What is the AmeriCorps VISTA Program?

The AmeriCorps VISTA program is a part of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an idea originating from the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and was officially established under CNCS in 1993. The program’s goal is to fight poverty in America by organizing stipended volunteers across the country in order to build capacity in non-profit and public entities to better enact their service to the community.

What do the VISTA’s do?

VISTAs work 40 hours a week to grow the capacity of your organization. VISTAs typically focus on grant writing and fundraising, creating collateral materials, streamlining programs and processes, designing new programs and building volunteer networks.

Why Downtown Colorado, Inc.?

Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) has been an intermediary organization with the VISTA program since early 2016. We have a team of VISTA members throughout the state which fit under the mission of both DCI, building stronger downtowns, and AmeriCorps which is to fight poverty. What separates DCI from other VISTA programs is that DCI offers the host site and VISTA a wide array of resources, experts, technical assistance, and access to a network of peer communities working on similar issues.

Host Site Requirements

The Local Program is responsible for day to day supervision, providing a three year project of your choosing for the VISTA, and workspace for the VISTA. The Local Program should plan to pay a program administration fee and assist with housing for the VISTA. To be considered for the program, you would create a VISTA Activity Description (VAD) that serves as a three year plan of work for the VISTA. When creating the plan, please remember the VISTA program is geared toward increasing organizational capacity and alleviating poverty. Some examples of this might include:

- Increasing capacity: Building membership, improving communications, building a program, grant writing, etc.

- Poverty Alleviation: Ensuring accessibility for all demographics, increasing opportunity for small business, programs to support low to middle income residents or businesses in a local economy, planning for people experiencing homelessness, etc.

How to Apply

To learn more about the program or the process of attaining a VISTA, feel free to call Andrew Curtis, VISTA Leader at 303-282-0625. Or, visit our website at downtowncoloradoinc.org under services.
Current VISTAs

Val Peterson, Downtown Colorado, Inc. | Mersdai McClure, Longmont Downtown Development Authority | Evan Ksander, Huerfano County | Aaron Schultz, Manitou Springs | Savannah Haney, Montrose | Sierra Jeter, Community Builders, Glenwood Springs | Karena Versalovic, Arts District on Santa Fe, Denver | Marina Jones, Town of Collbran | Andrew Curtis, VISTA Leader, Denver

Benefits of being a DCI member

Downtown Colorado, Inc. connects members to resources focused on the vibrancy of Colorado downtown. Providing members with critical tools ensures that communities of all sizes are equipped to face challenges and spark innovation. DCI’s peer-to-peer educational programming, customized training, and committee participation offers a broad range of options to learn and share successes.

With more than 362 active organizational members, DCI is composed of local government and commercial districts as well as private sector businesses, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies that support local communities. DCI members represent all regions and types of economy including farming, ranching, and mining, resort, rural, urban, and suburban.

Contact our offices for any inquiries about membership at membership@downtowncoloradoinc.org or 303.282.0625.