purposes of reviewing our work plan progress, checking in and sharing ideas.

PROPOSAL CHECK-LIST:

Have you enclosed the following items?

- Cover Page
- Letters of Support from Community Partners
- Work Plan and Summary
- Program Support Agreement

APPROVAL FROM CAMPUS OR ORGANIZATION OFFICIAL

I have reviewed the grant guidelines and this proposal and I understand that this organization/campus is applying to host an AmeriCorps*VISTA member.

Signature/Date: _____

*Must be signed by dean or director.

VISTA host sites shall comply with all applicable federal and state anti-discrimination laws, including those requiring host sites to provide reasonable access and work activities to volunteers with disabilities, as well as to persons with disabilities, as well as to persons with disabilities who are served by volunteers at host sites.