
*FLORIDA ALLIANCE FOR
STUDENT SERVICE*
AMERICORPS*VISTA INITIATIVE

WWW.FSU.EDU/~VISTA



*EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH
VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE-LEARNING TO
CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.*

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I. The Florida Alliance for Student Service: An Overview

What is the Florida Alliance for Student Service (FASS)?

FASS is a coalition of six statewide programs that promote student service and volunteerism. Formed in 1998, the Florida Alliance for Student Service promotes the sharing of ideas, expertise, and resources to initiate, improve, expand, and institutionalize student service-learning and volunteerism in Florida. Working together, the Alliance programs increase collaboration, leverage scarce resources, consolidate space and staffing, as well as expand programs, networks and in-house expertise. This kindergarten through higher education collaboration is the only formal alliance nationally where statewide Learn & Serve America, Campus Compact, VISTA, CHESP, Learn & Serve Homeland Security Grant (SPaRC), and FASS/State Farm Home Safety Initiative are co-located. Administratively, FASS is part of Florida State University's Center for Civic Education and Service. (www.fsu.edu/~fass)

Florida Learn & Serve (FL&S) awards grants to engage Kindergarten through 12th-grade students in service-learning activities-have students practice knowledge and behaviors through serving others. There are currently 92 large-scale projects and approximately 150 mini-projects supported through the program. Florida Learn & Serve provides technical assistance and training by sponsoring conferences, grant-writing workshops, institutes, travel by awardees, and related training. FL&S is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and administered through collaboration between the Florida Department of Education and Florida State University's Center for Civic Education and Service. For more information, contact Joe Follman at jfollman@admin.fsu.edu or 850-488-9661(www.fsu.edu/~flserve).

Florida Campus Compact (FCC) is a membership organization of 35 college and university presidents committed to helping students develop the values of citizenship through participation in public and community service. FCC works with these campuses to integrate service with academic study and to provide a collegial experience for inter-campus and community collaborations. FCC achieves its three-fold mission (academically rigorous/course-based service-learning; student volunteerism; and civic engagement) through site visits, conferences, workshops, grants, technical assistance/resources and awards. For more information, contact DeeDee Rasmussen at ddr@floridacompact.org or 850-488-7782 (www.floridacompact.org).

The FASS VISTA Initiative addresses problems associated with poverty through student volunteerism and service learning. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members are placed in colleges, schools, community organizations, and school districts to coordinate college volunteers and the service-learning efforts of youth who are working to meet the needs of low-income students and of communities. The VISTAs organize and coordinate a range of projects that engage K-12 and college students in addressing community needs associated with poverty. A total of 20 VISTAs are engaged in projects at 18 sites statewide. FASS VISTA project sites often enhance the work of other FASS programs such as FL Learn & Serve and FL Campus Compact (descriptions of FASS programs are listed below). For more information, contact Laryn Flikkema at lflikkema@admin.fsu.edu or 850-488-9660 www.fsu.edu/~vista.

The State Farm Florida Service-Learning and Home Safety Initiative (coordinated by FASS) is a competitive grant program for schools to apply for funds to engage students—especially needy students—in service-learning projects that support student advocacy and information campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of building codes and disaster preparation. Students learn about these issues and educate their peers, parents, and the public about them. The focus of the service is also for financially needy communities, which are most at risk in times of disaster. For more information, contact Joe Follman at jfollman@admin.fsu.edu or 850-488-9661 (www.fsu.edu/flserve).

II. FASS VISTA INITIATIVE

MISSION

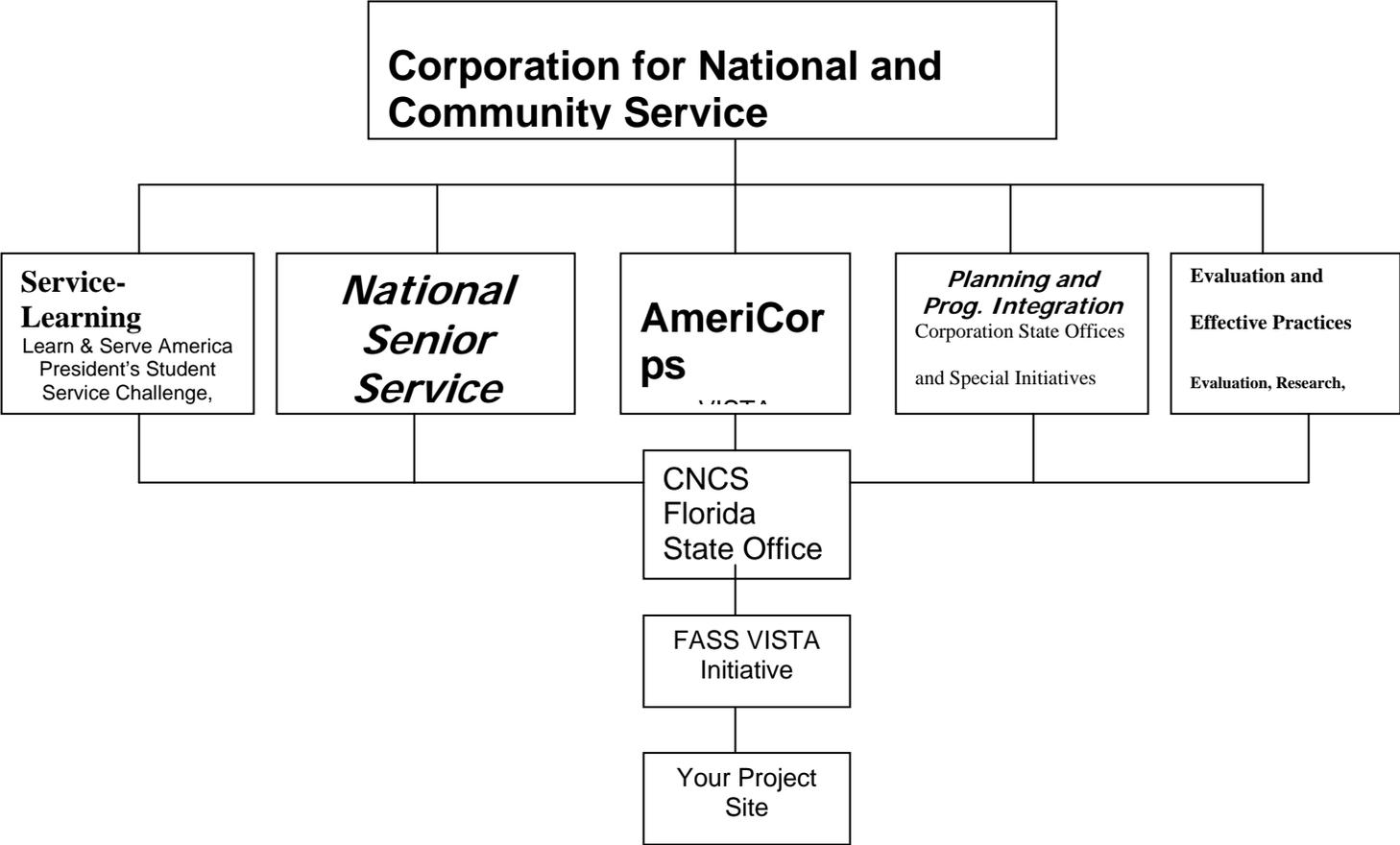
FASS connects educators, students at all levels, and community partners to improve education and address societal needs through service learning, applied civic education and engaged citizenship. To accomplish this, FASS provides support, training, resources, networking, opportunities and leadership to empower individuals and communities to engage in meaningful service collaborations that benefit both servers and those they serve.

GOALS:

- To develop meaningful service-learning opportunities for students in K-12 schools and Higher Education.
- To promote the values of AmeriCorps*VISTA: Get Things Done, Strengthen Communities, Encourage Responsibility, and Expand Opportunity.
- To empower students to be catalysts for community change.

III. Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Organizational Chart

WHERE DO WE FIT IN?



CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

HISTORY AND INTRODUCTION

Authorized originally in 1964 by the Economic Opportunity Act, the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program has provided full-time volunteers to help nonprofit organizations and public agencies build the permanent infrastructure needed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Over the years, more than 135,000 individuals have served in VISTA and AmeriCorps®VISTA on thousands of local projects, committing at least one year of full-time service to poor communities in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

In July 1971, the VISTA program was transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to a newly created federal volunteer agency, ACTION. Other volunteer programs administered by ACTION included the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and the Senior Companion Program. With the enactment of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service was established, and all of ACTION's programs were transferred to the Corporation for National and Community Service (hereinafter referred to as the Corporation). The Corporation oversees a wide range of national service initiatives, including AmeriCorps. In 1994, VISTA joined this network and became known as AmeriCorps®VISTA.

The purpose of the AmeriCorps®VISTA program has remained the same since its inception. That purpose is contained in its authorizing legislation, the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (Public Law 93-113), which states that AmeriCorps®VISTA's mission is:

to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate and alleviate poverty... in the United States by encouraging and enabling persons from all walks of life, all geographic areas, and all age groups, including low-income individuals...to perform meaningful and constructive volunteer service in agencies, institutions, and situations

where the application of human talent and dedication may assist in the solution of poverty and poverty-related problems...to generate the commitment of private sector resources, to encourage volunteer service at the local level, and to strengthen local agencies and organizations to carry out the purpose (of the program)" (42 U.S.C. § 4951).

The AmeriCorps®VISTA program rests on three basic assumptions:

- Private citizens can contribute on a voluntary basis to the solution of problems confronting low-income communities;
- The skills and energies of AmeriCorps®VISTA members are used most effectively when they live and work in the low-income communities they are serving; and
- The full-time personal involvement of AmeriCorps®VISTA members brings an added dimension to local public and private, nonprofit organizations working to develop lasting solutions to the problems of low-income communities.

Although AmeriCorps®VISTA is a national program that provides full-time members to organizations whose missions are congruent with AmeriCorps®VISTA's mission, it is not a self-contained or independent social action

program. AmeriCorps*VISTA achieves its mission by assigning members to Sponsoring Organizations in order to expand the ability of those organizations to fight poverty. AmeriCorps*VISTA members mobilize community resources and increase the capacity of the low-income community to solve its own problems. It is crucial to the concept of local self-reliance that Sponsoring Organizations plan for the eventual phase out of AmeriCorps*VISTA members and the absorption of their functions by other facets of the organization or community.

To address community problems, the AmeriCorps*VISTA program requires the merged interests and efforts of four distinct groups: low-income individuals, the Sponsoring Organization, the community, and the AmeriCorps* VISTA members. The details of this merger are explained in the remainder of this chapter.

ROLE OF SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

AmeriCorps*VISTA Sponsoring Organizations may be federal, state, or local government agencies, or private nonprofit organizations that are committed to solving problems affecting low-income communities. Sponsoring Organizations are responsible for managing AmeriCorps*VISTA resources and providing the support necessary to achieve project goals including dedicated supervision of the AmeriCorps*VISTA member, a clear work plan, and the mentoring needed to promote the professional growth of the AmeriCorps*VISTA member. Many Sponsoring Organizations share the cost of AmeriCorps*VISTA members by committing to pay all or part of their members' allowances.

Sponsoring Organizations also must ensure that each project achieves the following:

- Engages residents of the low-income community in planning, developing, and implementing the project to ensure that it is responsive and relevant to the low-income residents served;
- Leverages community resources (including part-time community volunteers) from the public and private sectors; and
- Expands community and organizational capacity to sustain the project once the AmeriCorps*VISTA member(s) finishes his/her term.

This type of program development by the Sponsoring Organization helps to ensure that the work performed will provide permanent, long-term solutions to problems confronting low-income communities.

ROLE OF THE AMERICORPS*VISTA MEMBER

AmeriCorps*VISTA members pledge themselves to serve on a full-time basis for a term of one year (in addition to time spent in Pre-Service Orientation), and it is expected that this pledge will be honored. In certain circumstances, members may be invited to extend or re-enroll in their service beyond one year, for a period not to exceed three years. AmeriCorps*VISTA members are not entitled to an extension or re-enrollment of their service beyond their first year. However, they are encouraged to pursue a second year of service - be it with their initial project or within another area of interest. A member may not accept any benefit from the Sponsoring Organization or the community served that relates to the AmeriCorps*VISTA assignment,

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*Members
live at the
economic level
of the people
they serve.*

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i.e., the member is expected to serve the community, not him or herself.

During their term of service, members live at the economic level of the people they serve. They remain available for service, without regard to regular working hours, at all times during their term of service, except for periods of approved leave. A member may not be absent from the project site without approval from the Sponsoring Organization or supervisor. Full or part-time employment is not permitted during AmeriCorps® VISTA service. Full or part-time enrollment in an educational institution is prohibited except as described in Chapter 9. A member may not receive any additional monetary compensation beyond the standard allowances for services rendered as an AmeriCorps® VISTA member.

In general, AmeriCorps® VISTA members may not assume, accept, or retain positions of leadership, or become identified with a particular faction or group or with a partisan or nonpartisan political group in the communities in which they serve. The assumption of such positions on the part of the member would hinder the community's

ability to develop its own leadership capacity.

Each member's assignment depends on the particular problem(s) being addressed by the project to which he/she is assigned. Each AmeriCorps® VISTA project application includes a project work plan and assignment description that clearly indicates the nature of the member's activities and duties, and describes how, when, and why the member is to accomplish them. This work plan and assignment description are given to the member before the Pre-Service Orientation.

AmeriCorps® VISTA assignments should focus on building the capacity of private citizens, nonprofit organizations, and communities to respond to problems confronting communities in need. AmeriCorps® VISTA assignments must not include the delivery of individual services to a limited number of clients (direct service) nor activities more appropriately performed by the Sponsoring Organization's administrative support staff. AmeriCorps® VISTA members serve as community and organizational catalysts, assist in creating or expanding programs, and mobilize community resources to sustain these programs.

Each AmeriCorps® VISTA member has a supervisor responsible for managing the project. Members receive direction and guidance in their assignments from their supervisors, who work for the Sponsoring Organization, rather than the Corporation.

ROLE OF THE AMERICORPS*VISTA LEADER

In certain circumstances, AmeriCorps*VISTA Leaders may be assigned to projects or regions to assist Sponsoring Organizations and members in achieving program objectives and developing new project activities and sources of community support.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Leaders are former AmeriCorps*VISTA members or Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary skills and leadership in community service. They have exceptional abilities to work constructively with community volunteers, supervisors, Sponsoring Organizations, and the low-income community.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Leaders do not supervise other AmeriCorps*VISTA members. Rather, they provide support and coordination for members in order to increase the impact of the project.

ROLE OF THE CORPORATION STATE OFFICE

Staff members from the Corporation State Office seek out and respond to technical assistance requests from potential Sponsoring Organizations who wish to develop proposals for AmeriCorps*VISTA projects. State staff members assist the potential Sponsoring Organization in defining project goals and objectives, determining whether the project is in accordance with the AmeriCorps*VISTA program mission, and ensuring that a self-sustaining activity will be achieved within the low-income community or the Sponsoring Organization.

Once a project has received final approval by the State Director and AmeriCorps*VISTA candidates have been selected, the candidates attend Pre-Service Orientation and, if deemed suitable for AmeriCorps*VISTA service, take the oath of service before they begin their project assignments. After members are assigned, the Corporation State Office helps the Sponsoring Organization provide in-service training and technical assistance for the members.

The Corporation State Office will review the Sponsoring Organization's use of AmeriCorps*VISTA members toward achieving the goals and objectives in the project application during periodic project monitoring visits.

ROLE OF THE AREA MANAGER

All Corporation State Offices fall within the jurisdiction of one of the Corporation's five Area Managers. Area Managers oversee Corporation State Offices. They establish strategies for program development and delivery, allocate resources, and coordinate activities.

ROLE OF THE SERVICE CENTER

Five Service Centers throughout the country provide administrative, fiscal, grants management, and training support to State Offices. Service Centers implement and monitor systems for tracking AmeriCorps*VISTA resources allocated to the Clusters by the AmeriCorps*VISTA Headquarters Office.

**ROLE OF THE AMERICORPS®VISTA
HEADQUARTERS OFFICE**

The AmeriCorps®VISTA Headquarters Office is located at the Corporation Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This office, in consultation with Area Managers, State Offices, and Service Centers, determines policy, administrative procedures, goals, and budgetary requirements for effective program operation. The AmeriCorps®VISTA Headquarters Office also monitors progress toward achieving national program goals and priorities. The Headquarters Office allocates AmeriCorps®VISTA resources among the Clusters and ensures that Corporation staff and Sponsoring Organizations adhere to AmeriCorps®VISTA policies and procedures. The Headquarters Office also reviews and makes final decisions on certain AmeriCorps®VISTA project applications as specified in the "Notice of AmeriCorps®VISTA Program Guidelines."

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*The AmeriCorps® VISTA
Headquarters Office also
monitors progress toward
achieving national program
goals and priorities.*
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IV. Role of FASS VISTA Initiative

The VISTA Initiative with the Florida Alliance for Student Service is a grant project of the Corporation for National and Community Service. What makes our Initiative different from other programs is that we directly receive funding to administer our program. Because we are grant project, FASS VISTAs receive their stipend checks from Florida State University rather than directly from the U.S. Treasury. Considering these facts, the role of the FASS VISTA Initiative changes. As a CNCS grantee, we are responsible for the majority of the day-to-day project management and supervision while CNCS serves as the overall program evaluator at the end of our fiscal year. Thus, the role of the FASS VISTA Initiative is to provide the services that CNCS would normally perform such as:

VISTA Project Proposal Process

- Assisting potential sponsors (sites) in defining project goals and objectives.
- Determining that the project is in accord with the AmeriCorps*VISTA's program mission, as well as our own mission.
- Ensuring that self-sustaining activity will be achieved within the low-income community.

VISTA Site Supervision

- Providing technical assistance to supervisors and VISTAs.
- Performing periodic site visits.
- Meeting with Supervisors.
- Scheduling training events.

Aside from these functions, it is also a priority for the FASS VISTA Initiative to support our sites, Supervisors and VISTAs in the following capacity:

- Recruitment of VISTAs and VISTA Leaders.
- Promotion of VISTA Projects to link people and resources to help make programs better.

The end result is to help your program become stronger which in turn makes out programs stronger.

IV. Role of the Site Supervisor

The Site Supervisor is the person who will guide each AmeriCorps*VISTA member through an amazing year. The role of all Site Supervisors is vital to the success of their program, the VISTA experience, and the FASS VISTA Initiative's Mission and Goals. As a VISTA Supervisor, there are certain responsibilities that come with this great opportunity. These are FASS VISTA Initiative's expectations of all Supervisors:

- Recruitment of VISTA member.
- Site Orientation and Project Overview: It is important to outline your expectations (both the Supervisor and VISTA).
- Review the basic terms and conditions of AmeriCorps*VISTA service.
- Use the approved VISTA work plan as the primary source of tasks and responsibilities for the VISTA.
- Meet regularly with VISTA member to discuss the project and other concerns.
- The sponsoring project site will be responsible for the VISTA's local travel reimbursement associated with the project. The Supervisor should ensure that the VISTA receives this.
- Provide project updates via quarterly Project Progress Reports. These reports should be completed with input from the VISTA member.
- Work with the VISTA to develop their personal and professional goals.
- Inform the FASS VISTA Director of any changes in status of the VISTA member and other concerns related to the VISTA project.
- Participate in scheduled trainings, site visits, and conference calls.

V. Appropriate Tasks for AmeriCorps*VISTA Members

Excerpted from the AmeriCorps*VISTA Supervisors' Manual

All of the goals and objectives in the project work plan and activities in the member assignment description should lead to measurable outcomes and the sustainability of project activities by the community being served.

AmeriCorps*VISTA members should:

- ◆ Build partnerships with local public and private sector organizations / businesses.
- ◆ Recruit, train and coordinate part-time volunteers.
- ◆ Write grant applications for funding and other resources under the supervision of the project director / supervisor.
- ◆ Solicit donations and other in-kind support for the project.
- ◆ Publicize the project;
- ◆ Create community events to support the project.
- ◆ Mobilize resources in and outside of the community in support of the project
- ◆ Promote project sustainability.

AmeriCorps*VISTA members should not:

- ◆ Displace staff of the sponsoring organization.
- ◆ Supervise employees of the sponsoring organization.
- ◆ Spend the majority of their time providing direct services to individual clients or community members.
- ◆ Engage in activities designed to influence the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition.
- ◆ Take any action with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification or apparent identification of the AmeriCorps*VISTA program with such activity. Such activities include those that involve elections, voter registrations, voter transportation to the polls, and efforts to influence legislation. *See Chapter 9 of the AmeriCorps*VISTA Handbook for more detailed information.*
- ◆ Give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any other religious activity as part of their duties, or in a way that would be perceived as part of their duties by members of the community in which they serve. *See Chapter 9 of the AmeriCorps*VISTA Handbook for more detailed information.*

AMERICORPS*VISTA Leaders

Mission of AmeriCorps*VISTA Leaders

AmeriCorps*VISTA Leaders support and coordinate large AmeriCorps*VISTA projects, which involve at least eight AmeriCorps*VISTA members, or a cluster of projects, in their efforts to address the needs of low-income communities. They serve as role models, trainers, and resource providers who strengthen the capacity of AmeriCorps*VISTA members, AmeriCorps*VISTA projects, and community residents. Just as AmeriCorps*VISTA members work to expand and build the capacity of community projects, leaders work to expand and build the capacity of individual AmeriCorps*VISTA members and their respective service sites. They perform various tasks depending on the needs of local projects including recruiting and coordinating AmeriCorps*VISTA members; acting as mediators, providing member support; planning training events; identifying new funding sources; and serving as liaisons between their projects and the Corporation for National Service.

VISTA ROLE	SUPERVISOR ROLE
<p>The AmeriCorps*VISTA Should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a full time commitment of 40 hours per week (minimum). Congress defines a full-time commitment as "24 hours a day, 7 days a week". This translates into being available to the community at all times without regard to regular working hours, except for periods of approved leave. • Work to emphasize the mobilization of local human, financial, and material resources, the transfer of skills to community residents, and the expansion of the capacity of the low-income community to solve its own problems. • Be utilized as "catalysts" within the overall community. • Concentrate their 40 hours per week on the approved AmeriCorps*VISTA work plan and member description to help meet the needs of the community identified in your original AmeriCorps*VISTA application. • Participate in scheduled trainings, site visits, and conference calls. <p>The AmeriCorps*VISTA Should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a part-time job or be employed in any other paid position for the full year. • Attend classes (full or part-time) during your year of service. There are a few exceptions for part-time enrollment; a) you are a recipient of a Pell Grant, or b) the class is directly related to your project assignment. • Register people to vote or drive people to the polls. • Take any action with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity or provide religious instruction that would result in the identification or apparent identification of you as an AmeriCorps*VISTA member. • Displace or replace staff of the sponsoring organization. • Supervise employees of the sponsoring organization. • Spend the majority of their time providing direct services to individual clients or community members. 	<p>The AmeriCorps*VISTA Supervisor Should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orient AmeriCorps*VISTA to the sponsor organization's site, work plan, community, etc. as described in their individualized OSOT plan. • Provide mentorship and guidance for AmeriCorps*VISTA in accomplishing goals and objectives listed in the work plan to help meet the needs of the low-income community being served. • Use the approved AmeriCorps*VISTA work plan as the source of tasks and responsibilities for the VISTA. • Schedule regular meetings with the VISTA member to discuss the project and other concerns. • Ensure that the VISTA is reimbursed for local travel reimbursement associated with the project. • Provide project updates via quarterly Project Progress Reports with AmeriCorps*VISTA input. • Inform FASS VISTA Director of any changes in status of the VISTA and other concerns related to the VISTA Project. • Participate in scheduled trainings, site visits, and conference calls. <p>The AmeriCorps*VISTA Supervisor should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give permission for AmeriCorps*VISTA to have a part-time job or be employed in any other paid position for the full year. • Allow AmeriCorps*VISTA to take more than 3 credit hours per semester to either a) maintain eligibility for a Pell Grant, or b) to take a course directly related to their project assignment. • Ask AmeriCorps*VISTA to participate in prohibited activities that include registering people to vote or driving people to the polls, partisan or nonpartisan political activity, or religious instruction. • Expect the AmeriCorps*VISTA to displace or replace staff of the sponsoring organization. • Require AmeriCorps*VISTA to perform tasks unrelated to approved VISTA work plan. VISTA Policies prohibit members from working on administrative tasks or other sponsor programs not identified in the approved work plan.

Definitions:

Community: People, institutions, or groups identified within initial VISTA application as beneficiaries of AmeriCorps*VISTA activities to help alleviate poverty.

Mentorship: The act of nurturing the capacity-building abilities of the VISTA member to empower them to successfully meet the needs of the low-income community being served. To guide the VISTA in the development of personal and professional goals.

VI. FASS VISTA Initiative Site Descriptions

Big Bend Cares

Tallahassee, FL

www.bigbendcares.org

Big Bend Cares is a not-for-profit, 501(c) (3) organization and is the only AIDS Service Organization serving an eight county rural area in north central Florida. This area includes Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor and Wakulla counties. The mission of Big Bend Cares is to provide education and comprehensive support to people infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. In fulfilling its mission it provides client, support, volunteer, and HIV prevention and education services. Client services include case management which assists clients in receiving medical care and AIDS drug treatment, support services, and housing assistance. Support services include weekly support group meetings. Community volunteers serve to provide support to clients, assist the agency in special events, education efforts, and office tasks. HIV prevention and education services include outreach education, AIDS update and AIDS 104 classes, educational presentations to community organizations, and HIV confidential testing.

Member Duties: Our VISTA member will recruit and coordinate a new Youth Corps for Big Bend Cares. Using a service-learning approach, members of this Youth Corps will educate and bring awareness about HIV/AIDS to their peers by conducting presentations, participating in community youth focused events, and organizing special events. Specific duties will include: (1) establish a Youth Corps peer education program at Big Bend Cares; (2) establish a steering committee comprised of trained peer educator Youth Corps members to assist in developing a training curriculum and presentation guides; (3) coordinate planning meetings focused on developing activities for national awareness days and additional special awareness events; and (4) assist youth in publicizing events through the schools, youth clubs/organizations, and local media.

Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partnership

Tallahassee, FL

www.tallpartners.org

The Partnership began in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1999 as an idea of a few individuals who believed passionately in the concept of holistic neighborhood revitalization. Members of the Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partnership include the Renaissance Partnership Board, the Covenant Partners and a Neighborhood Association. The Partnership Board, a non-profit corporation, includes representatives from: Florida State University, Florida A & M University, Tallahassee Community College, City of Tallahassee, Leon County Board of County Commissioners, Leon County School Board, Bank of America, Capital City Bank, AmSouth Bank, the United Way of the Big Bend, Apalachee Ridge Estates and the Covenant Partners, a coalition of religious organizations.

Member Duties: Match service learning opportunities with needs of neighborhood residents. Assist in the development of the project's sustainability. Learn how resident-led revitalization can empower youth and adults. Identify technological solutions to increase academic performance, improve job skills, and provide access to higher education opportunities for neighborhood residents. Act as a liaison with the neighborhood association and impacted schools. Provide support, guidance and encouragement to volunteers, tutors and others. Collaborate on the design of programs and special projects that address the needs identified by residents.

Community Tampa Bay

St. Petersburg, FL

www.communitytampabay.org

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) was founded as The National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1927. There are fifty-five NCCJ chapters across the country. Community Tampa Bay opened in 1949 and serves over 25,000 people annually in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties. The mission of Community Tampa Bay is to fight bias, bigotry and racism in America. Community Tampa Bay promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions, and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. Our role is to advocate, educate and resolve conflict relative to issues of discrimination and oppression of individuals and groups. We work with community, school and government leaders facilitating community and interfaith dialogues, providing workplace consultations, youth leadership development and educator training. Each summer four hundred youth attend CTB's Anytown, a week-long, residential, multicultural experience. Youth from diverse backgrounds spend a week learning and sharing with each other on issues such as genocide, racism, prejudice, sexism and other "isms" in experiential workshops, small and large discussion groups, role-plays, lectures and videos. The focus of Anytown is to engage youth in a challenging environment where they can develop solutions to critical human relations problems. For one week, students build relationships with others from across the Bay in order to create a network of youth who will work for justice in their schools and communities.

Member Duties: The VISTA project will provide follow up and continued development activities for Anytown participants. Specific duties will include: (1) develop a follow-up plan for Anytown alumni as part of "Building Inclusive Youth Leaders"; (2) hold monthly meetings and activities with youth leaders providing skill building and development; (3) work with the Anytown Advisory Board on various activities including the development and implementation of a recruitment plan of future participants; and (4) assist in the sustainability of the project through grant writing, community outreach, and supporting Community Tampa Bay's annual fundraising banquet.

**Eckerd College - Office of Service Learning
St. Petersburg, FL**

<http://www.eckerd.edu/servicelearning/>

Eckerd College is located in the most densely populated county in the fourth largest state in the country. The area in which the college is located--south St. Petersburg--contains a high concentration of low-income residents. South St. Petersburg suffers from a lack of jobs, adequate affordable housing, children's programs, healthy businesses, and many other community needs. The social service agencies that are present in the south side communities, particularly those for children, are often strained by a high volume of participants and a lack of adequate staff and funding. These agencies are doing the best job with the resources available to them but are greatly dependent on volunteers to help provide services. Eckerd College enjoys a high level of participation by its students in community service-learning. Service-learning has become a meaningful pedagogy among our faculty and a regular activity for our students outside of the classroom; however, there is room for growth in providing service to south St. Petersburg and other low-income areas of our city. Currently, students are involved with and provide volunteer support for a number of agencies working on the south side. They provide leadership, tutoring for children, mentoring for teens, administrative support, and other forms of service. The VISTA project will help strengthen the agencies working on the south side by better fostering a greater connection between the college and these agencies.

Member Duties: The objective of the VISTA project would be to strengthen the agencies working in south St. Petersburg by increasing student participation at these agencies using service learning as the main strategy. Participation by Eckerd students will help these agencies to provide services to the low-income areas of our city. With the VISTA project we will involve students in at least 3,000 more service hours in the next academic year. Students will help build the infrastructure of such agencies and enable them to better meet the needs of those they serve. Eckerd College will also strengthen local agencies by adding an alternative spring break service project focused on volunteerism at agencies working with low-income people. The VISTA member will also assist faculty in placing academic service-learning students in the community.

FASS/State Farm Service-Learning and Home Safety Initiative

Tallahassee, FL

www.fsu.edu/~fass

The Florida Alliance for Student Service (FASS) is a partnership between several statewide programs. These programs include-Florida Learn & Serve, Florida Campus Compact (FCC), the FASS VISTA Initiative, Community/ Higher Education/ School Partnership (CHESP) and the Florida Service Preparedness and Response Coalition (SPaRC). The goal of these programs is to increase opportunities for meaningful student service in Florida, based on the recognition that serving others also helps the server (student). Florida Learn & Serve oversees nearly 300 K-12 service-learning projects and 500+ service-learning mini-grants. FCC promotes the integration of service and service-learning into universities' and colleges' missions and curriculum to develop the values of citizenship. CHESP brings together college and K-12 students with community based organizations statewide to work collaboratively on service-learning projects to meet community needs. SPaRC engages students from kindergarten through higher education in service learning projects that focus on many areas including: disaster preparedness, school/community safety and senior safety. The FASS VISTA Initiative places VISTA members with K-12 and Higher Education institutions to coordinate volunteerism and service learning opportunities that create positive change in schools and communities. Many Florida Alliance for Student Service projects benefit low-income communities and the majority of the youth participating in these statewide initiatives are disadvantaged, at risk, and/or from low-income households.

Member Duties: Help coordinate the statewide program. Develop materials to promote home safety preparedness. Solicit grant applications from organizations that serve low-income communities in the areas of home safety and disaster preparedness education. Coordinate award competition, proposal review, selection and issuance of awards. Provide technical assistance, training, site visits, reporting, oversight, and evaluation to project sites across Florida.

Florida Campus Compact

Tallahassee, FL

www.floridacompact.org

FL|CC is a coalition of college and university presidents whose mission is to promote, support and advance college students' involvement in community service and service-learning programs. FL|CC will advance this mission by working with institutions of higher education and their communities to collaboratively solve locally identified problems ranging from student/adult literacy to neighborhood planning. Member campuses support and encourage administrators, faculty, staff and students to actively engage in their community through civic service. FL|CC works to enhance and support these efforts through training and technical assistance, grant programs and providing resources.

Member Duties: The FL|CC VISTA program will compliment our work by increasing the number of effective partnerships between community-based organizations, corporate community organizations and institutions of higher education. This program will work to decrease apathy and increase civic engagement among students, faculty and community members as well as proving that corporate organizations have a vested interest in their communities needs. The VISTA member will assist campuses in building and/or infusing their volunteer service centers by helping them to incorporate an online volunteer and service-learning tracking tool into their campus structure. This database will help provide more access to community involvement for students through volunteer and service-learning opportunities. This program will strengthen volunteer involvement in order to meet the daily needs of low-income populations and other difficult issues facing the local area through the community collaborations that are developed and sustained through a management system. The services provided by the VISTA member will directly benefit local non profits and low income communities by better equipping colleges with the training and information they need to successfully partner with their community,

meet identified needs, provide sustainable solutions, and report on the benefits of service-learning and volunteer projects in through a collegiate partnership.

Florida Impact
Tallahassee, FL
www.flimpact.org

Since 1979, Florida Impact has been dedicated to reducing hunger and poverty in Florida by enlisting the people of Florida to secure justice for and with those whose economic rights have not been realized. We also work to increase access to food and nutrition programs by conducting aggressive outreach strategies and public policy advocacy. Impact has shown a capacity for bringing more unused federal dollars into Florida to address hunger and under-nutrition. Our four current operational objectives are summer nutrition for children when school is out, greater participation in breakfast when school is in, easier access to food stamp benefits, and coordinated regional advocacy for federal food and nutrition priorities. These objectives will manifest as follows: 1) Assist community leaders to implement the provisions of the new Children's Summer Nutrition Act in six counties where children have had inadequate or no access to the federal summer food program; 2) Coordinate a second breakfast pilot in five Osceola County schools; 3) Work closely with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to revamp Impact's food stamp prescreening tool to conform with the state modernization plan's electronic application process; 4) Help the Southeast Anti-Hunger Consortium (SEAHC) organize a presence in Washington. Florida's low-income families benefit from the increased ease and access to federal programs these strategies provide.

Member Duties: The VISTA member will meet with and organize religious and community leaders in six north Florida counties, including high school and college-aged students. The VISTA will discuss the provisions of the new Children's Summer Nutrition law and strategies for setting up new summer food sites or extending the reach and length of operation of existing sites. The VISTA will help leaders to follow-up on commitments made in these initial meetings in each county as well as work with local media to educate the public about the potential federal dollars awaiting each county that runs a successful program. Meetings with school district superintendent and/or school board members will also be secured, so that the community leaders can convey their interest in complying with the new legislation; assess the school district's cooperation; and propose collaborations for summer food sites. If a school board indicates it will request an exemption to the law from the Florida Department of Education (DOE), the VISTA will assist community leaders in organizing families and media to provide public input at the required school board meeting. In one or two of the communities, as needed, Impact staff will provide on-site support once summer food sites open, e.g., helping leaders to fill out federal paperwork, advertise the program to parents, and run the day-to-day tasks of a site.

Human Services Coalition of Miami – Dade County
Miami, FL
www.hscdade.org

HSC's mission is to empower individuals and communities to create a more just and equitable society by promoting civic engagement, economic fairness, and access to health and human services. HSC conducts its work through coalition building, capacity building and innovation. Our focus communities are underserved, disempowered, and vulnerable people and communities, first in Miami Dade and then beyond. We invite them to partner with us to define and achieve shared goals. Specific programs include education and outreach on public benefits, leadership and advocacy training, and coordination of

Member Duties: The AmeriCorps*VISTA member will play an important role in our Greater Miami Prosperity Campaign (GMPC). Through the GMPC, the VISTA will work to help community groups and individuals empower themselves towards economic self-sufficiency. Specific duties include: (1) provide community

outreach through Benefits Bank software to ensure that people who are qualified for federal benefits are receiving them; (2) coordinate service-learners who will be conducting outreach to local groups using this software; and (3) develop a service-learning and civic engagement curriculum that will be beneficial to VISTA, Miami-Dade College students, the service-learners at HSC, and most importantly the community members that HSC serves.

I Have a Dream – Overtown

Miami, FL

www.ihad.org

The mission of I Have a Dream--Overtown, Inc. is to help children from low-income areas become productive citizens by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment, with an assured opportunity for higher education. The program is collaboration between the Center for Community Involvement at Miami-Dade College and the New-York based nonprofit I Have a Dream Foundation. The agenda of this program is simple, yet hands-on: nurture inner-city youth so they can take advantage of a full scholarship to college. To this end, the third grade class at Phillis Wheatley Elementary School will receive a grant from the Foundation and access to a full-time project coordinator, afternoon tutoring, and a summer program that helps them prepare for the following school year. In exchange, the students and their parents will sign a contract in which the families vow to stay on a productive educational path. All of these students who successfully complete high school in 2015 will receive a full scholarship to a state university from the I Have a Dream Foundation.

Member Duties: I Have a Dream--Overtown, Inc. is a holistic program. As such, the I Have a Dream--Overtown VISTA will have a large number of responsibilities related to helping to expand and sustain a multifaceted non-profit entity. Some of these duties include: introduce the concept of service-learning to teachers at Phillis Wheatley Elementary School; ensure that the teachers and students in the program participate in high quality service-learning projects that enhance classroom learning, help the community, and foster civic responsibility; help design a system to evaluate the effectiveness of service-learning; develop partnerships with Miami-Dade College's service-learning program; help the program coordinator create a sustainability plan; assist with grant writing and maintaining the after school program.

ManaTEENS

Arcadia, FL and Bradenton, FL

www.manateens.org

ManaTEEN LINK will increase school and civic engagement among students in De Soto and Manatee Counties.

Member Duties: 1) To increase civic engagement among middle school students and their families in SE Manatee County. 2) To increase school engagement among middle school students and their families in SE Manatee County. 3) Recruit student volunteers. 4) Create community Partnerships.

Miami-Dade College

Miami, FL

www.mdcc.edu/ci

The mission of Miami-Dade College's Center for Community Involvement is to (1) promote and support the ethic of service among students, faculty, and staff of M-DC and (2) connect the extensive resources of M-DC to the greater community. The Center coordinates all placement and ongoing support and holds continuous training sessions for faculty and for community agency volunteer supervisors who host the college's service-learning students. Our VISTA member will allow us, for the first time, to focus our efforts on one inner city neighborhood in order to make a more significant, well-planned, and sustainable impact. This project will allow

us to make tremendous strides in the areas of collaboration, partnership, and community transformation in the Overtown area of Miami.

Member Duties: Our VISTA member will greatly enhance our ability to improve the number and quality of service-learning partnerships with the Overtown community and it will forge important new partnerships between M-DC and its neighbors in Overtown. Specific duties will include: establish community partnerships between M-DC's Community Health Nursing class and Overtown agencies; create and implement system to facilitate placement of college volunteers in Overtown community agencies; provide support to M-DC Medical Center instructors and students; and assist faculty and community partners in developing and implementing service-learning projects.

New College of Florida
Sarasota, FL
www.ncf.edu

Founded in 1960 as a private college for academically talented students, New College became a public college in 1975 through a merger with the State University System of Florida. Today, as the state's independent honors college, New College of Florida retains its distinctive academic program and high standards, making it a college of choice for students who can manage the freedom and responsibility of designing their own education. It attracts highly motivated and self-directed students. (Current enrollment is approximately 750 students, all full-time; 80% are Florida residents. Historically, NCF students have tended to be civic-minded and environmentally concerned. Because NCF is situated almost adjacent to one of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of Sarasota, students have engaged in a number of volunteer and service-learning activities in that community. However, such projects and activities have never been systematically developed or promoted in either the neighborhood or within the campus community.

Member Duties: The VISTA member will work to develop of a comprehensive data-base of service-learning and associated opportunities in the communities surrounding NCF to better enable students and faculty members to enhance partnerships between the college and the communities.

Pensacola's Promise
Pensacola, FL
www.pensacolaspromise.org/

Pensacola's Promise mission is to unify the community to enhance the lives of youth. As a VISTA for Pensacola's Promise you will work with the Chain Reaction, the volunteer center for teenagers. Chain Reaction provides several services for our teenage members and to the community. Chain Reaction, recruits teenagers to volunteer in their community, identifies and develops volunteer opportunities for teenagers through non-profit organizations, hosts monthly meetings to train teenagers on how to become successful volunteers, sends weekly e-mails to members on volunteer opportunities, tracks all volunteer hours for each Chain Reaction member, and develops and sponsors Youth-led service projects for the community. The focus is on providing teenagers with appropriate service opportunities as well as providing a forum where they can become involved in solutions to community issues in a meaningful way. In only the third year of Chain Reaction, we have surpassed our goals and objectives. Pensacola's Promise has developed a volunteer program where teens in Escambia County feel they can make a difference. To date Chain Reaction has recruited over 850 teenagers interested in volunteering. Our Chain Reaction membership has grown to over 250 teens that perform approximately 7,000 hours of service per year. We have worked with over 30 nonprofits and performed 20 service projects ranging from Christmas Cards for troops in Iraq to running the local MTV Choose or Lose 20 Million Loud Campaign. It has been a banner year for Chain Reaction and we are anticipating continued growth.

Member Duties: The VISTA works closely with the Chain Reaction Director and is responsible for recruiting teenagers at local middle and high schools to join Chain Reaction, participate in preparation and running monthly meetings to train teenagers on how to become successful volunteers, sending weekly e-mails to members on volunteer opportunities, tracking all volunteer hours for each Chain Reaction member, and developing Youth-led service projects for the community. The VISTA is also involved in training teen members on ageing sensitivity, leadership plenty, volunteering 101 and SLIC (service learning impacting citizenship).

**Possibilities R Unlimited
Panama City, FL**

Possibilities R Unlimited is a Center based at Bay High School to train developmentally challenged adults between HS graduation and age 22 in basic work place skills.

Member Duties: 1) Set up Day Training and Small Business programs. 2) Mobilize volunteers and far-reaching support for the project. 3) Promote project sustainability and replication.

**Timber Creek High School
Orlando, FL**

<http://www.tchs.ocps.net/index2.htm>

The mission of the TCHS School of Service Learning is to promote the development of leadership skills and civic responsibility; to integrate and enhance academic curriculum; to build strong community partnerships; to put learning into action through meaningful service-learning projects that meet school and community needs; and to promote service-learning in the school and community. The school aims to bring relevance to subject matter as students put learning into action through meaningful service learning projects that meet actual school and community needs such as poverty and homelessness, literacy, and the promotion of safe choices and diversity. The School of Service Learning is partnering with over 40 community government, nonprofit agencies and businesses in Central Florida to achieve these goals. This VISTA project will serve the area's homeless population and the East Learning Community schools who have a high percentage of students who are at or below the poverty level. The project addresses two main challenges in our community. Students help to address issues of homelessness and poverty by staging a Hunger Banquet that educates and provides 2nd Harvest Food Bank with donations, sponsoring a sock hop that brings awareness to the situation and collects needed new socks for the estimated 5,000 homeless men, women and children living in the woods, and working at the Health Care Center for the Homeless, the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and the Second Harvest Food Bank. Students address a second community challenge, promotion of safe choices (drug, violence and bullying prevention) and diversity, by serving as mentors, peer mediators, tutors, and student assistants to over 300 at-risk students from the Student Success Program, COMPACT, and SAFE groups.

Member Duties: The VISTA member at Timber Creek High School will help to support and expand our student's efforts in addressing the community needs outlined above. Specific duties will include: (1) facilitate the Hunger Banquet and related homelessness and poverty projects sponsored by the School of Service Learning to increase community awareness and involvement; (2) work with the School of Service Learning Students to reduce violence, bullying and drug use and to promote diversity within TCHS, the 2 feeder middle schools and the 6 feeder elementary schools; and (3) strengthen and build district-wide partnerships between the School of Service Learning and community businesses, non-profit agencies and institutes of higher education to connect the school and community to work together to address the issues of homelessness and poverty and drug, violence and bullying prevention.

VII. VISTA FAQs

Q: How much money will I make?

A: The average is around \$840 per month before taxes. Specific amounts are based upon the poverty rate in the county you serve. Bi-weekly stipend = monthly stipend X 12 months divided 26 pay periods. Example, \$840 X 12 months = \$10,080/26 = \$387.70 is the amount of your bi-weekly stipend.

Q: Can I have another job?

A: No, VISTA is full-time volunteer opportunity. The expectation is that you will be available for VISTA service “24/7/365.” Depending upon your local site, you may be expected to travel or attend special evening or weekend events which may occasionally make your weekly schedule unpredictable.

Q: Can I take classes or be enrolled in school?

A: Yes and no. You cannot be enrolled as a full or part-time student at an educational institution. If you have a Pell Grant, you may be enrolled at an institution of higher education for the minimum number of hours required to maintain eligibility for a partial Pell Grant. Or, you may take one educational course that may be directly related to your VISTA project assignment. Advance permission from your project site, the FASS VISTA Director and the CNCS state office is required.

Q: I am relocating from out of state, will I receive help with relocation costs?

A: VISTAs relocating from out of state qualify for a one time \$550 relocation allowance, which subject to income tax. This is received 4 to 6 weeks after a VISTA has started their term of service. (FSU processes the relocation allowance.) In addition, there is a baggage/shipping allowance. The allowance based on direct mileage between two points, it is \$25 per 100 miles, rounded down to the nearest hundred, with a maximum of \$500. In all cases VISTAs must submit original receipts to the CNCS state office and payment should be received about one month after submission.

Q: I have student loans, do they qualify for forbearance?

A: This depends on the type of student loan. You are encouraged to contact your individual loan holder to see if your loans qualify. If eligible, interest will continue to accrue on your loans, but you will not be required to make payments during your term of service. CNCS may pay a portion of your accrued interest when you complete your term of service. Once again, this depends on your specific loan.

Q: Will I have health coverage?

A: Yes. Coverage begins automatically on your first day of VISTA service and applies only to you. Coverage includes payment of most medical and surgical costs, hospitalization, prescription drugs, and certain emergency dental, vision, and maternity care. A more detailed list of benefits is outlined in the Member Health Care Guide distributed by the AmeriCorps*VISTA health contractor (Seven Corners).

Q: What other benefits are there with this position?

A: You can qualify for either a \$4,725 education award or \$1,200 end of year stipend with the completion of a full year of service. You are entitled to 10 days of sick/personal leave and 10 days of vacation during your year service. These days are tracked using the VISTA Leave Report form which is submitted to the FASS office at the first of each month.

Q: Why did I receive two packets from FSU and the Corporation for National and Community Service regarding my payroll and service?

A: FSU is our fiscal agent. They manage our VISTA grant. Your living allowance check will come from FSU. It is important these forms are filled out in a timely fashion so there is no delay in pay. It is required that all VISTAs sign up for direct deposit
CNCS sends you a packet with paperwork including life insurance, W-4, W-5, direct deposit forms, and health insurance. You are required to fill out all of the forms for CNCS so they can enroll you in health insurance and reimburse you for travel related expenses.

Q: Where do I go to obtain bi-weekly pay summaries and other information about payroll and compensation history, etc?

A: This information can be obtained by using FSU's Online Management of Networked Information (OMNI) system at <http://www.omni.fsu.edu/>. You will be assigned a login name and password shortly after you begin your term of service. For information on how to use the OMNI system, please refer to the OMNI Employee Self Service Guide.

Q: When will I receive my first paycheck?

A: Refer to the FSU payroll calendar. Find your start date and then the correlating pay date in green. Updated versions of the calendar can be downloaded at <http://hr.fsu.edu/>.

Q: When will I receive my health insurance card?

A: You should receive a copy of your health insurance card 2-3 weeks after attending Pre-Service Orientation. Seven Corners is the provider for health care coverage, should you need access to medical benefits prior to receiving your card contact them at 866-699-4186 and the customer service representative should be able to send you a copy of your card via email. For a list of providers and claims forms visit <http://americorps.sevencorners.com/>.

Q: When will I receive my one-time relocation allowance? (Out-of-state VISTA candidates)

A: 4 to 6 weeks after you begin your term of service, it will be included in either your first or second stipend check from FSU. Remember you will also receive a separate mileage reimbursement from CNCS.

Q: Can FASS VISTA provide me with employment verification for food stamps, apartment, etc.?

A: Yes. Please send the appropriate forms and the FASS VISTA Director can verify your service. Assistance in obtaining the proper forms can be provided by the Florida Department of Children and Families visit their website at http://www.state.fl.us/cf_web/.

Q: Can FASS VISTA pay for a training opportunity for me?

A: FASS VISTA will provide funds for you to complete your Member Development Training (MDT) requirements at set forth by CNCS. The type of training and funding amount will be at the discretion of the FASS VISTA Director in consultation with you and your local site supervisor. For example, this training can take place in the form of an annual FASS VISTA In-Service Training or a local training opportunity identified by a local site supervisor. It is possible other training opportunities may become available throughout the year. If you are placed at a Higher Education project site, your local site has set aside \$750 for professional development to be used at the discretion of the local site supervisor. If you are a K-12 VISTA, we will have to see if your local site, FASS, or CNCS has available funds.

Q: Will CNCS pay for me to relocate back home when I complete my term of service?

A: Before you end your term of service, a CNCS Program Specialist will send you a form to fill out regarding relocation to your home of record. If flying, CNCS will buy the plane ticket. If driving, CNCS will send a check for mileage.

Q: When will I receive my \$1200 end of year stipend? (If you are not receiving an Education Award)

A: FSU will process your \$1200 stipend when you complete your term of service. It can take up to four weeks to receive the payment. It is important to keep your bank account open so that the stipend can be deposited.

Q: An immediate family member of mine has just died, can I receive help with getting a plane ticket home?

A: You can take up to 5 days of emergency leave (approved by CNCS) when an immediate family member dies. In most cases, CNCS can purchase a plane ticket. You will be reimbursed for actual travel expenses and will receive no additional allowances.