



PSP VISTA Summer Associate Pre-Application Orientation

— Presented by the —
Public & School Partnership

Overview of AmeriCorps VISTA

- One branch of the Corporation for National and Community Service (oldest branch!). Focus on anti-poverty programs
- All 50 states, all U.S. territories
- Regular, full-term VISTAs serve full-time hours for one full year. Indirect service focus (building programs, not running them directly)
 - Successful performance often indicated by indirect service measures: # volunteers coordinated/recruited, \$ in-kind/cash donations acquired, # new systems/services developed, # individuals trained, etc.

Overview of PSP VISTA Summer Associate Program

- **Minimum qualifications:** 18 years old by start of service, U.S. citizen *or* legal permanent resident
- **FREE!**
- **Hiring focus** on disadvantaged, 18-24 year olds, but ultimately open to any strong candidate (SAs can NOT be employed by any sponsoring entity during service term - site, school district, PSP, USU)
- **10 week *service term*** (end of May/beginning of June-beginning/mid August), **full-time** hours
- **Direct service *and* indirect service** okay
- **Program focus** on meal access, youth substance abuse, *and/or* summer learning

Typical Timeline

- **January**
 - a. Pre-application orientation and letter of intent request sent out
- **February-beginning of March**
 - a. PSP receives proposal request from CNCS State Office
 - b. PSP makes call for site applications
 - c. Site Supervisors submit site applications
 - d. PSP assembles and submits proposal to CNCS State Office
- **Beginning-mid March**
 - a. CNCS sends PSP acceptance/denial notice, PSP sends acceptance/denial notice to Site Supervisors

Typical Timeline (ctd...)

- **Mid-end of March**
 - a. PSP creates and posts job listings, after approval of Site Supervisor
- **All of April**
 - a. Active recruitment from all parties. PSP schedules interview dates/times with sites, sends applicant folders to Site Supervisors, schedules interviews with accepted applicants, interviews held at sites
- **End of April-beginning of May**
 - a. Site Supervisors send PSP top candidates, PSP sends candidates offer(s)
 - b. PSP handles hiring with AmeriCorps and (possibly) USU
- **End of May/beginning of June-beginning/end of August**
 - a. Summer Associates start service under daily supervisor of Site Supervisor. Site Supervisor and site staff assist with site-specific training
 - b. PSP organizes: 1 full-day orientation on first day of service, 2-3 site visits, 1 service project, 1 end-of-service celebration

The Application

- **Most important components**

- **# of Summer Associates requested**
- **Priority program focus area** (meal access, substance abuse, and/or summer learning)
 - Summer learning can look like training volunteers, community members, and staff; raising awareness for programs, youth camps, workshops, community education programs)
- **Primary projects and specific activities**
- **Required objectives and outcomes:** 2 objectives required w/ 1 quantitative outcome per objective. Also 2 additional outcomes for total # clients and disadvantaged clients
 - Example: If volunteers and/or donations are an important aspect of summer program, add it as an outcome!

- **Other components**

- Site Supervisor (not another AmeriCorps member)
- Recruitment plan
- Challenge to be addressed (tie to poverty, more detail than selecting focus area)

SA Reporting - Objectives, Outcomes/Performance Measures, VAD

- PSP is required by federal grant guidelines to report on certain service aspects
 - Indicate alignment with initial proposal and success of program
 - Strengthen justification for future Summer Associate proposal
- All SAs complete reporting form at least 2 times during service term
 - SAs will probably ask Site Supervisors for reporting information during reporting time

SA Reporting - Objectives, Outcomes/Performance Measures, VAD (ctd...)

- All components come from original site application
 - VISTA Assignment Description (VAD): general service outline for SA to reference, similar to job description
 - Objectives and outcomes indicated on site application used on each site VAD
 - “Outcomes” indicated on application are what PSP refers to as “Performance Measures”
 - SA reporting form will use term “Performance Measures”
 - PSP is, at a minimum, required to report on total # clients served and # disadvantaged clients served
- Sites do *not* have to have data reported in *all* measures asked for on SA reporting form
 - Example: reporting form asks SAs to report on how many volunteers were coordinated. If they did coordinate volunteers, they will report the # of volunteers. If they did not coordinate volunteers, they will put 0.

Interviews and Hiring

- Site Supervisors will select a date and time slot during a week in April, specified by PSP, to hold 15-minute interviews
- Applicants are asked in application to indicate top 2 preferred sites
- PSP will send applicant folders to Site Supervisors, who will communicate top preferred applicants to be interviewed
- PSP invites applicants to interviews and schedules them within timeslot
- Following interview, Site Supervisor will promptly email list top candidates to PSP
- Once interview week is finished, PSP will send offers to applicants, who will decide which offer to accept
- All hiring/onboarding managed by PSP

Expectations - Site Supervisor

- Email of intent
- Specific, clear, complete application
- Recruitment, interviews, timely communication
- Site-specific training
- Delegate day-to-tasks
- Daily supervision (can not be from another AmeriCorps member)
- Management of minor conflict at site
- Encourage SAs to pursue activities that bring in support or new aspects to program (volunteers, donations, new systems/services, etc.)
- Signing “site supervisor” line of time card

Expectations - PSP Office

- Recruitment, interviews, timely communication
- Hiring/onboarding
- Summer Associate orientation
- Coordinate reporting (create reporting form, make sure SAs complete reporting forms, submit final report to federal HQ)
- Monthly site visits
- Summer service project and end of year celebration
- Sign and file time cards
- Manage major, service-related issues, as needed/requested by Site Supervisor or SA

Bring on the questions!

Email shonna.ferree@usu.edu if you have any questions.