



Working with the AmeriCorps VISTA to Build Tribal Resilience

November 22, 2016

AMERICORPS VISTA

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) began in 1965 as a domestic counterpart to the Peace Corps. VISTA, as a program, is committed to creating long term sustainable pathways out of poverty for underserved and impoverished communities across the country.



VISTAs focus on building capacity for their sponsoring institutions through grant writing, strategic planning, partnership development, volunteer training and the development of sustainable systems. VISTAs don't focus on direct services like building houses or working in soup kitchens.

Resilience AmeriCorps



Resilience AmeriCorps recruits and trains AmeriCorps VISTA members to serve economical challenged communities by developing plans and implementing projects that increase resilience-building capacity. Resilience projects involve challenges and solutions such as:

Challenges

- **Climate Change**
- **Extreme weather**
- **Financial instability**
- **Food insecurity**

Solutions

- **Long-term planning**
- **Risk communication**
- **Community loan programs**
- **Urban food production**

Native Climate Resilience Network



AIHEC is seeking Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCUs) to host full-time, college-educated, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTAs) through the TCU VISTA Program. VISTAs can help provide capacity for community-driven projects that address pressing local climate change concerns.

- **Work** with community stakeholders to identify climate-related risks and vulnerabilities
- **Facilitate** the development of a community resiliency/preparedness plan to mitigate climate-related risks
- **Build** volunteer networks to carry out resilience and community development activities
- **Focus** on expanding food security efforts by promoting local food production that supports healthy futures and economic development outcomes
- **Develop** citizen science activities for K-12 youth around local environmental issues
- **Write** grants and identify additional resources needed to sustain community resilience work

About TCU/VISTAs

■ How VISTA works:

- *Serve full-time for one year*
- *Are college-educated*
- *Receive a monthly living stipend*
- *Receive an education award of \$5,775*
- *Live in the communities they serve*

■ What TCU/VISTAs do to support your project:

- *build partnerships*
- *engage communities*
- *create workforce training strategies*
- *develop long-range strategies*
- *write grant proposals*
- *and more...*



Project Guidelines



- **Focus Areas (must choose one)**
 - *Economic Development (relating to climate resilience)*
 - *Healthy Futures (Food Sovereignty/Nutrition)*
 - *Environmental Stewardship*
 - *Youth Development (must include another focus area)*

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas>

- **Incorporate all four core principals**
 - *Capacity Building*
 - *Sustainable Solutions*
 - *Community Empowerment*
 - *Anti-Poverty Focus*

Host Site: Eligibility & Requirements

- For this opportunity, host site **must** be:
 - *a federally recognized tribe, or*
 - *a tribal organization that will work with a TCU*
- Provide supervision/mentoring of assigned VISTA
- Identify housing for VISTA, budgeted at \$350/month unless supplemented by the TCU or tribe
- Develop a 3 year project plan that your VISTA will work on



VISTA Recruitment: What to Look For

■ Successful VISTA Volunteers:

- *Commonly have Bachelor's Degree in related field or 3+ years work experience*
- *Demonstrate initiative, flexibility, and organizational skill*
- *Have an expressed interest or experience in community engagement; not necessary to have experience working with Tribal communities but certainly a plus*
- *Self-motivated workers with skills in project management*



VISTA

Volunteers In Service To America

AMERICORPS VISTA BENEFITS

- Living Stipend
- Healthcare Benefits
- Child Care Assistance
- Relocation & Settling In Allowance
- \$5,775 Segal Education Award or \$1,500 Cash Stipend
- Non-Competitive Eligibility after service to assist with hiring VISTAs for federal positions
- Professional Development



Participation Options for Tribal Organizations

AmeriCorps VISTA will cover the cost of the VISTA stipend and other benefits VISTAs receive.

An additional \$10,000 per year is required to cover recruitment, training, and management costs.

Three options are available:

- 1. Tribes and tribal organizations can work with local/regional TCU to participate in the NCRN. AIHEC covers the management costs.**
- 2. Tribes without a TCU can apply, and can choose to participate in the NCRN. AIHEC covers the management costs.**
- 3. Tribes without a TCU cover the annual VISTA management costs and implement their climate change projects.**

Application Timeline

Submissions

- Pre-applications deadline: November 28, 5pm Eastern
- Full application deadline: December 16, 5pm Eastern
- **VISTAS likely start date: May 2017** (could be sooner if recruitment is done more quickly)

You will be contacted to receive application support when the pre-application is approved.

Questions?

- BIA Climate Office: Rachael Novak, 202.219.1652 rachael.novak@bia.gov
- AIHEC: Al Kuslikis, 703.504.9828, akuslikis@aihec.org
- Conservation Legacy: Caroline Smith, (304) 533-1211, caroline@conservationlegacy.org



Check out TCUs and their VISTA projects!

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tcuvista/albums/with/72157658685035358>
- <https://tcuexchange.org/>
- Example of a current VISTA announcement/project for a Resilient VISTA volunteer to help the Fon du Lac Tribal and Community College in collaboration the Fon du Lac Band from a previous opportunity announcement:
<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=69812&fromSearch=true>

