



**NC Hunger Corps
AmeriCorps VISTA Project
Request for Proposals 2024-2025**

A COMPLETE AND SUBMITTED PROPOSAL SHALL INCLUDE:

- [Submitted Online Application Form](#)
- Host Site Letter of Support (example on page 12)
- Community Partner Letter of Support (if applicable)
- Host Site Supervisor Resume
- Up to 3 pages of additional supporting documentation (optional)

ABOUT THE NC HUNGER CORPS

The NC Hunger Corps supports programs and organizations that address food access and healthy eating among low-income children, families, individuals, and college campus communities (students, staff, faculty) while developing opportunities for higher education civic and community engagement. Food insecurity among low-income children and families in North Carolina is well-documented. Approximately 170,200 people in our state receive emergency food assistance weekly while almost a third of NC food pantries have turned people away for lack of available food.

According to 2021 Feeding America data, 1 in 7 people in North Carolina struggles with hunger and 1 in 5 children struggles with hunger. A 2021 fact sheet from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities showed that 13.1% of North Carolina households were food insecure or struggled to afford a nutritionally adequate diet. According to the Budget & Tax Center's "Hunger in the Tar Heel" report (October 2016), North Carolina has the 8th highest rate of food insecurity in the nation. Of families served by food banks, 42% have had to choose between buying food and heating their home, and 35% have had to choose between paying for food or their rent.

Hunger is also a prevalent issue among college students. In an April 2018 report from the University of Wisconsin's HOPE Lab, "Still Hungry and Homeless in College," researchers found that 42 percent of community college students said they were food-insecure within the last 30 days of taking the survey, and just under one-third said they skipped a meal within the last 30 days because they did not have enough money.

This data grew when the Hope Center conducted the “#RealCollege Survey” in the fall of 2018 at 123 two and four-year institutions across the United States. Results from that survey revealed that 45% of the 86,000 student respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days while 56% of student respondents were housing insecure in the previous year, an issue intersecting and contributing with food security. This survey data is outlined in the April 2019 report, “College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report.”

In 2013, a study conducted by a UNC Pembroke sociology class found that 45.5% of the students in the study were experiencing "very low food security" in which they reported multiple indicators of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. In April 2014, the Washington Post reported that college administrators are finding hunger on campus, especially at schools enrolling many low-income and first-





generation students. A January 2014 study of Western Oregon University students put this number at 59%.

NC Hunger Corps VISTAs may support on-campus or off-campus food security programs, including programs that target low-income and/or disadvantaged college students and staff. These programs may include campus or community gardens, food recovery efforts modeled on the Campus Kitchen Project or the Food Recovery Network, campus-based or community-based food pantries/banks, and fresh produce distribution (mobile markets). Hunger Corps members may also work to raise awareness about nutrition and healthy eating.

ABOUT NCCE & AMERICORPS VISTA

The NC Hunger Corps is a project of [North Carolina Campus Engagement](#) (NCCE), a collaborative network of colleges and universities committed to educating students for civic and social responsibility, partnering with communities for positive change, and strengthening democracy.

The NC Hunger Corps is part of NCCE’s [AmeriCorps VISTA program](#), a federally sponsored national service program. [VISTA \(Volunteers in Service to America\)](#) members serve full-time for one-year to build the capacity of non-profit, governmental, and educational organizations and programs designed to lift individuals and communities out of poverty.

ELIGIBILITY

NCCE’s member campuses may apply and/or community-based 501c(3) non-profit organizations or agencies may apply in partnership with a member campus partner to host an NC Hunger Corps member for the 2024-2025 project year, with the expectation for renewed placement in subsequent project years. Applications for VISTA member placements are annual and required for all sites (new and renewing).

PROJECT AND PROPOSAL GUIDANCE

PROJECT GOALS

NC Hunger Corps members will work with host and partner sites to accomplish these project goals:

1. Increase human and financial resources to build capacity of food security and healthy eating programs that serve low-income individuals, families, communities, and campuses.
2. Increase opportunities for college and university students, faculty, and staff to engage with and support local programs and partners that address hunger.

BECOMING A “HOST SITE”

The following types of organizations may apply to become an NC Hunger Corps host site:

1. College or university that:
 - Operates or seeks to develop a campus-based food security or healthy eating program serving low-income individuals, including students or community members.
 - Supports or seeks to support a community-based food security or healthy eating program serving low-income individuals or communities.





- is a current member of NCCE.
2. 501c(3) non-profit or governmental organization that:
- Operates or seeks to operate a community-based food security or healthy eating program serving low-income people or communities.
 - **Applies in partnership** with a college or university member of NCCE.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

A VISTA’s time and effort may be directed to building the capacity of a community-based food access/food security organization, in which case both the campus and community partner will play a role in directing, supporting, and evaluating the project. One partner will be designated as the Host Site (or the project lead) and one will be designated as the Partner Site.

The organizations should assign a staff member to serve as the Corps member’s **supervisor** (“host site”) or **adviser** (“partner site”), and both organizations shall collaborate in clarifying the Corps member’s work plan and activities.

The host site should complete and submit the proposal, in collaboration with the partner site. **Both** organizations should also submit a letter of support. A sample support letter is provided in this packet.

HOST & PARTNER SITE EXPECTATIONS

A \$5,000.00 (for four-year institutions and community organizations) or \$3,000.00 (for two-year institutions) administrative fee is required to place an NC Hunger Corps member. The host and partner sites are free to decide if and how to share this fee and other associated costs of the placement.

We strongly encourage potential partners to discuss plans for the NC Afterschool Corps placement prior to applying. We recommend using the **partnership development worksheet** at the end of this packet to help with the discussion.

While the project is designed as a bi-lateral project between one campus and one community-based organization, either the host or partner could be a “multi-site” organization. For example, a local college office of civic engagement could host a Hunger Corps member who works with Communities in Pantries to build capacity at two different community locations. Only in special cases with experienced VISTA sites could multi-lateral partnerships (between 3 or more organizations) be considered.

PLEASE NOTE: It is possible for a host site to request the **placement of more than one member.** Placement of multiple members depends on the nature and extent of the projects planned by the site and on the availability of positions in our cohort. Placement of a second member does not require a separate application, but the role/activities of each member should be clarified in the relevant application narratives. The site must pay two administration fees and prepare two-member work plans.





How do host sites benefit from hosting an NC Hunger Corps member?

- Select and supervise a full-time VISTA volunteer to build organization and program capacity for 1-year term of service (human resource valued at \$35,000.00), with option to renew placement
- Increase resources to address local food access and security
- Increase community awareness of food security programs/issues and national service programs.
- Increase opportunities for community engagement of college students, faculty, and staff
- Build or strengthen campus-community partnerships

What commitments do host/partner sites make?

- **For four-year institutions and community organizations, an administrative fee of \$5,000 per Corps member to NCCE.** The administrative fee, which is paid to North Carolina Campus Engagement, goes to cover program costs including cost share payments required by AmeriCorps VISTA.
- **For two-year institutions, an administrative fee of \$3,000 per Corps member to NCCE.** The administrative fee, which is paid to North Carolina Campus Engagement, goes to cover program costs including cost share payments required by AmeriCorps VISTA.
- **Provide housing support of \$250 - \$550 per month, or in-kind housing support,** such as on-campus housing. Per AmeriCorps guidelines, this support may not be paid to the member directly. **Additional info below.**
- **Reimburse member for “service-related travel”** (not commuting) required by host site, according to host site’s travel reimbursement policy. Alternatively, the host site may provide the VISTA member a pass to utilize public transportation where available.
- Provide the VISTA with office space, computer, phone access, email account, and office supplies.
- Participate in the recruitment and selection of Corps member candidates.
- Develop the VISTA member VAD work plan and set performance goals.
- Review, sign and abide by terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- **Host site:** designate a **supervisor** to oversee and advise the Corps member. The supervisor must:
 - Prepare the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) and performance measures and submit on-time to NCCE
 - **Attend supervisor orientation** prior to service term and participate in occasional supervisor calls
 - Conduct weekly supervision meetings with Corps member
 - Monitor Corps member work hours, leave, and progress reports
 - Conduct performance evaluations
 - Assist in organizing a grant monitoring site visit at least once per year
- **Partner site:**
 - Designate an adviser to facilitate Corps member work at partner site.

VISTA MEMBER HOUSING SUPPORT

NCCE strongly encourages host sites to provide housing support to the VISTA member. The recommended support should fall in the range of \$250-\$550/month depending on local housing costs. If this support does not cover the entire monthly rent amount, the VISTA must use a portion of their living





allowance to make up the difference. Some campuses choose to provide on-campus housing, either at no-cost to the member or at a subsidized rate, with the VISTA member paying the difference. More info on VISTA housing support is provided in the [VISTA Member Handbook](#):

“One of the three fundamental assumptions of AmeriCorps VISTA is that the skills and energies of AmeriCorps VISTA members are used most effectively when they live and work with the low-income people they are serving. In keeping with this philosophy, members are expected to secure housing using their living allowance (and any additional provided support), which is provided to cover the basic costs of food, housing, and utilities. Members should look for housing within the community to which they are assigned. Because members' living allowances are limited, they are allowed to accept offers of free or low-cost housing made by community members, local organizations, educational institutions, or sponsoring organizations.

Some examples of housing that VISTA members may accept include:

- A community resident offers unused free housing space to the member because he or she is proud to have an AmeriCorps VISTA member in the community.
- A local business wants to offer a vacant apartment over the shop area.
- A national housing company offers reduced-rate housing for volunteers who are serving in a given community and the member meets the eligibility requirements.
- A local, state, or federal government agency provides free or low-cost housing in areas with limited housing opportunities.
- A sponsoring organization rents housing space on the member's behalf.
- A sponsoring organization allows the member to occupy a portion of existing space the sponsor already owns or rents.

Under no circumstances may the VISTA member accept money directly from a host site to supplement their living allowance or pay for rent or mortgage. **All housing support must be paid directly to the landlord, leasing agent, or mortgage holder.**

Accepting free or reduced-cost housing may increase the amount of the member's reportable income for tax purposes. If the member receives housing assistance, they may receive a 1099 form to aid them in reporting this on their tax return.

Members are also fully responsible for any legal or financial issues with their landlord (e.g., the project closes and you owe money on your lease). (Source: [VISTA Member Handbook, Chpt. 14](#))





ADMINISTRATIVE FEE SCHEDULE AND REFUND POLICY

To cover program costs, NCCE charges host site organizations an administrative fee. The 2024-2025 fee is \$5,000 (four-year institutions and community organizations) and \$3,000 (two-year institutions) and the fee schedule is:

- \$1,000.00 – First payment due with signed Memorandum of Understanding by March 31st, 2024.
- \$4,000.00 or \$2,000.00 – Balance due by June 30th, 2024.

The initial \$1,000.00 installment is non-refundable and is required before NCCE will begin screening potential VISTA candidates for a host site.

NC Hunger Corps members serve for 12 months, and the federal VISTA program incentivizes this commitment by making the End-of-Service benefits (e.g. education award) contingent on completing a full term. Still, a member may choose to exit the program early. AmeriCorps expects programs to backfill and recruit a new VISTA to replace any member who exits early. NCCE will work with host sites to support recruiting for a new member.

In rare situations when members exit early *and are not replaced*, NCCE will follow this policy:

Four-Year Institutions and Community Organizations:

- If the site is unable to recruit a member, \$4,000.00 will be refunded.
- If time served is greater than 1 week, but ≤ 3 months, site will be refunded $\frac{3}{4}$ of \$4,000.00 = \$3,000.00
- If time served is greater than 3 months, but ≤ 6 months, site will be refunded $\frac{1}{2}$ of \$4,000.00 = \$2,000.00
- If time served is greater than 6 months, but ≤ 9 months, site will be refunded $\frac{1}{4}$ of \$4,000.00 = \$1,000.00
- If time served is 9 months or greater, no portion of the fee will be refunded.

Two-Year Institutions:

- If the site is unable to recruit a member, \$2,000 will be refunded.
- If time served is greater than 1 week, but ≤ 3 months, site will be refunded $\frac{3}{4}$ of \$2,000.00 = \$1,500.00
- If time served is greater than 3 months, but ≤ 6 months, site will be refunded $\frac{1}{2}$ of \$2,000.00 = \$1,000.00
- If time served is greater than 6 months, but ≤ 9 months, site will be refunded $\frac{1}{4}$ of \$2,000.00 = \$500.00
- If time served is 9 months or greater, no portion of the fee will be refunded.

THE VAD AND CORPS MEMBER ACTIVITIES

The service of VISTA members is guided by the VAD – the VISTA Assignment Description. The VAD is a work plan that provides a broad outline of VISTA member’s objectives and associated activities. The VAD should break down the goals identified in your proposal into a realistic set of activities.





According to federal guidelines, AmeriCorps VISTA members, including NC Hunger Corps members, **generally may NOT provide direct service as a main focus of their service.** This means our Corps members cannot – as a general rule – work directly with service “beneficiaries” or clients, including providing one-on-one assistance, distributing or picking up food, or providing similar services.

Instead, Corps member activities should build organization or program capacity through activities related to process improvement, program development, needs assessment, volunteer recruitment and training, resource development and fundraising.

CAPACITY-BUILDING vs. DIRECT SERVICE

Direct Service provides immediate, hands-on solutions to help people in need. These can include activities like tutoring, performing manual labor, teaching, doing clerical work, or counseling. Below are examples of tasks performed by two different AmeriCorps programs. These two task lists illustrate the difference between a capacity-building AmeriCorps VISTA position and a direct service AmeriCorps State position.

<p>SHARECorps AmeriCorps VISTA members work on capacity-building initiatives that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting and training new community trainers who will train benefits counselors across the state • Creating educational materials • Writing grants and soliciting in-kind donations • Recruiting and coordinating volunteers for multiple projects, including community gardens, donation bins, and food banks 	<p>HarvestCorps--AmeriCorps State members work on direct service activities that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing Benefit Bank applications for program participants • Assisting with free electronic tax filing • Delivering food to clients through childhood anti-hunger initiatives such as the BackPack program • Offering evening meals, tutoring, and enrichment activities for the Kid's Cafe program
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While most VISTA member work is not direct service, according to VISTA program guidance: “On occasion, they may perform limited direct service activities if such activities are: incidental to the activities required under their VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) duties; a part of a term-limited special initiative such as National Days of Service; or a necessary part of VISTA training activities.”

To accomplish the project goals, NC Afterschool Corps members may undertake the following key capacity-building activities over the course of the service year:

1. Recruit volunteers from campus and community
2. Train volunteers to serve with afterschool program
3. Support fundraising and/or grant-writing activities, as directed by Hunger Corps program staff
4. Plan and implement a “Light on Hunger” event to raise community and campus awareness of food insecurity.
5. Plan and implement a National Day of Service event to raise community and campus awareness of community service.

VISTAs are not limited to this list of activities. Host sites may identify other capacity building activities and projects for the VISTA.





PERFORMANCE MEASURES

When designing your VISTA project, you must consider which performance measures will be used to track progress. The AmeriCorps VISTA program defines several performance measures which may be applied to your project. Members will report their progress monthly, with support from campus and community partners.

NC HUNGER CORPS MEMBER TERMS & CONDITIONS

All VISTA members, including NC Hunger Corps members, commit to 1 year (12 months) of full-time (35+ hours/week) service at a host site. VISTAs keep the regular work hours of the host site but may be called on to work evenings and weekends as the project demands. VISTAs typically serve a 40-hour week but must serve a **minimum** of 35 hours per week.

To serve in the NC Afterschool Corps program, candidates should have at least an Associate's degree (2-year), though exceptions can be made for a qualified candidate who may not meet the education requirements, and must be a U.S. Citizen or lawful permanent resident. Candidates may be recruited from the local community by host and partner sites, by NCCE through state networks, and from applicants to the position via the national AmeriCorps.gov online portal.

All VISTAs are part of the AmeriCorps National Service initiative and receive the following benefits provided:

- **Living allowance** of \$62.69/day, paid bi-weekly installments of \$877.66 –paid directly to VISTAs by AmeriCorps (updated 01/22/2024)
- Upon completing service, **Segal Education Award** of \$6,895.00 or **end of service stipend** of \$1,800 (updated 01/22/2024)
- **Settling-In Allowance** after returning the Relocation Allowance Request Form = \$750 (updated 01/22/2024)
- **Paid sick leave** (10 days) and **personal leave** (10 days), **plus holidays observed by the host site (excluding “university fall, winter, spring, and summer breaks and/or breaks that exceed TWO concurrent days off for any holiday)**
- **Health care benefits** provided by AmeriCorps
- **Loan deferment/forbearance** while enrolled in the program (depending on lender)
- **Relocation bonus** if moving more than 50 miles to serve
- **Professional training opportunities**

Corps members should also receive housing assistance from the host or partner site, should have access to training opportunities offered by the host site and NCCE, and will become part of a network of NCCE VISTA alums.

While serving as a VISTA, members **MAY NOT**:

- be a full-time student (they may take classes with supervisor and NCCE permission)
- hold outside employment that interferes with VISTA duties. They may pursue part-time employment **with supervisor and NCCE permission**, if the 2nd job is not with the host or partner site
- provide direct service (except in VERY limited capacities)
- provide services that would displace or supplant paid staff, contractors, or existing volunteers





- engage in restricted political activities, including non-partisan voter registration, lobbying, labor organizing, and political fundraising
- provide religious instruction or conduct worship as part of their VISTA duties
- receive any direct payments from host site or partner, or than permitted travel reimbursement
- perform duties that fall outside the scope of the VISTA work plan
- provide general support for “service-learning programs.” VISTA guidance states:

The use of service-learning as a pedagogy for improving the success of economically disadvantaged students is appropriate. However, service-learning as a single focus program area is not permissible. The placement of VISTAs at colleges and universities to only serve their [general] student populations or to build the capacity of the college or university is not appropriate.

All VISTA projects working in this area, including service-learning projects, must: (1) focus on building the capacity of low-income communities, schools, and organizations; and (2) support them to develop sustainable connections to the resources available at institutions of higher education.

PROPOSAL SELECTION

Proposal selection is competitive, based on alignment with NC Hunger Corps project goals and evidence of host site commitment. Applicants must complete all sections and submit all documents for consideration. Please note that **submitting an application does not guarantee a VISTA member placement.**

NCCE may identify alternative host sites if appropriate.

Selected sites will be required to attend trainings intended to prepare host sites to write the VISTA member work plan and to develop a site-specific orientation and training plan to guide onboarding at the host/partner site. Selected sites will also sign a Memorandum of Agreement outlining terms and conditions of the member placement and a Housing and Other Support Agreement outlining the support host site will provide to the VISTA throughout the service year.

PLEASE NOTE: Placement of Corps members is contingent on NCCE’s successful grant application, on availability of federal funds, and on the **host site’s timely recruitment and selection of an eligible VISTA member.**

SITE / MEMBER SELECTION AND PLACEMENT TIMELINE

- Host site application released – January 10th, 2024
- Host site application & supporting materials due – February 19th, 2024 (for best consideration).
- Host sites announced – March 2024
- VISTA Recruitment Begins – application release for applicants February 19th, 2024 (*target site placements won’t begin until initial instalments have been paid)
- Memorandum of Understanding and \$1000.00 initial installment due – March 31st, 2024
- Priority Deadline for VISTA candidates to apply – May 31st, 2024





- Final date for VISTA candidate selection – June & July 2024 for July & August start dates (AmeriCorps requires candidates to be submitted 1 month prior to start date in the AmeriCorps system)
- \$4,000.00 or \$2,000.00 remaining admin fee balance due – June 30th, 2024
- Host Site Supervisor Orientation – June 2024 (date to be announced)
- VISTA Orientation at Elon University or virtual pending orientation group – will depend on majority starting times, but typically always takes place the week prior to the VISTA’s start date.
- First day of VISTA service on site:
 - Monday, July 15th, 2024 (candidate recommendation form due by June 17th)
 - Monday, July 29th, 2024 (candidate recommendation form due by July 1st)
 - Monday, August 12th, 2024 (candidate recommendation form due by July 15th)
 - Monday, August 26th, 2024 (candidate recommendation form due by July 29th)

**The above are expected dates. Actual dates may vary slightly as these are scheduled by AmeriCorps regional VISTA office and subject to their calendar updates and changes.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Any institution or organization needing technical assistance or additional support with the host site application process should contact Christina Wittstein, VISTA Program Manager at cwittstein@ncengage.org.

A COMPLETE AND SUBMITTED PROPOSAL SHALL INCLUDE:

- [Submitted Online Application Form](#)
- Host Site Letter of Support (example on page 12)
- Community Partner Letter of Support (if applicable)
- Host Site Supervisor Resume
- Up to 3 pages of additional supporting documentation (optional)





DEVELOPING CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WORKSHEET

To be completed by both campus and community partners.

Examining Assumptions & Expectations

1. Why am I interested in this partnership?
2. What expectations do I have of a partnership with this organization?
3. What barriers could this partnership encounter and how might we overcome those barriers?

Getting Started

4. What do we need to know about one another and our organizational settings to start a partnership?
5. What experience does the campus have in working with partner or similar community-based organizations?
6. What experience does the community organization have in working with college students and/or campus programs?
7. How would college students, faculty, or staff best be involved in the community organization? In what work would they be engaged?





8. What strengths does each partner bring? What potential challenges exist?

9. Who will be involved from each partner and what will be their roles and responsibilities?

10. What structures or systems should be put in place to maximize the potential for success (e.g. regular meetings, evaluation, time on site, celebratory events)?

Sustaining the Partnership

11. How will we know if the partnership is meeting goals and expectations of all partners? What will success or progress on the partnership or project look like in one year? Three years?

12. What challenges might we encounter in sustaining a partnership?

13. How will we resolve conflict or challenges as they arise?

14. What strategies can we develop to protect the partnership from vulnerabilities such as staffing changes and/or resource limitations?

Adapted From: Jones & Palmerton. (2010). How to Develop Campus-Community Partnerships. In Jacoby & Mutascio (Eds.) *Looking In Reaching Out: A Reflective Guide for Community Service-Learning Professionals*. Boston, MA: Campus Compact.





SAMPLE HOST / PARTNER SITE LETTER – TO BE SUBMITTED BY DIRECTOR OR HIGHER-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVE WITH AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS ON BEHALF OF ORGANIZATION.



(Your campus or organization letterhead here)

Month Day, 2024

Leslie Garvin, Executive Director
North Carolina Campus Engagement
2257 Campus Box
Elon, NC 27244

Dear Ms. Garvin,

I am writing to express my full support for the NC Hunger Corps Project Proposal. We are excited by this opportunity to work with HOST/PARTNER SITE to support the work of an AmeriCorps VISTA member who will assist us in strengthening food security programs in our community and creating more opportunities for college students, faculty, and staff to engage in community-based service and learning.

This project is important to HOST/PARTNER SITE because

Through our organization’s participation in the NC Hunger Corps project, HOST/PARTNER SITE expects to accomplish

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Vice Chancellor for Community Engagement
State University

