

# Application Instructions

## Minnesota Literacy Council AmeriCorps VISTA



Here are some instructions and tips to ensure that your AmeriCorps application is completed correctly.

### Creating your My.AmeriCorps profile

1. When you find a position you're interested in applying for, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click "Apply Now."



2. A dialogue box will appear, asking you if you would like to register with the system. Click "OK."



3. This will open a new page. Enter all the relevant information. When you click "Next" a dialogue box will appear asking you to confirm that the information entered matches the information on your state issued ID. Double check that it matches, then click "OK."



4. On the next page, when you get to the prompt "Earliest Availability Date," be sure you enter a date that is *before* the start date of the position you're interested in (if you will be available then).

Similarly for the “Last Availability Date” prompt, be sure you enter a date that is *after* the end date of the position you’re interested in.

The image shows a portion of a USPS application form with the following fields and values:

- \* City of Birth: Decorah
- State of Birth: IOWA
- \* Country of Birth: United States of America
- \* Gender: Female
- \* Earliest Availability Date: 06/01/2018 (mm/dd/yyyy)
- \* Last Availability Date: 09/30/2019 (mm/dd/yyyy)
- Available indefinitely:
- \* Are you moving within the next six months?  yes  no
- \* Move Date: 05/30/2018 (mm/dd/yyyy)

Two callout boxes provide instructions:

- An arrow points to the Earliest Availability Date field with the text: "Enter date before first day of service".
- An arrow points to the Last Availability Date field with the text: "Enter date after last day of service term".

5. On the next page, be sure you list a mailing address where you can receive mail. You will have to re-enter the information for your permanent address, even if it is the same.
6. Here you’re also required to enter a 4 digit “zip code extension.” We recommend looking up your zip code on the USPS website: <https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action> Even if you enter the correct zip code extension, it may send you back to the page and say the zip code is incorrect. It will have a suggested zip extension. Enter that in the relevant sections, and then click “next.”

\* Street address 1: [REDACTED]  
Street address 2: [REDACTED]  
\* City: Minneapolis  
\* State: MINNESOTA  
\* Zip code: 55407 - 0000

System recommends this address  
[REDACTED]  
Minneapolis MN 55407-1794  
 Keep your address  
 Enter new address

\* Preferred Phone: [REDACTED] (e.g. 555-555-5555)  
Is this an international phone number? Click here.

7. The next page asks for information on your skills and the languages you speak. Check any skills that you have training in or experience with. Be aware that when you create an application you will be asked to elaborate on all the skills you list here.
8. Click “Finish.” A dialogue box will appear that says “Please login and create an application.” Click “OK.” You’ll see a screen that says an email has been sent to you – that means you’ve successfully completed your profile, **but you do not yet have a My.AmeriCorps account.**

You will need to elaborate on each of the skills you have selected. This is not an exhaustive list of skills. If you have additional skills, please enter the skill in the 'other' field below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Business/Entrepreneur	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Computers/Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts/Crafts
<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising/Grant Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Law
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Tutoring
<input type="checkbox"/> Trade/Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing/Editing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services	
<input type="checkbox"/> Team Work		

Other:

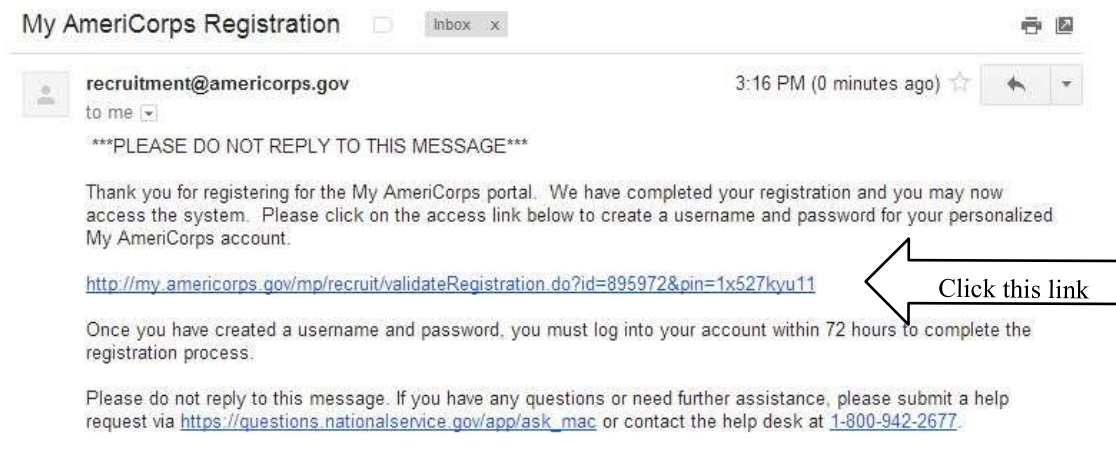
In the space provided below, please provide any additional interest, skill, experience, or additional information that may be helpful in evaluating your application.

200 characters left



## Creating a My.AmeriCorps account

1. An email will go to the address you listed on the first page. Go to that email and click the "Access Link" to create a login.



2. You'll be asked to verify some of the information you entered, and then to create a username and password. The website has *very* strict password rules. *Your password must:*
  - Be at least 12 characters long
  - Contain at least 1 number
  - Contain at least 1 special character (!#&\*)



- Contain both upper and lower case letters
- Not repeat any previous passwords (if you've applied before)
- Not contain your username

[Click here for help.](#)

Please enter a username and password below. The username you specify will be used to identify you throughout the system, and may be seen by potential projects and help desk staff, so please choose accordingly. Usernames must be at least six characters in length. Your password must contain at least eight characters and include lowercase letters, uppercase letters, and numerals. An asterisk (\*) denotes a required field.

\* Last Name:

\* Last 4 Digits of SSN:

\* Date of Birth:  (mm/dd/yyyy)

\* User Name:  ?

\* Password:  ?

\* Confirm Password:

Profile Privacy:  Check here to allow programs to search for and view your profile.

E-mail Notifications:  Check here to receive e-mail notifications.

3. Once you create a username and password, you'll be allowed to enter the My.AmeriCorps portal. From here you can search listings, mark your favorites, and create an application. ***We recommend writing down your My.AmeriCorps.gov password, as the process for resetting it can be complicated.***

## Creating an Application

1. In the left menu, click on the tab labeled "Applications"



**My AmeriCorps** Welcome, Anna M [redacted]

Click this link

Applications  
References  
Submissions  
Search Listings  
My Favorites  
Contact My AmeriCorps

My Information

Name: Anna M [redacted]	Date of Birth: [redacted]
Preferred Name: Anna	Username: anna [redacted]
Applicant ID: 895972	E-mail: [redacted]@gmail.com
SSN: **** [redacted]	
U.S. Veteran: N	

**AMERICORPS** Your World. Your Chance To Make It Better.

2. Select "Create Application"

# Applications

[Click here for help.](#)

There are no applications created with the system. Click on the 'create new application' button to create an application.



3. You'll be taken to the first page of the 8 page application. Complete the entire application before submitting it. Here are some general tips that apply to every page of the application:
  - ❖ If you have not **made changes to your application for 15 minutes or more, you will be locked out of the site**, and any unsaved information will be deleted.
  - ❖ **Make sure you complete all required questions on a page before clicking the "next" button.** If you click "next" before completing all the required sections, you'll get sent back to the page you were on and some of your information may get deleted.
  - ❖ **Pay attention to character limits.** If you go over the character limit on a section and click "next" you will be sent back to the page you were on and some of your information may get deleted.
  - ❖ **Pay attention to the format they would like you to use when entering numbers** (ex: mm/dd/yyyy for dates) because if you enter them wrong it will not let you go on to the next page, and some of your information may get deleted.
  - ❖ **When you click "next" the website will save any information you have entered** on the page IF you have not gone over any character limits, missed any required questions, or entered any information incorrectly.
  - ❖ Because your information can get deleted for the reasons listed above, *we highly recommend that you save your answers in a word document, email or on paper*, as well as on the online application.

## Tips for crafting a strong application

### **Basic Information Section:**

- Name should match the name on your driver's license.
- Minnesota Literacy Council **does not** offer housing to VISTA members, although some individual site placements might. Please keep this in mind if you intend to relocate for the position.
- Applicants **must** be available for the full term of service

### **Motivational Statement Section: (250-500 words)**

- Explain why you are applying for AmeriCorps service and how this relates to your personal and professional goals.
- Explain why you are interested in literacy.
- Describe the experiences in your life that influenced your decision to join AmeriCorps.
- Share the impact community service has had on you or the community.

**Skills and Experience Section: (200 characters per section)**

- Describe in detail how you have acquired and applied each skill.
- **Do not** simply list work or volunteer experiences.
- Please list any relevant training, certification, or language proficiency.

**Education Section:**

- Select the highest level of education you will have achieved by the time you start service (Example: Select “college graduate” if you are currently in school and will have completed your degree by your VISTA service start date).
- Post-secondary education **is not** a requirement for most VISTA positions with Minnesota Literacy Council.

**Community Service Section: (150-250 words)**

- **Don’t** check the “I do not have any volunteer experience” box unless you actually don’t have any experience.
- List your most recent volunteer experiences and explain your responsibilities in detail.
- List hours per month for each volunteer position.
- **Don’t** just list your volunteer experiences in your written statement.
  - Explain why you volunteer or want to begin volunteering.
  - Describe what service means to you and what you hope to achieve through a year of service.

**Employment Section:**

- Explain your reasons for leaving each work position.
- Include **all** employment, even if it is not directly relevant to the VISTA position.
- List number of hours per week for each work position.
- Explain any employment gaps of six months or longer.

**Criminal History Questionnaire Section:**

- **Don’t** include minor traffic violations (Example: speeding ticket).
- **Do** include anything that would show up on a state or federal background check (Example: petty misdemeanors including those that were expunged). Additional information may be requested.
- Admission of minor crimes does not automatically disqualify you for service but omissions *will* disqualify you.

**References Section:**

- Your references must be complete **before** you can be offered a position.
- Alert your references that they will receive an email from AmeriCorps and send an email reminder to complete the reference questionnaire if necessary.
- Appropriate References: Work or volunteer supervisors, teachers, counselors, coaches, clergy (of a supervisory nature in a professional or educational context)
- Inappropriate References: Family members, friends, coworkers, classmates, peers.
- References should ideally include at least one work or volunteer supervisor (using two teachers is not encouraged).
- Consider using two references that can speak to different strengths or skill sets.