Downtown Colorado, Inc. partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) national AmeriCorps VISTA program in 2016 to provide our Colorado communities and non-profit organizations with a VISTA member who works to build capacity for those host site organizations, whether it be a public or private non-profit entity. This report is a review of our second full year of the program in 2018 showcasing our successes, growth, and what the program can do for your organization or community.

**A Brief Review**

- **25 EVENTS HELD**
- **444 VOLUNTEERS MANAGED**
- **$236,000 CASH DOLLARS LEVERAGED**
- **$134,200 IN-KIND DOLLARS LEVERAGED**
- **$370,200 TOTAL DOLLARS LEVERAGED**
- **10 GRANTS WRITTEN**
- **35 PARTNERSHIPS CREATED**
- **18,000 TOTAL HOURS WORKED**

**Testimonials**

"Savannah provided us with a greater understanding of the housing issues facing our community. She also worked alongside a local nonprofit, the Hispanic Affairs Project, to support the city’s engagement efforts to build relationships and identify needs in order to better serve our residents. We are grateful for the VISTA program and Savannah's service in Montrose."

~ Kendall Cramer, Montrose Innovation & Citizen Engagement Grant Coordinator ~

“Aaron is an extremely valuable member of our team. He works well with everyone in our office, as well as working with several offices of the City on different projects. He is incredibly organized, sees things that need attention and jumps in to take care of them.”

~ Leslie Lewis, Director, Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development ~
Case Study: From Volunteer to Director - Economic Development in Huerfano County

Carl joined the DCI-VISTA team in February of 2018. Carl worked on a number of economic development projects in Huerfano County including heritage tourism, an industrial park, events, and a local Business Alliance. He wrote many grants ranging from a recovery grant for the wildfires of 2018, the Colorado Tourism Office, History Colorado, and the Department of Local Affairs for a business marketing grant. During Huerfano County's first year of hosting a VISTA, they were able to take on a second VISTA to build more capacity for the county to coordinate with the County Tourism office and bring more people to the region.

After Carl’s year of service, he then officially started as the temporary Director of Economic Development and Tourism for Huerfano County.

“Carl is a wonderful asset for us. It’s a mystery how someone that young can be so full of knowledge. His insight into the workings of government is remarkable. Carl stepped into the job like a native and has elevated the names of Walsenburg and Huerfano County in circles we didn’t even know existed.”

The Team

Hunter Hovenga (August 2016 - 2018)
City of Buena Vista / Buena Vista Main Street
Primary Focus: small business and economic development, historic preservation, events, and community outreach

Kiki Hooton (June 2017 - 2018)
La Plata County Local First | Durango, CO
Primary Focus: small business and economic development, sustainability, events, community outreach, and social sustainability

Rob Warner (June 2017 - 2018)
Longmont Downtown Development Authority
Primary Focus: small business and economic development, marketing and branding, graphic design, events, and community outreach.

Downtown Colorado, Inc. | Denver, CO
Primary Focus: non-profit management, communications, events, and community outreach.

Carl Young (February 2018 - 2019)
Huerfano County Economic Development
Primary focus: historic preservation, sustainable tourism, economic development

Savannah Haney (June 2018 - 2019)
City of Montrose
Primary focus: affordable housing, community outreach & development

Aaron Schultz (June 2018 - 2019)
Manitou Springs Economic Development Office
Primary Focus: community outreach & development, economic development

Andrew Curtis (April 2017 - June 2019)
VISTA Leader | Downtown Colorado, Inc.
Primary Focus: providing resources, connections, + support for all VISTA members, assists in managing the DCI-AmeriCorps Program
OTHER DCI SERVICES

Membership and Services

Champions who invest in DCI memberships - whether individual business owners, local agencies, or entire town governments - are plugged into an active statewide network of advocates and experts who have one unified goal: strengthening and sustaining business districts throughout Colorado.

DCI members can access an array of benefits from event discounts to tailored advisory services that help groups throughout Colorado learn new ideas, connect with peers, collaborate, solve challenges, and grow.

- Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program
- Educational Trainings and Events
- General strategy workshops
- Board training: URAs, DDAs
- Small Business Training
- Professional connections: Jobs & RFPs, Case Studies
- Technical Assistance Advisory Teams

Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program

The Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program is a unique team building accelerator focused on establishing a plan of work and a proposal that engages public, private, and non-profit partners to address a significant community challenge over the course of twelve months. The Colorado Challenge works to transform the community's challenge into an opportunity, to establish a proposal, financing approach, and team of community partners ready to implement their plan of action.

The program includes five phases of planning and development that will help our Colorado communities establish a plan for community-wide initiatives to foster sustainable community and economic development. This involves public, private, and non-profit partners moving forward to establish their community as a business-friendly destination for entrepreneurs and community initiatives.

More Details About the VISTA Program

Often described as “the domestic Peace Corps”, AmeriCorps-VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a federal program aimed at reducing poverty in the United States through building the capacity of the public or non-profit entities that share this goal. VISTA members apply for one year terms and are placed at various host-site communities across the country. The host-site then benefits from a full time VISTA member working on building the systems of their organization that will live on after the VISTA’s one year term.

Downtown Colorado Inc. is a sponsoring organization with the program which gives us a team of AmeriCorps VISTA members placed across the state of Colorado. All of our DCI-VISTA team members are working on objectives that relate to community and economic development, urban planning, and transit, etc. that coincide with poverty reduction and furthermore, many of our VISTA members have interests and are beginning their career in these fields.

Our philosophy and strategy with the AmeriCorps VISTA program is that laying the foundations today of sound community planning will build stronger and more equitable communities tomorrow.