



Community Services Consortium's
'Building Bridges'
AmeriCorps*VISTA Program

An AmeriCorps* Intermediary Project sponsored by the Oregon State Office of the
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

Project Application
2010-2011 Program Year

Application Due Date

March 11, 2010 by 5:00 pm



Learn more about our program on the web at: www.communityservices.us (see AmeriCorps*VISTA)

WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE'RE HERE

CSC'S '*BUILDING BRIDGES*' AMERICORPS*VISTA PROGRAM:

INTRODUCTION

'*Building Bridges*', as we trust the name implies, is an opportunity for non-profit organizations to build bridges within their communities and to other like-minded organizations through capacity-building. The program is a partnership between the Oregon Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Community Services Consortium, all of our partner host-site organizations and of course, perhaps most importantly, the service minded individuals who commit a year of their life to the program. Together, the expertise of expanding partnerships allows for greater program growth and ultimately, improved and strengthened services to the communities and residents we all exist to serve.

Today, the CSC '*Building Bridges*' program is moving into its fifth year of operation. After recently reviewing our first four years, we were very pleased to find the substantial impact that our members have had at their host-site organizations across Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties. From helping partner non-profits raise well over \$1 million, to building a stronger corps of volunteers, to strengthening community relations and partnerships, we continue to see great potential through our collective effort. Since our project is regionally based, our ability to work closely with both members and supervisors at host-sites enables us to have a much larger impact than we might otherwise expect.

In the first two years of the '*Building Bridges*' Program, our members have:

- Raised over \$1.5 million in financial resources
- Recruited 870 community volunteers who have served 16,000 hours
- Created more than 300 community collaborations and partnerships
- Developed new programs to support family literacy, end homelessness, provide health and nutrition education, create mentoring opportunities and much more.

Monetary support for '*Building Bridges*' comes from two sources: first, the Oregon State Office for the Corporation for National and Community Services which provides a small \$15,000 to \$20,000 administrative grant and second, our host-site cost share contributions of \$5,950.00 each. As with many state and federally supported programs, the continuation of '*Building Bridges*' is annually contingent on approval of the application CSC submits to CNCS and on the federal funding available. From the County Commissioners who approve our operating the program to our community-based Advisory Committee that help to oversee it, and our partners who help to strengthen it — we continue to believe that this is a rare and increasingly cost-efficient opportunity for non-profits whose mission is to impact peoples lives and poverty, to expand their outreach and improve their services.

Should you have a project in mind or a program that needs the assistance of a full-time, committed person, then '*Building Bridges*' might just be for you. Explore us – and know we welcome you to join us. If you have any questions, please call us directly at 541-752-1010.

Sincerely,

Tom Cope, Program Supervisor

Tifani Erpelding, Program Coordinator

CSC's Mission: "...to help people in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties overcome the causes and conditions of poverty by providing services leading to productive and self-sufficient lives."

SECTION I: OVERVIEW

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a nationwide network of service programs that involves over 70,000 Americans annually to address the critical needs of our country. Members provide service in areas of education, public safety, health, and the environment. These volunteers commit themselves full-time for one year, in the communities they serve. To learn more about what AmeriCorps is doing in Oregon, please visit www.oregonvolunteers.org.

About AmeriCorps*VISTA

Since 1965, the AmeriCorps*VISTA program has been addressing the needs of impoverished communities and more than 146,000 people have worked with local organizations to address barriers that keep people and often their communities in poverty. In sum, VISTA programs and members build capacity in non-profit organizations and in communities to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Core Principles:

- **Anti-Poverty Focus** – The purpose of VISTA members is to support efforts to fight poverty. Any non-profit organization, educational institution, tribal or public agency with a program that is poverty-related in scope can apply to sponsor a VISTA project or host a VISTA member. The project’s goal should address helping individuals and communities out of poverty, not simply making poverty more tolerable through short term services.
- **Community Empowerment** – Organizations must ensure that their project engages residents of the low-income community in planning, developing, and implementing the project to ensure that is responsive and relevant to low-income residents’ ownership and self-help initiatives tapping inherent community strengths.
- **Capacity Building** – VISTA members *do not provide direct services to low-income individuals*, but rather work to increase the capacity of organizations that fight poverty. Through activities such as fundraising, establishing community volunteer systems, volunteer recruitment and management, community outreach, and partnership development, VISTA members mobilize local resources to achieve lasting solutions.
- **Sustainable Solutions** – VISTA members are a short-term resource to help sponsoring organizations address a new or existing program area related to their mission. Members help build the capacity of an organization to implement its anti-poverty program on its own after a period of time (typically three years).

How can VISTA help with capacity building?

A VISTA program, like *‘Building Bridges’* provides full-time members to non-profit, faith-based and other community organizations and public agencies to *create and expand programs that ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty*. Essentially, capacity building is the development of an organization’s core skills and capabilities, such as leadership, management, finance and fundraising, programs and evaluation, in order to build the organization’s effectiveness and sustainability. It is the process of assisting an individual or group to identify and address issues and gain the insights, knowledge and experience needed to solve problems and implement change.

VISTAs do not tutor children, or build homes, or feed the hungry (these are AmeriCorps State/National positions or direct service activities). Instead, VISTAs increase the ability of their host-site to do these things in more sustainable ways. VISTAs build and put programs and services in place. For example, systems and programs that help tutor children, build homes and feed the hungry. The support structures that VISTAs develop and the skills they transfer to others are “capacities” that the organization and the community keep after the VISTA project is over. All VISTAs help communities address poverty with lasting solutions.

Who are AmeriCorps*VISTA members?

VISTA members are *volunteers* that come from our communities or from across the region, state or country. They serve full-time for at least one year in the national service movement to help impoverished communities. They may be recent college graduates, retired persons, or someone looking for a career change. Although VISTA members will be different ages, genders, races, cultures and from different socioeconomic backgrounds, they all share the dedication to giving something back to the community and the mission of “getting things done.”

VISTA members are expected to live in the communities where they serve and they receive a monthly living allowance (\$858). In addition to the living allowance, they also receive healthcare benefits, loan forbearance and childcare (if eligible). The member may choose to receive either an end of service cash stipend (\$1,500) or an education award (\$5,530) upon successful completion of their term of service. In addition to receiving financial compensation at the end of service, members also receive the opportunity to develop new skills, develop lasting relationships, and the satisfaction of helping in the community.

What Can AmeriCorps*VISTA Members Do During Service?

In sum, they perform indirect capacity building activities that focus on creating sustainable projects. The following table gives examples of how indirect services provide capacity building and create sustainable programs.

| Indirect Service | Capacity Building | Sustainable Endeavors |
|---|--|---|
| Recruit Volunteers | Develop forms, volunteer assignments, training, etc. | Develop volunteer handbook |
| Train direct service providers | Write training curriculum or manuals, train trainers | Develop training manual and train the trainer curriculum |
| Coordinate projects | Develop procedures and systems | Develop volunteer management systems and procedural guides |
| Public speaking | Develop speakers' bureau | Develop community partnerships |
| Write press releases | Develop press kits, media databases | Secure and work with media partners |
| Write grants or organize fundraising events | Complete grant applications; develop alternative funding resources | Secure project funding for staffing, new technologies, etc. |
| Organize task forces & develop coalitions | Recruit members, develop leadership structures of task force/coalition | Create infrastructure |
| Conduct outreach | Design brochures, posters | Create mechanism for project evaluation |

SECTION II: 'Building Bridges' PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Host Site Eligibility Requirements: The following types of organizations are eligible to apply:

- Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status (community and faith-based organizations are encouraged to apply).
- Schools, school districts, educational service districts, colleges, universities, alternative schools and others.
- Government agencies: cities, counties, regional, state, tribal or federal agencies

Share of Cost to Administer the Program:

To continue our commitment to provide our host sites with qualified AmeriCorps*VISTA members and to provide professional development opportunities during the year, 'Building Bridges' requires our host sites to share in the cost of managing our program. The 2010 share of costs for hosting a 'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA member for one year is \$5,950.00 (per VISTA member requested). \$400.00 is non-refundable. **A deposit of \$750.00 is due on or before May 14, 2010.** These funds are used for training, travel, coordinating member recruitment and the administration of the 'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA program. In addition to the share of costs, host sites need to consider additional costs they may incur. These may include:

- Recruitment costs, such as advertising, printing, interview time, etc.
- Portion of the Site Supervisor's time and salary
- Additional project related training for VISTA member
- Mileage reimbursement for project related travel
- Additional travel (if required)
- Office supplies and equipment – computer, paper, ink cartridges, computer software, etc.
- Postage
- Office - space rent and utilities
- Telephone and long distance
- Additional project related expenses – web-hosting, publishing materials, professional dues, etc.

- VISTA member recognition

Sites are eligible to apply to host a VISTA project for up to three years. If your agency is moving into its fourth year of hosting a VISTA member and you still require VISTA resources, please contact **Tifani Erpelding at 541-758-2641** to discuss your options.

Management Expectations

Organizations are expected to comply with the following conditions and to provide the following support for the VISTA members they host. Projects must:

- Support people in Linn, Benton and/or Lincoln counties.
- Have an anti-poverty focus in need of indirect capacity building support.
- Ensure that host site has a Drug Free Work Place Policy and a Non-Discrimination Policy.
- Ensure the safety and well being of the member during the year of service.
- Work with the '*Building Bridges*' program coordinator in recruiting, selecting, training, supporting and supervising VISTA member.
- Provide each member with resources necessary to complete project. This can include work space, a desk, computer, printer, phone with long distance, Internet access, email, and access to a copy machine and fax machine. **If your organization is not able to provide these resources due to limited funding or agency size, contact Tifani Erpelding 541-758-2641 to discuss different options.**
- Allow members the use of an organization vehicle or mileage reimbursement if using personal vehicle while completing project-related responsibilities.
- Designate an on-site supervisor who will be responsible for supervising the VISTA member.
- Participate in all supervisor trainings provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the '*Building Bridges*' AmeriCorps*VISTA program. There are approximately three required training days scheduled throughout the year for supervisors. **Dates have yet to be determined, but they will be in Spring, early Summer and late August.**
- Work with '*Building Bridges*' program coordinator to design a well-defined VISTA Assignment Description that addresses the community need outlined in the application.
- Complete quarterly reports outlining measurable outcomes related to the VISTA Assignment Description that is achieved by VISTA member.
- Provide on-site orientation and training for VISTA member during the first two weeks of service. (Details regarding topics to cover at on-site orientation and training will be provided during site supervisor training prior to the VISTA member's arrival.
- Meet with VISTA member **at least weekly** to problem-solve and provide ongoing encouragement, guidance and support.
- Arrange for project-specific skills training for the VISTA member during the year (grant writing, volunteer management, etc).
- Allow VISTA members participation in '*Building Bridges*' trainings, national service day activities and other required activities.
- Participate in host site visits with VISTA member and '*Building Bridges*' program coordinator at least once a year to discuss project progress.
- Allow VISTA members to participate in two days of service with the '*Building Bridges*' program. The days are Make A Difference Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Host sites may not supplement an AmeriCorps*VISTA member's living allowance. (Provision of rental assistance or utility assistance paid directly to the landlord or utility company is acceptable, as are gift certificates, gas vouchers, etc.)
- Assure that no AmeriCorps*VISTA members participate in the following activities during their official duties during the year of service:
 - ⇒ Partisan and non-partisan political activities, including voter registration.
 - ⇒ Direct or indirect attempts to influence passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition.
 - ⇒ Labor or anti-labor organization or related activities.
 - ⇒ Religious instruction, worship services, proselytizing, or other religious activity as an 'assigned' official part of their duties.

Tentative Program Year Calendar

| | DATE(S) |
|---|--|
| Request for Proposal (RFP) available for interested applicants. | January 6, 2010 |
| Information sessions can be arranged in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Please contact Tifani Erpelding at (541) 758-2641 to arrange a time and location. | Between January 6, 2010 thru March 11, 2010. |
| Complete application due on or before 5:00 p.m. Sorry, late applications can't be considered. Early applications encouraged. | March 11, 2010 |
| Award notification to applicants | April 14, 2010 |
| Deposit of \$750.00 due to CSC from Host Sites | May 14, 2010 |
| Work with selected sites on member recruitment and planning | April 14-July 1, 2010 |
| Final date for VISTA member selection from host site | July 1, 2010 |
| Member attends Pre-Service Orientation required by the Corporation for National and Community Service | August 16-19, 2010 |
| First day at site for VISTA Member | August 20, 2010 |

Note: Dates are subject to change.

A detailed program calendar will be provided to your organization if selected as a host site.

Recruitment

'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA members are recruited and selected by both the 'Building Bridges' Program and the Host Site. **Host Sites are critical in the successful selection of an AmeriCorps*VISTA member.** Applicants participate in a two part interview process, one targeting their fit for AmeriCorps*VISTA and the other with the Host Site. The goal of this interview process is to identify a candidate who will be a strong match to the project and Host Site. Detailed recruitment information will be provided upon selection as a Host Site.

Project Duration

Member's term of service is a full year, 365 days, starting in mid-August 2010 and ending mid-August 2011 (exact dates TBD), based on availability of funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

SECTION III: SELECTION CRITERIA

AmeriCorps*VISTA host sites will be determined through a competitive application process. Applications are reviewed, scored, and ranked by a committee of community representatives. Selections will be based on the sum of points given for each section of the application. The total point value for each question is listed in bold at the end of the question.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be typed in 12 point font and submitted single-sided for ease of copying. A supplemental information packet is available at www.communityservices.us under AmeriCorps*VISTA. It is strongly encouraged that all applicants review the supplemental information prior to completing an application.

COVER PAGE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Please complete the cover page (following) with the signature of your authorized representative and **attach to the front of your application upon submission.**

PROJECT NARRATIVE – NOT TO EXCEED 5 PAGES

The narrative is your opportunity to provide a concise explanation of your project. The following sections are part of the Project Narrative: Project Details, Community Need, Results, VISTA Assignment Description & Position Description, Program Growth, and Continuing Programs. The VISTA Assignment Description, the VISTA Position Description and the information regarding continuing programs are NOT included in the 5 page maximum. **Please answer questions completely and follow a question and answer format.**

PROJECT DETAILS

25 Points

- A. Provide a detailed description of the project for which you are requesting a VISTA member. **25 Points Total**

COMMUNITY NEED

20 Points

- B. State in measurable and quantifiable terms the specific poverty-related needs the AmeriCorps*VISTA project will address, including the number of individuals affected by the problem(s). Use current and local statistical data. **15 Points Total**
- C. Describe how you identified the specific need in the community for the project. **5 Points Total**

RESULTS

20 Points

The overarching **GOAL** of the *'Building Bridges'* AmeriCorps*VISTA program is to ensure VISTA Members increase the capacity of organizations in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties to help alleviate poverty across our communities.

- D. Name at least **three** specific, measurable results of your project and explain how they lead to the achievement of poverty alleviation in your community. For example: Donations to project will increase by 15%. Five outreach events conducted each month. 25% more clients served due to an increase in volunteer hours. **15 Points**
- E. How do you plan to evaluate the impact (the results) your project has on the client's you serve? **5 Points**

VISTA ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION (VAD) & POSITION DESCRIPTION

20 Points

- F. VISTA members are required to have a VISTA Assignment Description before they leave for their Pre-Service Orientation and Training prior to starting their service. The VAD provides the members with the activities they are going to be working on during the year. Use template provided at the end of this document. **10 Points (See supplemental information packet for example.)**
- G. Please provide a position description for your VISTA position. The *'Building Bridges'* Program Coordinator uses the information from the position description to post information on the National AmeriCorps website and for additional recruitment. Use template provided at the end of this document. **10 Points (See supplemental information packet for example.)**

PROGRAM GROWTH

15 Points

- H. Describe how your agency plans to sustain the project after VISTA resources are no longer available. **10 Points**
- I. State how many years you anticipate needing AmeriCorps*VISTA resources. Provide a brief outline of your future project plans. **5 Points**

CONTINUING PROGRAMS (Complete this section ONLY if you have previously participated in the 'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA Program.)

- J. What results did you achieve on your VISTA project? Did you reach the outcomes outlined in your previous application? If no, explain why.
- K. How will your current proposal build upon the results your previous project achieved?

- L. The current AmeriCorps*VISTA Member will be asked to complete a confidential questionnaire regarding their experience on the project. Please have them contact Tifani Erpelding at 541-758-2641 to receive the questionnaire. It must be submitted by **March 11, 2010** by 5:00 p.m.

SECTION IV: GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Submit one copy of the signed, original application by 5:00 p.m. on **March 11, 2010** to Tifani Erpelding, Program Coordinator.

Submit application and any questions to:

Tifani Erpelding, Program Coordinator
'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA Program
545 SW 2nd Street, Suite A
Corvallis, OR 97333
(541) 758-2641 Telephone
terpelding@communityservices.us

Application Checklist

- Completed application cover page, including the signed and initialed Acknowledgement and Certification page, for each position requested
- Completed Project Narrative for each position requested
 - Project Details
 - Community Need
 - Results
 - VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) & Position Description
 - Program Growth
 - Continuing Programs (Only for programs who are currently hosting a VISTA Member)
 - VISTA Member Questionnaire (for Continuing Programs only)
- VISTA Assignment Description for each VISTA position
- Position Description for each VISTA position



Application Cover Page

SPONSORING AGENCY:

PROJECT TITLE:

MAIN PROJECT CONTACT & TITLE:

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

WEBSITE:

Site Supervisor Information (if different than above)

Name:

Phone:

e-mail:

Is the supervisor aware of the responsibilities required in supervising a VISTA member?

Yes No

Has your agency hosted an AmeriCorps*VISTA member before? Yes No

If yes, how many and when:

'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA Program is designated to serve Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties. Which county(s) is your project in? Check all that apply.

Linn Benton Lincoln

Transportation requirements for the VISTA project:

An organizational vehicle is available for the VISTA member to use for service activities. *Member must be covered by organization's vehicle insurance policy.*

Personal vehicle is required. Note: Mileage reimbursement for required project travel is required. Reimbursement rate must be at current employee level.

If applicable, have you discussed the AmeriCorps*VISTA position with your union representative?

Yes No N/A

'Building Bridges' requires a share of costs of **\$5,950.00** to administer the program.

Is your funding: Secured Pending

If funding is pending, when will it be secured? _____

Is the organization a non-taxable entity (documentation may be requested): Yes No

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS: Each must be initialed

_____ Our agency agrees to provide our AmeriCorps*VISTA member with resources necessary to complete the project. This can include work space, computer, internet access, e-mail and telephone.

_____ Our agency understands the 'Building Bridges' program requires members to participate in two national service days throughout the program year. We will support our VISTA member in their additional efforts of national service.

_____ Our agency understands the 'Building Bridges' program provides member development opportunities throughout the program year. We will support our member in their continued professional development.

_____ Our agency agrees to provide an on-site supervisor for our VISTA project who will be available to meet with the VISTA member at a minimum of one hour a week.

_____ Our agency understands there may be additional costs, to be covered by our agency, for project related mileage reimbursement, project related training and development for the member and for supplies and materials necessary to develop the project.

_____ Our agency understands members may not participate in the following activities as part of their official duties: partisan and non-partisan political activities, direct or indirect attempts to influence legislation, labor or anti-labor activities, and/or religious instruction, worship services, proselytization or any other religious activity.

_____ Our agency agrees not to supplement our members living allowance with cash and will assure that others do not do so.

_____ Our agency certifies that this AmeriCorps*VISTA position will not displace any current employees or positions. VISTA members cannot perform activities that would otherwise be part of another employee's assigned responsibilities.

_____ Our agency certifies that it has an active Drug Free Work Place Policy.

_____ Our agency certifies that it has an active Non-Discrimination Policy.

By initialing above and signing below, our agency agrees to perform all actions and support all intentions in the acknowledgments and certifications.

Sponsoring Agency: _____

Name & Title of Authorized Representative: _____

Signature and Date: _____

***'Building Bridges'* AmeriCorps*VISTA Program
VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)**

Host Site:

Project Summary:

Project Logistics:

Date:

| |
|--|
| Goal: <i>'Building Bridges'</i> AmeriCorps*VISTA Members will increase the capacity of organizations in Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties to help alleviate poverty across our communities. |
|--|

| |
|-------------------|
| Objective: |
|-------------------|

| Activities | Steps to Complete Activities | Expected Outcomes | Actual Outcomes | Timeline |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Activity 1: | | | | |
| Activity 2: | | | | |
| Activity 3: | | | | |

***'Building Bridges'* AmeriCorps*VISTA Program**
Position Description

Organization: Include the organization name, program name and website, if applicable.

Position Title: Create a position title that is clearly distinct from staff – such as Educator, Specialist, or Project Coordinator.

Location: Street address and city. Also include if travel is required.

Mission: List mission statement of the organization

Summary of Position: Provide an overview of the position.

Essential Responsibilities: List the essential responsibilities and activities that the VISTA member will focus on.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Benefits:

- A monthly living allowance of \$858 (before taxes)
- An education award of \$5,350 OR a stipend of \$1,500 upon successful completion of service
- Health Care for member
- Relocation allowance (if eligible)
- Loan forbearance on qualified student loans
- Interest accrual payment on qualified student loans
- Child Care (if eligible)
- Training and Professional Development
- Non-competitive eligibility for federal government service (for one year after service)

Additional Benefits: If your organization is able to offer additional perks to your VISTA member(s) list them here. This can include free bus pass, gas card, access to fitness center, rental subsidy, discount child care, etc. Please note that you are not able to provide your VISTA member with a cash supplement to their living allowance. **This is not a requirement.**

Preferred Qualifications: While members are not required to have an educational degree, you may list a degree as a preferred qualification if you feel it would be helpful to have a background in a particular area.

Contact Information: Tifani Erpelding, Program Coordinator, 541-758-2641
terpelding@communityservices.us or Name, phone and e-mail of person who will review applications and interview candidates. This person should also be equipped to respond to inquiries from applicants about the position.