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Subpart A—General Information

§ 2556.1 What is the purpose of the VISTA program?

(a) The purpose of the VISTA program is to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate and alleviate poverty and poverty-related problems throughout the United States and certain U.S. territories. To effect this purpose, the VISTA program encourages and enables individuals from all walks of life to join VISTA to perform, on a full-time basis, meaningful and constructive service to assist in the solution of poverty and poverty-related problems and secure opportunities for self-advancement of persons afflicted by such problems.

(b) The VISTA program objectives are to:

- (1) Generate private sector resources;
- (2) Encourage volunteer service at the local level;
- (3) Support efforts by local agencies and community organizations to achieve long-term sustainability of projects; and
- (4) Strengthen local agencies and community organizations to carry out the purpose of the VISTA program.

§ 2556.3 Who should read this part?

This part may be of interest to:

(a) Private nonprofit organizations, public nonprofit organizations, State government agencies, local government agencies, Federal agencies, and Tribal government agencies who are participating in the VISTA program as sponsors, or who are interested in participating in the VISTA program as sponsors.

(b) Individuals 18 and older who are serving as a VISTA, or who are interested in serving as a VISTA.

§ 2556.5 What definitions apply in this part?

Act or *DVSA* means the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, Public Law 93–113 (42 U.S.C. 4951 *et seq.*).

Alternative oath or *affirmation* means a pledge of VISTA service taken by an individual who legally resides within a State, but who is not a citizen or national of the United States, upon that

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individual's enrollment into the VISTA program.

AmeriCorps means the Corporation for National and Community Service, established pursuant to section 191 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12651, which operates as AmeriCorps.

Applicant for VISTA service means an individual who is in the process of completing, or has completed, an application for VISTA service as prescribed by AmeriCorps, but who has been not been approved by AmeriCorps to be a candidate.

Application for VISTA service means the materials prescribed by AmeriCorps to determine an individual's eligibility and suitability for VISTA service.

Assistance means VISTAs, leaders, or summer associates. "Assistance" also means technical assistance or training of VISTAs, leaders, summer associates, candidates, sponsors, or supervisors that are provided from funds appropriated by Congress for the purpose of supporting activities under the DVSA. "Assistance" also means grant funds.

Candidate, when used in the context of an individual who has applied for VISTA service, means an individual whose application for VISTA service has been approved by AmeriCorps, but who has not taken an oath, alternative oath, or affirmation to serve in the VISTA program. Candidates may include those who were enrolled in the VISTA program at a prior time.

Cost share means when an entity, such as a VISTA sponsor, reimburses AmeriCorps part or all of the expenses associated with the operation of a VISTA project, such as the costs for one or more VISTAs, leaders, or summer associates placed in a VISTA project.

Deputy Regional Administrator means an AmeriCorps official who reports directly to the Regional Administrator and oversees the day-to-day regional operations to ensure the quality of program design and delivery.

Education award or Segal AmeriCorps Education Award means an end-of-service monetary benefit from AmeriCorps' National Service Trust that is directed to designated educational institutions and is awarded to certain qualifying

VISTAs who successfully complete an established term of VISTA service.

Enroll, enrolled, or enrollment, when used in the context of VISTA service, refers to the status of an individual admitted to serve in the VISTA program. The enrollment period commences when the candidate takes the Oath to serve in the VISTA program and ends upon their termination from a term of service in the VISTA program. The enrollment period may begin on a date earlier than the first day of a service assignment of an enrolled VISTA member.

Full-time, when used in the context of VISTA service, means service in which a VISTA, leader, or summer associate remains available for service without regard to regular working hours.

Leader, a leader, or a VISTA leader means a VISTA member who is enrolled for full-time VISTA service and who is also subject to the terms of subpart G of this part.

Living allowance or living allowance payment means a monetary benefit paid for subsistence purposes to a VISTA member during VISTA service.

Memorandum of Agreement means a written agreement between AmeriCorps and a sponsor regarding the terms of the sponsor's involvement and responsibilities in the VISTA program.

Nonpartisan election means:

(1) An election in which none of the candidates for nomination or election represents a political party for which candidates for Presidential elector received votes in the last preceding election at which Presidential electors were selected; or

(2) An election involving a question or issue which is not specifically identified with a political party, such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, approval of a municipal ordinance, or any question or issue of a similar character.

Oath means an avowal to VISTA service, taken in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 3331, by an individual who is a U.S. citizen or national. The taking of the Oath effects an individual's enrollment into the VISTA program.

On-duty or during service time means when a VISTA is either performing VISTA service or scheduled to do so.

Portfolio Manager means an AmeriCorps official who reports to a Senior Portfolio Manager and serves as a technical advisor to current and prospective grantees and sponsors for effective, timely, and compliant administration of grant awards.

Project or *VISTA project* means a set of VISTA activities operated and overseen by, and the responsibility of, a sponsor, and assisted under this part to realize the goals of title I of the DVSA.

Project applicant or *VISTA project applicant* means an entity that submits an application to AmeriCorps to operate, oversee, and be responsible for a VISTA project.

Project application or *VISTA project application* means the application materials prescribed by AmeriCorps to determine an applying entity's eligibility and suitability to operate, oversee, and be responsible for, a VISTA project.

Project director or *VISTA project director* means a staff person, of legal age, of the sponsor, who has been assigned by the sponsor the overall responsibility for management of the VISTA project.

Regional Administrator means an AmeriCorps official who is the head of a designated region for AmeriCorps and responsible for driving, managing, and overseeing the strategic direction and operations of the Region Office.

Senior Portfolio Manager means an AmeriCorps official who reports to a Deputy Regional Administrator and supervises a team of portfolio managers and manages an advanced portfolio of grants and program development.

Sponsor, *VISTA sponsor*, or *VISTA project sponsor* means a public agency or private non-profit organization that receives assistance under title I of the DVSA and is responsible for operating and overseeing a VISTA project. A public agency may be a Federal, State, local or Tribal Government.

State, when used as a noun, means one of the several States in the United States of America, District of Columbia, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Stipend or *end-of-service stipend* means an end-of-service lump-sum monetary benefit from AmeriCorps that is awarded to certain qualifying VISTAs who

successfully complete an established term of VISTA service.

Subrecipient means a public agency or private non-profit organization that enters into an agreement with a VISTA sponsor to receive one or more VISTAs, and to carry out a set of activities, assisted under this part, to realize the goals of title I of the DVSA. A public agency may be a Federal, State, local or Tribal Government.

Summer associate means a VISTA member who is enrolled for VISTA service, during a period between May 1 and September 15, and who is also subject to the terms of subpart H of this part. A summer associate must be available to provide continuous full-time service for a period of at least eight weeks and a maximum of ten weeks.

Supervisor or *VISTA Supervisor* means a staff member, of legal age, of the sponsor or a subrecipient, who has been assigned by the sponsor or the subrecipient the responsibility for day-to-day oversight of one or more VISTAs.

Tribe means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaskan native village or regional village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which is recognized by the United States or the State in which it resides as eligible for special programs and services provided to Indians because of their status as Indians.

VISTA Case Manager means an AmeriCorps official who reports to the VMSU Director and manages service status changes of VISTA members (e.g., removals, terminations, and transfers).

VISTA member, *a VISTA*, or *the VISTA* means an individual enrolled full-time in the VISTA program, as authorized under title I of the DVSA.

VISTA program means the Federal Government program named Volunteers in Service to America and authorized under title I of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4950 *et seq.*

VISTA service means VISTA service activities performed by a VISTA member while enrolled in the VISTA program.

VMSU Director means the AmeriCorps official who is Director of the VISTA

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Member Support Unit and manages daily operations of the VMSU to provide services to potential, current, and former VISTA members.

§2556.7 Are waivers of the regulations in this part allowed?

Upon a determination of good cause, the Chief Executive Officer of AmeriCorps may, subject to statutory limitations, waive any provisions of this part.

Subpart B—VISTA Sponsors

§2556.100 Which entities are eligible to apply to become VISTA sponsors?

The following types of entities are eligible to apply to become VISTA sponsors and thereby undertake projects in the U.S. and certain U.S. territories:

- (a) Private nonprofit organizations.
- (b) Public nonprofit organizations.
- (c) State government or state government agencies.
- (d) Local government or local government agencies.
- (e) Tribal government or tribal government agencies.

§2556.105 Which entities are prohibited from being VISTA sponsors?

(a) An entity is prohibited from being a VISTA sponsor or from otherwise receiving VISTA assistance if a principal purpose or activity of the entity includes any of the following:

(1) *Electoral activities.* Any activity designed to influence the outcome of elections to any public office, such as actively campaigning for or against, or supporting, candidates for public office; raising, soliciting, or collecting funds for candidates for public office; or preparing, distributing, providing funds for campaign literature for candidates, including leaflets, pamphlets, and material designed for print or electronic media.

(2) *Voter registration activities.* Any voter registration activity, such as providing transportation of individuals to voter registration sites; providing assistance to individuals in the process of registering to vote, including determinations of eligibility; or disseminating official voter registration material.

(3) *Transportation to the polls.* Providing voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or raising, soliciting, or collecting funds for such activities.

(b) Any organization that, subsequent to the receipt of VISTA assistance, makes as one of its principal purposes or activities any of the activities described in paragraph (a) of this section is subject to the procedures in §§2556.125 through 2556.145.

§2556.110 What VISTA assistance is available to a sponsor?

(a) A sponsor may be approved for one or more VISTA positions.

(b) A sponsor, upon review and approval by AmeriCorps to establish a leader position or positions, and in accordance with criteria set forth at subpart G of this part, may be approved for one or more leader positions.

(c) A sponsor, upon approval by AmeriCorps to establish a summer associate position or positions, and in accordance with criteria set forth at subpart F of this part, may be approved for one or more summer associate positions.

(d) A sponsor may be eligible to receive certain grant assistance under the terms determined and prescribed by AmeriCorps.

(e) A sponsor may receive training and technical assistance related to carrying out the purposes of title I of the DVSA.

§2556.115 Is a VISTA sponsor required to provide a cash or in-kind match?

(a) A sponsor is not required to provide a cash match for any of the assistance listed in §2556.110.

(b) A sponsor must provide supervision, workspace, service-related transportation, and any other materials necessary to operate and complete the VISTA project and support the VISTA.

§2556.120 How does a VISTA sponsor ensure the participation of people in the communities to be served?

(a) To the maximum extent practicable, the people of the communities to be served by VISTA members must participate in planning, developing, and implementing programs.