

§ 2556.180 What are the limitations on VISTA sponsors receiving funding for the direct cost of supporting volunteers?

(a) AmeriCorps will not obligate funding for the direct cost of supporting volunteers that is:

(1) More than 30 percent of VISTA funds appropriated in any fiscal year; or

(2) For a new project that was not selected through a competitive process.

(b) The “direct cost of supporting volunteers” includes only those funds that are paid directly to VISTA members, leaders, or summer associates, such as: living allowance; travel reimbursements, including the Settling In Allowance; End of Service Benefits, including the cash stipend; and other expenses paid directly to the member, leader, or summer associate, as determined by the VISTA Director.

Subpart C—VISTA Members

§ 2556.200 Who may serve as a VISTA?

An individual may serve as a VISTA if all the following requirements are met as of the date the individual takes the oath or affirmation, as appropriate, to enter VISTA service:

(a) The individual is at least eighteen years of age. There is no upper age limit.

(b) The individual is a United States citizen or national, or is legally residing within a State.

§ 2556.205 What commitments and agreements must an individual make to serve in the VISTA program?

(a) To the maximum extent practicable, the individual must make a full-time commitment to remain available for service without regard to regular working hours, at all times during their period of service, except for authorized periods of leave.

(b) To the maximum extent practicable, the individual must make a full-time personal commitment to alleviate poverty and poverty-related problems, and to live among and at the economic level of the low-income people served by the project.

(c) The individual’s service cannot be used to satisfy service requirements of

parole, probation, or community service prescribed by the criminal justice system.

(d) A VISTA candidate or member agrees to undergo an investigation into their criminal history or background as a condition of enrollment, or continued enrollment, in the VISTA program.

§ 2556.210 Who reviews and approves an application for VISTA service?

AmeriCorps has the final authority to approve or deny applications for VISTA service.

Subpart D—Terms, Protections, and Benefits of VISTA Members

§ 2556.300 Is a VISTA considered a Federal employee and is a VISTA considered an employee of the sponsor?

(a) Except for the purposes listed here, a VISTA is not considered an employee of the Federal Government. A VISTA is considered a Federal employee only for the following purposes:

(1) Federal Tort Claims Act—28 U.S.C. 1346(b); 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680;

(2) Federal Employees’ Compensation Act—5 U.S.C. chapter 81, subchapter 1;

(3) Hatch Act—5 U.S.C. chapter 73, subchapter III;

(4) Internal Revenue Service Code—26 U.S.C. 1 *et seq.*; and

(5) Title II of the Social Security Act—42 U.S.C. 401 *et seq.*

(b) A VISTA is not considered a Federal employee for any purposes other than those set forth in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) A VISTA is not covered by Federal or State unemployment compensation related to their enrollment or service in the VISTA program. A VISTA’s service is not considered employment for purposes of eligibility for, or receipt of, Federal, State, or any other unemployment compensation.

(d) Monetary allowances, such as living allowances that VISTAs receive during VISTA service, are not considered wages. Monetary allowances, such as living allowances, that VISTAs receive during VISTA service are considered income for such purposes as Federal income tax and Social Security.

(e) A VISTA is not, under any circumstances, considered an employee of