

**Minnesota Literacy Council  
AmeriCorps VISTA**

**New Project Application 2017-18**

The online application form is located at [www.tfaforms.com/452761](http://www.tfaforms.com/452761). You may reference the content of the online form in this document, but the final application must be submitted through the online form.

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*For detailed information on hosting a VISTA and what the Minnesota Literacy Council is looking for in its request for proposals for VISTA projects, please visit [www.mnliteracy.org/educators/host-vista](http://www.mnliteracy.org/educators/host-vista).*

**USING THIS FORM**

In order to be eligible to apply for a Literacy VISTA project using this form, you must first participate in an Information Session. **You will receive a password in the Information Session that is required to complete and submit this application.** For Information Session dates and information on registering, see [www.mnliteracy.org/educators/host-vista](http://www.mnliteracy.org/educators/host-vista).

To save your work:

- 1) Click "Save my progress and resume later" at the top of any page.
- 2) You will be prompted to enter your email address and create a password.
- 3) You may then choose to "Resume this form now." You may also log back into the form later.

At any point before you click "submit" and "confirm" at the end, you may return to a page and make changes. We recommend completing the narrative sections in a Word document and then copying and pasting into this online form.

**Applying for a Literacy VISTA project beginning on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

Please complete the following form to apply for a Literacy VISTA project. Literacy VISTA projects typically last for 3-5 years. If selected, your first year of hosting a VISTA would be 2017-2018.

*For detailed information on hosting a VISTA and what the Minnesota Literacy Council is looking for in its request for proposals for VISTA projects, please visit [www.mnliteracy.org/educators/host-vista](http://www.mnliteracy.org/educators/host-vista).*

**Before you begin, please review the following important information.**

**Timeline** Please note: exact dates are subject to change.

- Submit this application by **5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017**.
- You will be notified of selection decisions by **Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**.
- If selected, you will be required to participate in a New Supervisor Workshop in mid-**February**. See below for details.
- You will be asked to submit your "SuperVAD" (project plan and VISTA Assignment Description) and VISTA position description by **Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**.
- You may begin recruiting your new VISTA member in **March** as soon as your SuperVAD and position description have been approved. You must have your candidate selected and approved by both the Minnesota Literacy Council and the Corporation for National and Community Service by **early June**.
- Signed site agreements and an initial, non-refundable \$1,000 portion of the cost share payment will be due by **early June**. See below for more cost share details.
- The new VISTA member will begin service on **July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017**.

**Workshops for New Site Supervisors**

All site supervisors will be asked to participate in training related to VISTA recruitment, SuperVAD (project plan and VISTA Assignment Description) development, and orienting and supervising a new VISTA member. Site supervisors will be asked to register for **one** of the following workshops once site selection decisions have been announced on February 8<sup>th</sup>. (*Dates and locations for the workshops are subject to change.*)

Workshops for host sites located in the **Twin Cities metro area** will be held in the Minnesota Literacy Council training room (700 Raymond Ave, Suite 180; Saint Paul, MN 55114) on the following dates.

- **Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (light breakfast and lunch provided)
- **Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>** from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (light breakfast and lunch provided)

For host sites located in **Greater Minnesota**, an alternative training date and location and/or a webinar will be made available.

**Cost Share**

As part of the host site’s agreement to host an AmeriCorps VISTA member, the host agency commits to making a cost-share contribution. Cost share amounts for 2017-18 are as follows:

- Year 1: \$3,000 (new projects only)
- Year 2: \$4,000
- Year 3: \$5,000
- Year 4: \$11,796 (Full Cost Share)
- Year 5: \$11,796 (Full Cost Share)

**Organization Information**

*Please provide information on the organization applying to host a VISTA.*

Name of Organization

What type of agency is your organization?

- A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- Public school or school district (K-12)
- Preschool or early childhood center
- Library
- Institute of higher education
- Other (\* Please specify for other.)

Organization's Street Address

Address Line 2

City State Zip Code (+4 extension)

Organization's Web Address

Organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) *(federal tax ID number)*

How many full time staff members are currently employed by this organization?

How many part time staff members are currently employed by this organization?

What is your organization's annual budget?

*\* If this is a large organization (i.e. school district, public library, college, large nonprofit with multiple branches) OR if the VISTA will be housed at a different location, you may opt to provide information for the particular location, department or program that would host the VISTA member.*

### **Contact Information**

*Please provide information on the people we may contact regarding this application and this VISTA project.*

\* Primary contact person regarding this proposal:

\* Primary contact person's title:

What is this person's role regarding the VISTA project?

\* Email address of contact person:

\* Phone number of contact person:

\* Is the person listed above the same person who will be responsible for providing on-site VISTA supervision throughout the project?

Yes

No

Name of staff person identified to be VISTA site supervisor:

VISTA site supervisor's title

Email address of VISTA site supervisor:

Phone number of VISTA site supervisor:

\* Would you like to provide contact information for any other staff regarding this application or this VISTA project?

Yes

No

Name of staff person:

Staff person's title

What is this person's role regarding the VISTA project?

Email address of staff person

Phone number of staff person

## Participation in National Service Programs

*Please provide information, to the best of your knowledge, about your organization's involvement with national service programs. National service programs include: AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, CTEP, Promise Fellows, Reading Corps, Math Corps, Senior Corps, RSVP, Experience Corps, Public Allies, College Possible, and more.*

Does your organization currently host any national service members?

(Please provide as much information as possible. List the type of national service program, the sponsoring agency, projects on which they serve, and projected timeframe of the project)

Has your organization hosted national service members in the past?

(Please provide as much information as possible. List the type of national service program, the sponsoring agency, projects on which they served, and timeframe of the project)

Does your organization plan to apply for other national service resources in 2017-18?

(Please provide as much information as possible. List the type of national service program, the sponsoring agency, proposed project, and proposed timeframe of the project)

## Organization Description

Please describe your organization (narrative, 200-300 words). Include all of the following:

- A brief summary of your organization's history, including the date your organization was established.
- A brief summary of your organization's mission and goals.
- A description of your current programs or activities. Provide any relevant statistics about how many people you serve and in what way. Highlight any recent accomplishments or strengths of your organization.

## Summary of Request

How many VISTA members are you requesting for this project?\*

*\*Organizations are generally awarded one VISTA member per project, which is typically renewable for three years. If your organization would like to request more than one VISTA for this project, please use the narrative sections below to make the case for why this is necessary. If your organization would like to apply for more than one distinct VISTA project, please complete a separate application for each project.*

Which best describes the main focus of this capacity-building project?

- Scale/Reach.** As a result of this project, we will be able to SERVE MORE people or a NEW GROUP of people. The VISTA is adding new literacy services or expanding existing literacy services to build the organization's capacity to serve more individuals, particularly those living in poverty.
- Effectiveness.** As a result of this project, we will be able to provide a HIGHER QUALITY of literacy services, particularly for individuals living in poverty. The VISTA is enhancing existing programming (e.g., by improving curriculum, training, evaluation strategies, systems, or practices for volunteer engagement).

*If chose scale/reach:*

Please provide a brief, 2-3 sentence summary of what you would like to accomplish with this VISTA project. What new services will the VISTA project help your organization be able to offer, or how will the VISTA project help your organization expand existing literacy services to serve more individuals, particularly those living in poverty? (100-150 words)

*If chose effectiveness:*

Please provide a brief, 2-3 sentence summary of what you would like to accomplish with this VISTA project. How will the VISTA project help your organization be more effective in providing literacy services, particularly to individuals living in poverty? (100-150 words)

## **Need Statement**

### **Target Population**

Please describe the population that will be served by your proposed VISTA project (narrative, 250-500 words). Include all of the following:

- Information on poverty in this population and the particular literacy needs of this group, as well as any other relevant demographics (i.e. age range, language background, cultural background, geographical area served, etc.)
- Current statistical data, citing sources whenever possible, to substantiate the needs of the population who will be served through this project.

### **Identifying Community Need**

Is the proposed new program/program expansion/change to current programming based on an identified community need? Have members of the target population (i.e. adult learners, youth, parents, community leaders) been involved in identifying the need for this project? Please explain how the need was identified and/or how the VISTA project will incorporate needs assessment to inform program development and/or to increase the effectiveness of current literacy programming. (Narrative, 150-300 words)

### **Identifying Capacity Building Need**

*If chose scale/reach:*

Describe how the organization identified a need for a VISTA project to build capacity by adding or expanding literacy services. Among staff and/or board, who was involved in planning for this project? To what extent does your organization have staff capacity to support new program development and/or program expansion?

*If chose effectiveness:*

Describe how the organization identified a need for a VISTA project to expand its capacity to provide effective literacy services. Provide information on current challenges faced by your organization in serving the target population and/or opportunities available for better serving the needs of this group. Among staff and/or board, who was involved in planning for this project?

## Capacity-Building and Sustainability

### Project Vision

Describe your long-term vision for this project (narrative, 350-650 words).

- What makes your project innovative and unique?
- What will the VISTA(s) do to build the capacity of your organization, and how will that benefit the target population described in the Need Statement?
- How will the community be different 3-5 years from now, as a result of the proposed VISTA project (after the VISTA project has been completed and VISTA resources are no longer in place)?
- How will your organization be different as a result of the proposed VISTA project?
- How will your organization ensure that expansions or improvements to programming established with this VISTA project can be maintained after the VISTA project is complete?
- How will you sustain the momentum of the VISTA project beyond three years of VISTA support?

### Community Involvement

How will you involve the community to ensure the sustainability of the proposed project? (narrative, 200-400 words).

- How do you plan on incorporating feedback from the community, and/or involving community members in decision-making regarding the proposed project?
- How might community members take on leadership roles or otherwise contribute to help sustain the proposed project?

## Project Management and Supervision


Describe how you plan to support and manage the VISTA project at your site (narrative, 250-500 words). Include all of the following:

- Who within your organization or other partners will be involved in the implementation of this VISTA project?
- Describe your plan for providing administrative support for the VISTA project. How will this support help ensure completion of the goals and objectives of the VISTA project, including long-term sustainability?
- Who will provide direct supervision to the VISTA member? What skills, values or past experience does this person have as a supervisor?
- Describe your plan for providing effective supervision, training and support to the VISTA member throughout the year.
- Describe what makes your VISTA project an attractive opportunity for an individual to dedicate a year of service to your organization as a VISTA member.

How many hours of staff time will be dedicated to supervising the VISTA member and overseeing the VISTA project on average **per week**?

Thinking about the first year of the VISTA project (2017-18), please indicate which of the following types of capacity-building responsibilities will be included in the VISTA member's service.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Capacity-building Responsibilities</b>
	<p><b>Developing, Designing or Enhancing Program Content</b></p> <p>Developing or designing new program content; creating systems for standardizing content across programs; aligning program content with standards; creating processes for reviewing and modifying program content; evaluating program content to ensure it is responsive to participants' needs; finding ways to make better use of technology to increase effective use of content and materials; and/or developing and implementing training for staff on new program content and related systems, tools and processes.</p>
	<p><b>Designing or Conducting a Program Evaluation</b></p> <p>Activities may include: Developing a comprehensive, actionable logic model; defining measurable outcome objectives and output targets; conducting a program evaluation; analyzing evaluation results to guide program improvement; and/or disseminating evaluation findings.</p>
	<p><b>Developing or Strengthening Goals/Performance Targets and Milestones</b></p> <p>Activities may include: Developing or strengthening program goals/performance targets to ensure they are clearly defined and aligned with program goals and strategies; articulating short-term and long-term targets and milestones; ensuring program staff and volunteers are aware of relevant goals, objectives and milestones; identifying, developing and/or implementing new tools for assessing and tracking program goals/targets (i.e. pre and post-test assessments, participant surveys, intake forms, databases); finding ways to make better use of technology to increase efficiency in collecting data; and/or developing and implementing training for staff on new systems, tools and processes for assessment and data tracking.</p>
	<p><b>Developing and Nurturing Partnerships</b></p> <p>Activities may include: Developing and nurturing partnerships in the community to deliver services or otherwise directly support service delivery (for example, by providing a volunteer pipeline); creating processes for ongoing collaboration and communication between community partners; and/or developing or identifying appropriate systems for tracking information related to community partnerships.</p>
	<p><b>Enhancing Volunteer Recruitment and/or Training</b></p> <p>Activities may include: Creating new opportunities for engaging volunteers; increasing the size and diversity of the organization's pool of volunteers; identifying pipelines for providing an ongoing source of volunteers; increasing the effectiveness of volunteers in program delivery by</p>

	<b>Capacity-building Responsibilities</b>
	developing enhanced resources for training and orientation; and/or developing and implementing training for staff on new systems, tools and processes for volunteer recruitment and training.
	<p><b>Improving Volunteer Systems</b></p> <p>Activities may include: Implementing new systems for volunteer recruitment, training and/or management; formalizing systems so the organization can more effectively and efficiently use volunteers; increasing volunteer retention and reliability by creating improved systems for volunteer support, recognition and management; creating or enhancing a written volunteer generation plan, volunteer manual, job descriptions for volunteers, formal screening process, formal volunteer orientation, systems for measuring volunteer impact, etc.; developing or identifying appropriate systems for tracking volunteer information (i.e. databases, intake forms, etc.); finding ways to make better use of technology to increase efficiency of tracking volunteer data or communication with volunteers; and/or developing and implementing training for staff on new volunteer systems, tools and processes.</p>
	<p><b>Conducting a Needs Assessment</b> <i>(allowable as a secondary component of a VISTA project to complement other capacity-building activities)</i></p> <p>Activities may include: Planning, conducting, or analyzing an organizational needs assessment to determine the needs, opportunities and potential challenges with regard to developing and expanding literacy-focused programming; creating systems to facilitate ongoing needs assessment; and/or developing and implementing surveys, conducting focus groups, etc.</p>
	<p><b>Implementing New Program-Related Outreach or Fundraising Strategies</b> <i>(allowable as a secondary component of a VISTA project to complement other capacity-building activities)</i></p> <p>Activities may include: Creating plans or materials for outreach for new or expanded programming; conducting outreach in the community or among potential participants to increase awareness of programming; developing communications materials to showcase program outcomes or successes to potential stakeholders; identifying and securing resources for new or expanded programming through fundraising, grant-writing, volunteer engagement, or in-kind donations; and/or developing and implementing training for staff on new systems, tools and processes related to new outreach or fundraising strategies.</p>



Please provide the estimated amount of the VISTA member's time that will be dedicated to each capacity-building category you selected, and briefly describe the VISTA member's duties and what you would like your VISTA member to accomplish in the **first year of the VISTA project** (*the total percent of time should add up to, and not exceed, 100% of the VISTA's time*).

Description of Capacity-building Responsibilities	% of Time	Description of VISTA activities and accomplishments
<b>Developing, Designing or Enhancing Program Content</b>		
<b>Designing or Conducting A Program Evaluation</b>		
<b>Developing or Strengthening Goals/Performance Targets and Milestones</b>		
<b>Developing and Nurturing Partnerships</b>		
<b>Enhancing Volunteer Recruitment and/or Training</b>		
<b>Improving Volunteer Systems</b>		
<b>Conducting A Needs Assessment</b> ( <i>allowable as a secondary component of a VISTA project to complement other capacity-building activities</i> )		
<b>Implementing New Program-Related Outreach or Fundraising Strategies</b> ( <i>allowable as a secondary component of a VISTA project to complement other capacity-building activities</i> )		
	Total % of VISTA's time	

### Capacity-Building Activities

Please select up to five of the following capacity-building activities that will be part of your proposed VISTA project in 2017-18.

- Community assessment
- Community awareness and engagement
- Expand/strengthen partnerships/networks
- Financial resources
- Material development
- Outreach
- Performance measurement
- Program development and delivery
- Technology use
- Volunteer recruitment and management system

*If chose "Enhancing Volunteer Recruitment and/or Training" or "Improving Volunteer Systems" above*  
Which areas will be relevant to your VISTA project in 2017-18? (Please note that your VISTA may not be the person primarily responsible for these areas but may be expanding capacity for others to carry out volunteer engagement best practices/be more effective in these areas)

- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer training
- Volunteer management/support/retention

Will your VISTA be responsible for developing or implementing training for staff?

### Capacity-Building Performance Measures

Based on your responses, the following performance measures appear to be applicable to your VISTA project. Please fill in a target number that you expect to be able to reach after Year 1 of your VISTA project (2017-18). Please be reasonable about what will be manageable to accomplish in one year and something that you will be able to measure and report on. If you will be unable to track/report on this data, please enter "0." (*Items will vary depending on responses in previous section*)

G3-3.1: Number of community volunteers recruited (by the VISTA and/or by the organization with the capacity-building support of the VISTA)

G3-3.2: Number of community volunteers managed (by the VISTA and/or by the organization with the capacity-building support of the VISTA)

G3-3.5: Number of staff and community volunteers that received training (by the VISTA and/or by the organization with the capacity-building support of the VISTA)

G3-3.8: Hours of service contributed by community volunteers (who were managed by the VISTA and/or by the organization with the capacity-building support of the VISTA)

G3-3.15. Number of additional types of services offered by host organization as a result of capacity building services provided by the VISTA.

*\*Types of service: includes qualitatively distinct service activities in the area of Education that enable the program to address different needs or different populations in need of the organization's services.*

## Anti-Poverty Impact

The VISTA project will primarily build capacity for programs in the area of...

- School Readiness (serving early childhood/pre-school children; supporting pre-literacy skills and social/emotional school readiness skills)
- K-12 Success (serving school-age children and youth; supporting literacy skills, general academic achievement and engagement, on-time graduation and/or transitions to post-secondary education)
- Adult Literacy (serving individuals at least 18 years old and not enrolled in K-12 school system; supporting English as a Second Language preparation for GED or other high school equivalency credential, pathways to college and career readiness, and/or other basic adult education services)

## Anti-Poverty Interventions *(Items will vary depending on responses above)*

School Readiness. Which of the following interventions will be part of the programming supported by the VISTA project?

- Family involvement
- Preparation for kindergarten
- Other

Please briefly describe programming interventions

K-12 Success. Which of the following interventions will be part of the programming supported by the VISTA project?

- Classroom Teaching
- Community School Partnership
- Family Involvement
- Mentoring
- Out-of-School Time
- Service Learning
- Summer Learning
- Teacher Training
- Tutoring -- One on One
- Tutoring-- Small Group
- Other Classroom Support
- College Access programming
- Other

Please briefly describe programming interventions

Adult Literacy

- Classroom Teaching
- Tutoring -- One on One
- Tutoring-- Small Group
- Distance Learning
- English as a Second Language Instruction
- GED Preparation

- Assistance with Alternative Adult Diploma
- Career Readiness
- Other

Please briefly describe programming interventions

**Anti-Poverty Performance Measures** *(Items will vary depending on responses above)*

Based on your responses, the following performance measures may be applicable to your VISTA project. Please fill in a target number that you expect to be able to reach after Year 1 of your VISTA project (2017-18). Please be reasonable about what will be manageable to accomplish in one year and something that you will be able to measure and report on. If a particular performance measure is relevant but you will be unable to track/report on this data, please enter "0." If the performance measure is not applicable, please enter "N/A."

*(Items will vary depending on responses in previous section)*

School Readiness

**ED21. Number of children that will complete participation in early childhood education programs supported by the VISTA.**

*\*Children up through the age of kindergarten enrollment who are enrolled in early childhood education programs with a majority of economically disadvantaged children (eligible for free/reduced lunch) and/or a majority of children with special or exceptional needs. At the outset of the activity, the program should indicate how much time (i.e. how many days or hours) is required in order to complete the activity. Then they will only count the number of students who meet that threshold by the end of the program or activity.*

**ED23. Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development.**

*\*Social and emotional development: An indicator and element of school readiness that measures a child's development in one or more of the following domains: self-concept, self-control, cooperation, social relationships, and knowledge of families and communities.*

**ED24. Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills.**

*\*Literacy skills: An indicator and element of school readiness that measures a child's development in one or more of the following domains: phonological awareness, book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness and concepts, early writing, and alphabet knowledge.*

**Other. Please describe any other quantifiable outputs or outcomes that you expect to see for participants** (i.e. number of parents engaged, etc.)

## K-12 Success

**ED2. Number of students that will complete participation in K-12 education programs supported by the VISTA.**

*\*Students enrolled in grades K-12 in schools with a majority of economically disadvantaged students (eligible for free/reduced lunch) and/or a majority of children with special or exceptional needs. At the outset of the activity, the program should indicate how much time (i.e. how many days or hours) is required in order to complete the activity. Then they will only count the number of students who meet that threshold by the end of the program or activity.*

**ED5. Number of K-12 students with improved academic performance in literacy.**

*\*As measured by an improved demonstration of skill/knowledge at post-test as compared to pre-test (gain score) using a standardized test/instrument.*

**ED27. Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement.**

*\*Improved academic engagement: A positive and significant change in one of the following student behaviors or attitudes over the course of a school year. Measures of student behaviors include: increased attendance, increased completion of assignments including homework, increased teacher-reported participation, decreased disciplinary referrals and decreased reports of substance abuse. Measures of student attitudes include: increased interest in school, improved perspective on school climate, increased attachment to school and increased educational aspirations.*

**ED9. Number of students graduating from high school on time with a diploma.**

*\*On Time: Within four years.*

**Other. Please describe any other quantifiable outputs or outcomes that you expect to see for participants** (i.e. number of parents engaged, number of high school seniors applying to post-secondary education, etc.)

## Adult Literacy

**Output1: Total number of adult learners enrolled (enrollees)**

**Output2: Total number of adult learners completing pre- and post-test assessments (i.e. CASAS or TABE)**

**Outcome 3: Total overall contact hours for the program**

**Outcome 4: Average contact hours per adult learner**

**Outcome5: Number of adult learners demonstrating gains in literacy skills (i.e. making a level gain on CASAS or TABE)**

**Outcome6: Number of adult learners obtaining a high school equivalency credential (i.e. GED, adult diploma)**

Other. **Please describe any other quantifiable outputs or outcomes that you expect to see for participants** (i.e. number of participants obtaining employment, number applying to post-secondary education, number obtaining U.S. citizenship, etc.)

### Application Submission

Please enter the password from the Information Session.

Contact Meghan Paul-Cook for password assistance or any other questions about this application (mpaulcook@mnliteracy.org).

Once you click "submit," you will have a chance to review your full application. Please ensure that all fields are complete. **You must then click "confirm."** Once you confirm, a copy of the completed application will be sent immediately to the email address listed for the person completing this form.

By Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, the person (or people) listed in the Contact Information section will be sent an email notification indicating whether this project has been selected to host a VISTA beginning in 2017-18, and site supervisors of selected projects will receive information on participation the Site Supervisor Workshop.