



Alliance AmeriCorps Promise Fellow & VISTA Program Overview



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I. OVERVIEW

Founded in 1997, Minnesota Alliance With Youth (the Alliance) is a leading convener, collaborator and capacity-builder for youth development, working with and for youth to ensure that all young people have access to the fundamental resources they need to succeed. Over the last 20+ years, the Alliance and its statewide partners have brought together schools, local government agencies and nonprofit organizations to enhance partnerships toward a common goal. Our belief and work in strengthening school and community partnerships is not only about making opportunities more accessible for young people, but also engaging youth in the process.

The mission of Minnesota Alliance With Youth is “to work in partnership with youth to ensure that ALL young people have equitable educational opportunities that foster their individual assets, honor their voices, and prepare them to reach their goals.” Our vision is a Minnesota that supports young people in building their own present and future. In order to ensure all youth achieve success in school, work, and life, we focus on the following strategic goals:

- Challenge existing systems to integrate youth voice.
- Promote policies that support equitable access to education.
- Develop strong systems of engagement and collaboration.

Established in 1998, our AmeriCorps Promise Fellow program, dedicated to helping every youth reach their full promise, has grown steadily over the years and now has a statewide presence of 200 members. Over 1,700 individuals have served in the program, providing caring adult supports to over 170,000 students. AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) was founded in 1965 as a national service program to fight poverty in America. In 1993, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs and in 2016 the Alliance hosted our first cohort of VISTA members.

II. AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps is a national service program funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). In Minnesota, AmeriCorps programs, including Promise Fellows, are supported by ServeMinnesota, the Minnesota State Commission for national service. AmeriCorps VISTAs, including the Alliance VISTAs, are supported by the regional CNCS office. Visit www.serveminnesota.org or <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-programs/ameri-corps-vista> for more information.

The Alliance is proud to offer two different opportunities to host AmeriCorps members. Host Sites are able to apply to host one or both types of members. Below you will find more information on:

- ❑ **AmeriCorps Promise Fellows** directly serve youth in schools and community-based organizations to provide integrated youth support that create a positive climate, increase academic engagement, and prevent school dropout/pushout in communities across Minnesota. AmeriCorps Promise Fellows work with a Site Supervisor, Data Coach and a Youth Success Team comprised of school social workers, counselors, teachers, administrators, and other community partners to analyze data and identify youth in grades 6-12 who need support using early warning indicators, known as the ABC’s, (Attendance, Behavior, or Course performance). Promise Fellows provide a “Focus List” of 30 youth with evidence based interventions, connecting students to resources and programs that engage them in school and learning. AmeriCorps Promise Fellows ensure youth receive a variety of supports utilizing interventions identified by the National Dropout Prevention Center as most effective; caring adults, service and service-learning, and out of school time supports.
- ❑ **Alliance AmeriCorps VISTA Members** strengthen communities and bring youth out of poverty by serving at non-profits, government agencies, community-wide coalitions and statewide agencies to implement three key strategies: 1) Build capacity at their host site organization to help address

education inequities such as the achievement and opportunity gaps, 2) Coordinate efforts that bridge and build the integration of school and community wide support for youth, focused on providing and sharing resources that increase a young person’s school attendance, behavior and/or course performance, and 3) Actively engage youth as agents of change in closing the achievement and opportunity gaps in their communities.

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows <i>200 Placed Throughout Minnesota</i>	Alliance AmeriCorps VISTAs <i>15 Placed Throughout Minnesota</i>
Provide direct service to students	Focused on capacity building
Education equity focus	Education equity & poverty elimination focus
Members serve 11 months (start dates begin 9/1)	Members serve 12 months
Cash Match of \$8,700 per member (40 Hours/Week) \$6,750 per member (30 Hours/Week) \$4,900 per member (20 Hours/Week) <i>A nonrefundable deposit of \$750 per slot requested is due upon award confirmation (February/March). The remaining cash match per slot will only be due when the slot is filled with a member.</i> Additional Cash Match information available on page 9 of this document.	Cash match of \$8,700 per member <i>A nonrefundable deposit of \$750 per slot requested is due upon award confirmation (February/March). The remaining cash match per slot will only be due when the slot is filled with a member.</i> Additional Cash Match information available on page 9 of this document.
Member benefits: 40 Hours/Week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$649 (pre-tax) twice per month as a living allowance ● Qualified student loan forbearance ● Qualified childcare assistance ● \$6,195 Education Award upon successful completion of service ● Health and Dental Insurance available (at no monthly cost to member) 30 Hours/Week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$454 (pre-tax) twice per month as a living allowance ● Qualified student loan forbearance ● \$4,336 Education Award upon successful completion of service 20 Hours/Week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$324 (pre-tax) twice per month as a living allowance ● Qualified student loan forbearance ● \$3,097 Education Award upon successful completion of service *There is no Health/Dental Insurance or Childcare Assistance available for 30 and 20 Hour/Week positions.	Member benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Metro based members: \$491 (pretax) biweekly as a living allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Minnesota members: \$479 (pretax) biweekly as a living allowance <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 assistance in food/gas cards <input type="checkbox"/> Qualified student loan forbearance <input type="checkbox"/> Qualified childcare assistance <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,195 Education Award upon successful completion of service OR \$1800 stipend <input type="checkbox"/> 10 sick days and 10 vacation days <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare allowance to pay for out of pocket expenses <input type="checkbox"/> Settling in allowance of \$750 if relocating more than 50 miles plus an additional mileage based reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Non-competitive Eligibility (NCE) Status for <i>federal government jobs</i> after successful completion of service <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 professional development fund provided by Alliance

III. EDUCATION FOCUS AREA

Despite a decades-old assumption that Minnesota is a national leader in education, the state has an unacceptable reality. While White, middle and upper class students are largely seeing success in school and graduating on-time from high school (88.4% in 2018, according to the Minnesota Department of Education), students of color and low-income students are not experiencing similar levels of success. 4-year graduation rates for these student groups show the persistent disparities; 2018 4-year graduation rates; African American students- 67.4%, Hispanic/Latino- 66.8%, Native American- 51%, Free and Reduced Lunch- 70.2%.

Graduating from high school opens the door of opportunity, with research showing that those who drop out are more likely to suffer negative consequences, including unemployment, poverty and poor health outcomes. According to the US Census Bureau, the average high school dropout earns an annual income of \$20,241, a full \$10,386 less than the typical high school graduate. In 2008, Growth and Justice reported that dropouts have higher reliance on public programs such as welfare and Medicaid, and are more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system (Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students, A Research-Based Investment Proposal, Growth and Justice, 2008). The Center for Disease Control reports that "more formal education is consistently associated with lower death rates, while less education predicts earlier death (Freudenberg and Ruglis, 2007).

IV. AMERICORPS PROMISE FELLOW MODEL

The Alliance Promise Fellow model consists of the following required elements:

- A Multi-Tiered System of Supports approach
- Focus on serving youth at higher risk of dropping out in grades 6-12 for a minimum of 12 weeks
- Youth Success Teams that identify youth to serve, select the programs/resources/interventions to be utilized by the Promise Fellow, and monitor progress over time
- Early Warning Indicators that identify and track the progress of Focus List youth in the areas of Attendance, Behavior (utilizing the Student Engagement Instrument), and Course Performance (demonstrated by a teacher-reported Work Completion score)
- Interventions recommended by the National Dropout Prevention Center (Caring Adult, Service and Service-Learning and Out-of-School-Time supports)
- Members trained in Establish-Maintain, Restore and WOOP (Wish, Obstacle, Outcome and Plan) Goals and Motivational Interviewing.



Step One: Wraparound Supports Perspective

To address the challenges facing Minnesota, the Alliance invests AmeriCorps Promise Fellows in schools and communities to connect high-need and disengaged youth with critical school and community resources. Promise Fellows make it possible for an increasing number of schools to implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) approach, a framework that promotes a comprehensive and integrated continuum of system wide resources, strategies, structures and practices with tiered levels of support matched to student need. MTSS is used in education to systematically identify and address academic and behavioral problems before students struggle, fail, and drop out. The MTSS approach uses easily accessible data indicators to quickly identify early warning signs of disengagement and identify appropriate and engaging interventions and supports, designed to meet each student's needs. Promise Fellows work as part of a Youth Success Team to use student data to determine thresholds for early warning indicators, student needs based on the three tiers, appropriate interventions for each youth, and monitor participant involvement and improvement over time. Promise Fellows provide the needed

capacity to deliver individualized interventions to a core group of youth and support the overall implementation of the MTSS approach to ensuring all youth at the site succeed.

A key aspect of implementing the MTSS approach is having access to student data and information. All Host Sites, both school and community based organizations, are asked to regularly review the data of youth on the Promise Fellow's Focus List along with the frequency and dosage of each intervention. This information is shared with the Alliance using a secure online data management system called Knack. ALL Promise Fellow Host Sites are required to share and track student progress and complete a formal Data Sharing Agreement with the Alliance.

Step Two: Early Warning Indicators & Identifying Students

Many future dropouts can be identified as early as sixth grade, using the Early Warning Indicators of:

- **Attendance:** high number of absences from school
- **Behavior:** a self-reported score on the School Engagement Instrument Survey (SEI) developed by Dr. Appleton and Dr. Christenson. Please note: referrals, detentions, suspensions, and personal referral can help refer students but only the SEI can qualify. Referrals for behavior issues include but are not limited to office referrals, detentions, or suspensions.
- **Work Completion:** Individualized data on the percentage of work completed, reported to the Promise Fellow by teachers.

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows make it possible for schools and communities to use MTSS to implement effective drop-out prevention strategies that result in increased academic engagement with higher attendance, increased positive behavior and school engagement, and improved academic performance.

During their year of service, each AmeriCorps Promise Fellow provides intensive support to youth in grades 6-12 on their Focus List for a minimum of 12 weeks. 40 hr/week Promise Fellows serve 30 students on their Focus List, 30 hr/week Promise Fellows serve 21 students, and 20 hr/week Promise Fellows serve 15 students.

Step Three: Common Strategies & Interventions

The National Dropout Prevention Center recommends the Basic Core Strategies of Mentoring/Tutoring, Service-Learning and Afterschool/Out-of-School Opportunities. The following strategies reflect these core recommendations and help students increase their academic engagement. Promise Fellows ensure youth on their Focus List:

- Become connected to more caring adults
- Engage in meaningful service and service-learning
- Receive out-of-school time supports

A multi-faceted problem like dropping out of school requires multi-faceted solutions. AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, using research-based strategies common across all sites, increase the capacity of schools and communities to use the dropout prevention interventions described below. To read about these and other strategies, visit: www.dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies

Depending on the reason a youth has been identified as needing support, Promise Fellows intervene using appropriate strategies to create the most impact. AmeriCorps Promise Fellows work to connect every youth on their Focus List with at least one of the following three support strategies:

- ❑ **Caring Adult Interventions** include; calling home to check in on attendance, discussing attendance issues with the student or their family, conducting behavior check-ins, providing informal mentoring, assisting with schoolwork or homework, providing in-classroom presence and support, and connecting students to mentors.

- ❑ **Service and Service-Learning Interventions** include; encouraging and supporting students to volunteer in their school or community or participate in a service-learning club, creating mentorship matches with younger peers, and developing and facilitating service projects and clubs.
- ❑ **Out-of-School Interventions** include; designing and leading lunch time programming and after school clubs, connecting students to afterschool tutors, and encouraging students to join existing groups.

Step Four: Review Data, Make Adjustments, Repeat

Promise Fellow Required Trainings & Visits

- ❑ Promise Fellows are required to participate in the following:
 - Kick Off Meeting (1st day of Fellow's service term)
 - November Institute (2-3 days)
 - Monthly on-going Regional and Small Corps meetings
 - End-of-Year Reflection Retreat (1 day in the Fellow's region)
 - One On-Site Visit with Alliance Staff and the Host Site and Promise Fellow(s)
 - One Site Check-In Call with Alliance Staff and the Host Site and Promise Fellow(s)
 - Fellows are encouraged to actively participate and connect with Alliance Staff and other Fellows through blogs, webinars, email, phone calls, and days of service.
- ❑ Promise Fellow Site Supervisors are required to participate in the following:
 - Program Requirements and Recruitment Webinar
 - Three Site Supervisor Trainings (August/October/February)
 - Mid-Year Training Retreat (Winter; 1 day)
 - One On-Site Visit with Alliance Staff and the Host Site and Promise Fellow(s)
 - One Site Check-In Call with Alliance Staff and the Host Site and Promise Fellow(s)
 - Site Supervisors and Data Coaches are encouraged to actively participate and connect with Alliance staff and other Supervisors/Data Coaches through blogs, webinars, email, phone calls, and days of service.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR PROMISE FELLOWS

The Alliance provides support to Promise Fellows through regular trainings, weekly communication via email, site visits, and coaching. Members of the Youth Success Team provide day-to-day supervision of Promise Fellows, site specific additional training and evaluation support. Each Host Site and Youth Success Team identifies a Host Site Supervisor and a Data Coach.

- **Site Supervisor:** Acts as the main contact with the Alliance, Host Site and the Promise Fellow. They provide the day-to-day oversight of the activities of the Promise Fellow (2 hrs/wk per member); signs off on evaluation and timesheets; ensures that the member meets service hour requirements; attends all required meetings with the Alliance and identifies additional allies for the Fellow.
- **Data Coach:** Assists the Promise Fellow in accessing and reviewing student data on a regular basis. They may convene the Youth Success Team to discuss interventions and students to serve.
- **Please note, the Data Coach and Site Supervisor may be the same person, depending on the Host Site.**

Site Supervisors play an important role in ensuring the success of the Promise Fellow. In most cases, the supervisor must be a full-time employee with available time to effectively oversee and mentor the Promise Fellow. Supervisors are expected to contribute at least 2 hours per week (per member) of program support time (includes member supervision and coaching, program and calendar planning, observation, feedback on interventions, supporting youth success team, focus list student data review, email support and communications with Alliance); weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the Promise Fellow

members are required. The Site Supervisor signs-off on timesheets, and in collaboration with Data Coach and other partners, will ensure "layered" supervision and support for the Fellow.

To help Promise Fellows successfully reach the highest risk youth, a **Data Coach** at each participating school allocates a portion of his/her time to coordinate the program. The Data Coach will review weekly student data on early warning indicators (low attendance, behavior referrals/disengagement, or poor course performance) and identify youth who are heading off track. In order to provide the right support to the right youth at the right time, the Data Coach and Youth Success Team use this data to determine appropriate interventions for each youth and monitor participant involvement and improvement over time. The Data Coach will also support the Promise Fellow to facilitate and track the School Engagement Surveys. Promise Fellows provide or coordinate interventions for at least 30 identified youth, ultimately helping them get back on track to graduate.

For Host Sites that are community-based, it will be necessary to develop a strong, ongoing relationship with a designated school partner who can assist with the reporting and data requirements. The school partner acts as the gatekeeper for this information. For example, in one community, a Fellow serving at the local drop-in afterschool center was able to access the grades and the attendance information on her students because of the relationship established between her Site Supervisor and the school's Assistant Principal. The Assistant Principal provided access to information for the Fellows and sites and acted as the Data Coach. Host Sites will be required to complete a Data Sharing Agreement before sites can begin recruiting their Promise Fellow.

Promise Fellow Data Collection & Reporting

The Alliance is committed to achieving measurable results through clear and consistent data collection, aggregation, and reporting. Promise Fellow Host Sites must commit to completing all program evaluation requirements.

Data Coaches must use or establish a system to review student data on a weekly basis related to attendance, behavior, and course performance. Working in collaboration with Promise Fellows and other school personnel, data is used to determine which students are heading off-track to graduate, which students should receive support (be added to a Promise Fellow's Focus List), and how students who are receiving support are progressing. Data trends are to be shared with the Youth Success Team to support interventions and program planning.

Promise Fellows are expected to regularly enter data into the online data tracking system, OnCorps. Reporting includes:

- Summary of youth participation and progress, including ongoing data on attendance, behavior, and academic performance for each individual Focus List youth and comparison baseline data
- Description of Fellows' personal and professional development plans and activities
- Monthly Reflections of when the Promise Fellow has seen success in their service

Host Sites are asked to submit their data sharing agreements as part of the Host Site Agreement. Host Sites are also required to train their Promise Fellows in their site's data privacy procedures and ensure that guidelines are followed throughout the program year.

V. ALLIANCE AMERICORPS VISTA MODEL

Alliance VISTA members strengthen communities and bring youth out of poverty by serving at non-profits, government agencies, community-wide coalitions and statewide agencies to implement three key strategies:

- Build capacity at their host site organization to help address education inequities such as the achievement and opportunity gaps,



- Coordinate efforts that bridge and build the integration of school and community wide support for youth, focused on providing and sharing resources that increase a young person’s school attendance, behavior and/or course performance (all indicators with a strong link to academic engagement and high school graduation), and
- Actively engage youth as agents of change in closing the opportunity and achievement gaps in their communities.

Alliance VISTA member activities increase the capacity of their Host Site and community to support young people, and lead to significant increases in the number of additional activities able to be carried out by the host organization and its partners. Possible activities VISTA members perform that provide a direct link to increasing educational equity in Minnesota include:

- Creating or improving data systems to increase host site’s ability to track, evaluate, and replicate positive youth interventions
- Establishing/strengthening volunteer programs
- Developing and implementing a process for recruiting volunteers and caring adults to work with youth in areas such as mentoring, tutoring, civic engagement and college/career exploration
- Convening partners to align goals and activities
- Assessing community needs and conducting asset mapping
- Researching best practices relating to educational equity (ex. access to reliable transportation, ensuring quality data is available and used to target students, providing effective alternative pathways and additional time to earn a diploma, etc.) and conducting literature reviews
- Reducing/eliminating duplication in educational equity efforts
- Identifying and integrating best practices into communities and organizations
- Creating resources and materials to help inform the community and disseminate information
- Creating or promoting leadership and civic engagement opportunities for youth
- Helping organize community meetings
- Developing communication tools
- Identifying potential collaborators and partners
- Researching youth-led programming models and identifying opportunities to engage youth in co-creating programming

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Host Sites are responsible for creating a VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) once they are selected to host VISTA members. The purpose of the VAD is to identify the specific objectives and activities of the proposed VISTA project year. The VAD is used throughout the year to help the Alliance, the Site Supervisor, and the VISTA member identify priorities and monitor progress. The VAD is a critical tool in the recruitment, selection, and ongoing supervision of a VISTA member. If multiple VISTA members are placed at one site they will each need their own individual VAD. New Supervisors will be required to attend a workshop to develop and refine their VISTA project plan and VAD. Returning Supervisors are asked to submit a VAD as part of the renewal application or after their application is approved.

VISTA Required Trainings & Visits

- VISTA members are required to participate in the following:
 - Attend Service Orientation the week before service begins
 - Attend Alliance Site Orientation within first 2 weeks of service
 - On-going Cohort meetings (approximately 11 half-days)
 - Mid-year Training Retreat (1 day)
 - Two Site Visits with Alliance Staff and the Host Site and VISTA member(s)
 - VISTA members are encouraged to actively participate and connect with Alliance Staff and other AmeriCorps members through blogs, webinars, email, phone calls, and days of service.

- ❑ VISTA Site Supervisors are required to participate in the following:
 - Recruitment Webinar
 - Attend VAD Workshop (Spring) – *New Supervisors Only*
 - Attend Supervisor Training & Submit Onsite Orientation and Training Plan (Spring/Summer)
 - 2 Member/Supervisor Retreats (Fall/Spring)
 - Two Site Visits with Alliance Staff and the Host Site and VISTA member(s)
 - Site Supervisors are encouraged to actively participate and connect with Alliance staff and other AmeriCorps Supervisors through blogs, webinars, email, phone calls, and days of service.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR ALLIANCE VISTA MEMBERS

The Alliance provides support to VISTA members through regular trainings, on-going email communication, site visits, and coaching. Each Host Site identifies a Host Site Supervisor who acts as the main contact with the Alliance, Host Site and the VISTA member. They provide the day-to-day oversight of the activities of the VISTA member and alignment with project goals; signs off on reporting and documents approved days off; ensures that the member meets service requirements; and identifies additional supports for the VISTA member. Site Supervisors play an important role in ensuring the success of the VISTA member. In most cases, the supervisor must be a full-time employee with available time to effectively oversee and mentor the VISTA member. Weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the VISTA member are required. Additionally, the Site Supervisor participates in approximately five Alliance meetings during the year.

VISTA Data Collection & Reporting

The Alliance is committed to achieving measurable results through clear and consistent data collection, aggregation, and reporting. VISTA Host Sites must commit to completing all program evaluation requirements. When applying to host a VISTA member, Host Sites set Capacity Building and Education goals for the year. The Performance Measures are as follows:

Performance Measures	
Capacity Building	<p>Number of organizations that received capacity building services.</p> <p>▮ <i>Examples include: # of schools that received training on volunteer management; # of organizations attending coalition meetings; # of sites implementing host site programming.</i></p>
	<p>Number of organizations that increased their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach.</p> <p>▮ <i>Effectiveness: Improved ability of the organization to achieve outcomes resulting in better success rates or better quality of outcomes achieved.</i></p> <p>▮ <i>Efficiency: Improved outcomes with the same level of resources; improved or consistent quality of services with fewer resources.</i></p> <p>▮ <i>Scale/Reach: The scope of a program’s services. Increased scale/reach can be measured by the number of new people served, new populations served, and/ or new or expanded services.</i></p>
Education/ K-12 Success	<p>Number of individuals served</p> <p>▮ <i>Examples include: # of youth who received mentoring; # of youth that attended conferences; # of youth leading focus groups.</i></p> <p>Number of students with improved academic engagement or social-emotional skills.</p> <p>▮ <i>Examples include: # of youth reporting improved attitude toward school/school climate (out of total #); # of youth reporting increased motivation to be more engaged in school or learning (out of total #), # of youth who increased participation in school activities.</i></p>

VISTA members are expected to regularly report on Performance Measure progress. These reports include:

- Periodic reports that summarize VISTA member daily activities, including what progress has been made in reaching VISTA member Performance Measures
- Description of VISTA members' personal and professional development plans and activities
- Monthly Reflections of when the VISTA member has been successful and challenged in their service

VI. HOST SITE EXPECTATIONS, ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

Host Sites take on a variety of responsibilities when they are selected to host an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow or VISTA member. The Alliance works to support each Host Site and Youth Success Team in meeting the goals of the Promise Fellow and VISTA model.

Both Promise Fellow and VISTA Host Sites are asked to fulfill the following expectations and commitments:

- Recruit and select their AmeriCorps member(s)
- Provide a deposit of \$750 per slot awarded and provide remaining Cash Match for AmeriCorps slots that fill; meet In-Kind Requirements such as providing members a desk, phone, computer, mileage reimbursement, etc.
- Complete Host Site Agreement in July prior to start of service term
- Provide training, orientation, supervision, and support for the AmeriCorps member(s)
- Ensure Promise Fellow and VISTA member activities align with AmeriCorps and Alliance goals
- Support AmeriCorps member(s) in maintaining schedule (at least 20, 30, 40 hours/week) to meet all service hour requirements, including Promise Fellow and VISTA member required training and meetings
- Actively participate in trainings, meetings, and site visits

Promise Fellows Only:

- Supervisors participate in required National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) background checks to allow the Alliance to count supervisory time as in-kind
- Record at least 2 hours per week of supervisory time per member
- Complete an Onsite Orientation and Training Plan prior to start of service year
- Complete Data Sharing Agreement prior to start of service term
- Train Promise Fellow(s) in accessing data and data privacy according to site or partner school procedures
- Assist with data collection and reporting requirements
- Submit In-Kind Contribution Forms showing monetary value of resources provided to members

VISTA Member Only:

- Submit Onsite Orientation and Training Plan prior to start of service year
- Submit Completed VISTA Assignment Description
- Assist VISTA member in periodic reporting

Cash Match Requirements

For Promise Fellows and VISTA, Host Sites are required to help offset the cost of the program by providing a cash match per member (note cash match amounts on Page 3). Please note that this cash match amount is PER MEMBER SLOT.

Both Promise Fellow and VISTA Host Sites are required to pay a nonrefundable deposit of \$750 per slot awarded; the deposit is due upon award. If a site fills a Promise Fellow or VISTA slot with a member, the

remaining cash match will be due prior to the member's start date. Host Sites can use a variety of sources to pay for the cash match. If federal funds are used to cover the cost of the AmeriCorps member cash match, the Alliance requires written authorization from the Federal Program Officer to use federal dollars as match for another federal program.

For those Host Communities that are working to bring together multiple schools and organizations to host Fellows or VISTA members, the parties involved may collaborate to cover the cost of this payment, but the organization signing the Host Site Application is ultimately responsible for the total payment owed to the Alliance.

Although the Alliance assists in recruitment and works closely with Sites throughout the process, members are not placed and Host Sites are ultimately responsible for filling all positions awarded. Please note that the Alliance is willing to negotiate financial deadlines for those Host Sites that demonstrate meeting the requirement would be an extreme hardship or preclude them from applying to host an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow or VISTA member.

In-Kind Requirements (Promise Fellow Only):

The Alliance relies on the collection of In-Kind from Host Sites to meet our federal grant match requirements. In addition to the cash match payment, Host Site are required to provide their AmeriCorps member(s) with the following:

- personal workstation/desk and office supplies
- a telephone with personal voicemail or a cell phone
- a computer with current software, individual email account, and access to the internet
- technical support for the computer
- resources and materials for programming
- mileage reimbursement for required Alliance trainings
- local travel necessary for conducting service activities (can be mileage reimbursement based)
- parking permit or bus pass if necessary

At time of award, Host Sites will be asked for an estimate of the amount of in-kind from the list above that they will be providing to members. At the end of the service term, Host Sites will be required to submit a final In-Kind Contribution Form confirming the amount of in-kind provided to members.

Supervisor Background Checks and Timesheets (Promise Fellow Only)

The Alliance's largest collection of in-kind will come from the time that Host Site supervisors spend supporting their members and programming onsite and is an essential part of the Promise Fellow program. Supervisors are expected to devote at least 2 hours per week per member for the duration of the term of service. In order for supervisor time to be recorded, supervisors must undergo a National Service Criminal History background check (paid for by the Alliance) and complete online, twice monthly timesheets. Additionally, the Alliance will contact the Host Site's HR/Business office to complete a confidential Loaded Salary form to estimate the value of the supervisor's time. Supervisors will be guided through this process prior to their member's start date.

What Organizations Can Apply?

Promise Fellow and VISTA Host Sites can be any of the following types of organizations:

- Community-Based Youth Serving Organizations (ex. Boys and Girls Clubs, afterschool program, etc.)
- Public Schools, School Districts, Charter Schools
- Healthy Community Initiatives
- Non-profits, government agencies and intermediaries

** Priority will be given to schools/communities that have a high school graduation rate lower than the state average of 82.2% and schools/communities that have a majority student population that is economically disadvantaged (demonstrated by greater than 50% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch)**

How Many AmeriCorps Members Can Organizations Host?

There is no limit on the number of Promise Fellows or VISTA members a site can host! Many schools and organizations that have hosted a cohort of AmeriCorps members have seen great success. Sites requesting multiple Fellows and/or VISTA members will need to demonstrate the need and capacity to support and supervise multiple members. Promise Fellows are expected to serve in a full-time (40 hours), 30 hours, or 20 hours/week capacity throughout their 11 month term of service, while VISTA members serve in a full-time capacity for a 12 month service term. Sites are expected to ensure members meet their service hour requirements and have sufficient activities to maintain their hours.

VII. ALLIANCE AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Alliance is dedicated to recruiting a diverse pool of prospective Promise Fellows and VISTA members reflective of the communities in which they serve. Our goal is to fill 100% of our positions and retain 100% of our members over the course of the year. We work to assist applicants in finding the best fit between member and Host Site. Members are recruited both by their Host Site and the staff at the Alliance. Host Sites are expected to recruit aggressively through their networks and local media. The Alliance staff, in partnership with Host Sites, places ads in major state and national websites, newspapers, and works with national AmeriCorps recruiting systems. Sites are required to submit a position description and interview questions to the Alliance for review to ensure that the selection process is fair and equitable for all applicants. Applicants will be interviewed by both the Host Site and Alliance staff before an official offer of service is made. Host Sites will be required to check references. Please note that a complete National Service Criminal History Background check is conducted on each member to meet basic AmeriCorps eligibility requirements (read [42 U.S.C. § 12645g](#) and [45 CFR §2540.200 through §2540.207](#)); Host Sites are encouraged to run their own background checks to meet any additional eligibility requirements of their site. Sites that are unable to meet recruitment deadlines will be at risk of losing their AmeriCorps member position and risk becoming ineligible to host in the future.

For basic eligibility, AmeriCorps members must be:

- 18 years or older
- A high school graduate with a diploma or GED
- A U.S. Citizen, U.S. National or a Lawful Permanent Resident Alien of the United States
- Able to pass a complete National Service Criminal History Background check (including National Sex Offender Registry, State, and FBI checks)
- Eligibility based on AmeriCorps [term limitations](#)
- If serving in a full time (40 hour/week) capacity, members must be able to maintain a consistent schedule of 40 hours per week throughout their term of service (e.g. not a full-time student or working elsewhere full-time)

Member Benefits:

- Promise Fellows: The Alliance provides Promise Fellows with a living allowance twice per month (pre-tax). This living allowance, health and dental insurance, workers compensation, FICA, background checks, child care assistance, and much of the Fellows' trainings are paid directly by Minnesota Alliance With Youth. Fellows will receive their living allowance directly from the Alliance through direct deposit. Additionally, members may be eligible to receive an Education Award from CNCS.

*Please note: health/dental insurance and child care assistance is only available for members serving 40 hours/week.

- ❑ VISTA members: The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides VISTA members with approximately a biweekly (pre-tax) living allowance. This living allowance, plus the VISTA members' educational award, workers compensation, FICA, and background checks are paid directly by CNCS. VISTAs will receive their living allowance directly from CNCS through direct deposit. The Alliance additionally provides professional development funds and grocery/gas cards to VISTA members.

VIII. HOW TO APPLY

Applications to host an Alliance AmeriCorps member will be assessed and reviewed by a team of Alliance staff, using the following criteria:

- Need as demonstrated by a needs/resources assessment completed by Promise Fellow Youth Success Team or VISTA Supervisor with clear plans to connect local activities to dropout prevention and to engage and serve youth who are most at-risk of dropping out
- Commitment to implement the Alliance AmeriCorps program models with fidelity
- Commitment to youth engagement and youth voice, including youth who are disengaged
- Alignment between the planned roles for the AmeriCorps member and the goals of the program
- Authentic collaboration among members of the Promise Fellow Youth Success Team or VISTA Support Team, including both school and community partners, and youth
- Ability to demonstrate that a high quality Site Supervisor will be assigned to each AmeriCorps member to provide professional development experiences for the member
- Commitment to participate in all required meetings by Site Supervisors and member (e.g. Promise Fellow Institute, VISTA Cohort Meetings, etc.)
- Ability to pay required cash match and in-kind match

Promise Fellows and VISTA members will follow a predetermined position description (written by their Host Site) for their year of service. Promise Fellow and VISTA member roles must relate to the design of this program and contribute to achieving the Alliance's goals.

As you prepare your host site application, be sure to review what AmeriCorps Promise Fellows and VISTAs can and cannot do. The below activities are prohibited while AmeriCorps members are accruing hours that count towards their living allowance and education award:

- AmeriCorps members may not displace or duplicate roles of other paid staff of the organization
- AmeriCorps members may not perform secretarial functions for other staff
- AmeriCorps members may not lobby politicians or organize voter registration drives
- AmeriCorps members may not attempt to influence legislation
- AmeriCorps members may not organize or engage in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- AmeriCorps members may not assist, promote, or deter union organizing
- AmeriCorps members may not engage in activities that have connections to religious instruction, religious proselytizing, or maintenance or construction of facilities that serve a religious purpose
- AmeriCorps members may not provide abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services

APPLY TODAY!

In order to help schools and community-based organizations collaborate with strong and enthusiastic partners, Minnesota Alliance With Youth can help connect applicants with existing resources and leaders across the state. We encourage you to ask questions during the preparation of your application!

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Review this Alliance Promise Fellow and VISTA Program Overview and additional information on our website.
- Complete the Host Site Application available on our [website](#). If you are a current 2019-2020 host site, please contact Bette Benson, bbenson@mnyouth.net, for the Returning Host Site Application.

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020.
APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON A ROLLING BASIS BEYOND THAT DATE.**

Please visit our [website](#) or email Sarah Ullmer sullmer@mnyouth.net with any questions.