

AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers In Service to America) has a mission to strengthen efforts to eliminate poverty related problems in the United States by encouraging volunteer service at the local level and strengthening the capacities of local agencies and organizations. AmeriCorps VISTA members will mobilize community resources, recruit and train volunteers, assist in program development, participate in fundraising activities, plan community meetings, and support and create sustainability of the assigned project.

Be part of an important new statewide program to strengthen and expand citizen disaster preparedness and response capabilities – focusing on low income and special needs populations – through **Iowa VISTA Disaster Corps**. The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service has initiated a three-year “AmeriCorps*VISTA Disaster Corps” project that will begin in November 2008. VISTA members will strategically develop and/or strengthen a variety of disaster preparedness & response initiatives throughout the state.

There are four positions available with this project.

Statewide Recovery and Development Specialist – the main objective of this position will be to create a statewide volunteer and donations plan. This position will be housed at the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service in Des Moines.

Long Term Recovery Committee Specialist – the main objective of this position will be to create sustainable practices for disaster recovery including developing local VOADs. This position will be housed in Waterloo.

Capacity Building Specialist – the primary focus of this position will be to create a plan for disaster volunteer coordination in developing Volunteer Reception Centers. This position will be housed at the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service in Des Moines.

Long Term Community Recovery Specialist – the main objective of this position is to develop and implement long term recovery plans for communities impacted by the recent disaster. This person will be housed at the Rebuild Iowa Office in Des Moines. Extensive travel is required.

Benefits of AmeriCorps VISTA service:

- Living allowance (\$9,996, annually)
- Choice of Education Award (\$4,725) or End of Service Stipend (\$1,200)
- Health insurance coverage
- Childcare assistance if eligible
- Student loan forbearance or deferment (most Federal loans).
 - Relocation allowance.
 - Professional Development opportunities including intensive disaster training.
 - AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve full-time, for one year and receive a lifetime of experience.

Qualifications and Skills:

- Must be at least 18 years of age and be a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident.
- Must have High School diploma or GED; college degree or 2-5 years experience preferred
- Must be willing to commit to one year of service.
- Must have valid Iowa driver's license as VISTA member will be required to travel throughout Iowa.
- Comfortable speaking in public.
- Ability to work independently and be a positive and productive member of a work team.
- Computer skills (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Outlook).
- Experience or high level of interest in at least one of the following areas:
 - Community and Economic Development
 - Community Outreach & Empowerment
 - Disaster Relief
 - Health
 - Homeland Security
 - Leadership Development
 - Public Safety
 - Resource Access Issues
- Leadership Potential:
 - Strong written and oral communication skills
 - Ability to create and implement program plan
 - Comfort with team facilitation, training and management roles
- Commitment to Service:
 - Strong desire to dedicate full year of service
 - Belief in power of volunteers as community problem-solving strategy
- Interpersonal Skills:
 - Ability to work well in diverse teams
 - Ability to relate easily with diverse site staff, program partners, volunteers, and program participants
- Flexibility:
 - Eagerness to learn
 - Willingness to try new approaches
 - Positive attitude

STATEWIDE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT (1)

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service project development VISTAs will build the capacity of Iowa's volunteer management sector to meet community needs, including disaster response and preparedness, and poverty by providing training and technical assistance to benefit the regional activities conducted under this project: creating and sustaining peer-to-peer networks (including volunteer managers, emergency response agencies and others), supporting outreach and marketing of volunteerism; developing training materials; and increasing use of the statewide online volunteer portal as a volunteer management tool.

Member Activities Include:

- Identify resources and develop and implement plan to assist low income and special needs populations (older adults, non-English speaking and persons with disabilities) to become better prepared for disasters.
- Collaborate and build partnerships to build the capacity for establishment and utilization of Volunteer Reception Centers during times of disaster.
- Participate in meetings with the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council, Long Term Recovery Committee Planning and other state committees as needed.
- Build on current commission programs and partnerships to strengthen disaster response, such as AmeriCorps, RSVP, mentoring programs, commissioners, etc.
- Participate in meetings/trainings with state and county emergency management officials to develop partnerships and identify model projects and potential pilot communities.
- Deliver trainings to local volunteer organizations, emergency management officials and others on disaster preparedness and response.
- Fundraise for on-going support and development of statewide volunteer management for disaster response and other community needs.
- Research, identify and focus efforts on areas that are high risk for disaster and/or areas that are underserved for disaster response as compared with population.
- Develop models, including templates, tools and resources to provide "mobile" response in areas of the state that are unserved/underserved for disaster.
- Research, identify, test and establish innovative models for response – such as AmeriCorps teams, college response teams, etc.
- Develop, recruit for, manage and support Alternative Spring Break opportunities in areas impacted by disaster. Develop project model and supporting materials to offer this service in future disasters.
- Coordinate monthly reporting, documentation and record keeping between the Commission, Volunteer Centers and project partners as well as quarterly reporting to CNCS.
- Provide training and technical assistance to VISTA members and project partners and work to strengthen and expand the VISTA project.

AMERICORPS*VISTA LONG TERM RECOVERY DISASTER SPECIALIST (1)

Members assigned to this community-based project will work with local Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) and/or other alternative community organizations and service providers to help restore the well-being of area residents affected by the tornado and flooding events in Iowa. Members will identify local resources and needs, and mobilize volunteer and other resources to address the long term housing, health, and other basic human needs of affected families and individuals. They will also work with the LTRCs to help them build capacity to be ready for future disasters. This position will be supervised by Michael Stadie, Lutheran Disaster Services.

Member Activities include:

- Facilitate bringing together faith-based and social service organizations, civic groups, and business and industry to determine long term needs.
- Assist LTRCs at each local level with developing a Memorandum of Understanding and Standard Operating Procedures for working together in their long term recovery efforts.
- Assist with the identification and mobilization of organizations that will provide their support services as part of the LTRC.
- Serve as training liaison to LTRCs that will bridge the service gap from organizations such as FEMA and Red Cross to local entities.
- Recruit community volunteers to serve, primarily on a part-time basis, in various capacities to meet the overall needs of the project.
- Serve as volunteer coordinator between local groups and volunteer resources coming in to serve.
- Assist LTRCs or alternative entities with setting up systems for conducting, gathering, storing data, conducting assessments, etc.
- Help set up infrastructure that will address ongoing long-term recovery needs after major disasters have occurred, including development of volunteer assignment descriptions.
- Assist with development and delivery of disaster awareness education (including a disaster plan) to area residents for better preparedness for future disasters.
- Organize fundraising events to support building, debris removal, etc. for victims not covered by private insurance.
- Facilitate the transition of the LTRC into local VOAD/COAD as appropriate.
- Develop communication plan for the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council and LTRC's.
- Develop and implement plan to provide case advocacy for counties not covered by LTRC's.

AMERICORPS*VISTA CAPACITY BUILDING SPECIALIST (1)

AmeriCorps*VISTA member will interact with community leaders in order to develop a comprehensive volunteer management plan and to build the capacity of Volunteer Centers and Information and Referral agencies to respond to disaster. These activities will focus on faith and community-based organizations in order to effectively address a current gap in disaster preparedness and relief efforts: participation by low-income communities and to specifically address groups under-represented in Iowa: minorities. The AmeriCorps*VISTA will directly support and develop these efforts through outreach, volunteer recruitment, training and retention, and program planning and development.

Member Activities include:

- Assist with the development of a disaster and volunteer management plan.
- Assist with the development and ongoing needs of the local Long Term Recovery Committees.
- Develop and implement plan to identify resources available to region.
- Assist with development of local VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) or COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster)
- Attend disaster related meetings, events and trainings.
- Strong communication skills (written and oral).
- Ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously.
- Ability to work closely with staff, local leaders, and citizens from disadvantaged communities.
- Develop plan to implement Volunteer Reception Center in community and/or region during times of disaster. Have a scalable plan, with identified volunteer leadership, schedules, position descriptions, location, etc. Determine service area capabilities and partners to ensure success and sustainability.
- Fundraise and gather resources to support initiatives.
- Research and identify sustainable projects and activities for the volunteer center, with particular emphasis on low-income and special needs populations.
- Identify and provide (or coordinate provision) of disaster trainings, particularly around volunteer management and referrals during times of disaster.
- Work with local disaster agencies to identify service gaps and challenges and promote these opportunities to the general public.
- Work to identify roles for other community and ICVS partners, such as national service, community clubs, school groups, faith communities, etc.

AMERICORPS*VISTA LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY SPECIALIST (1)

The VISTA Member assigned to this community-based project will work with local Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) and/or other alternative community organizations and service providers to help restore the well-being of area residents affected by the floods and tornadoes of spring/summer 2008 in Iowa. The Member will identify local needs and associated resources, assist in the development of disaster recovery plans, and identify and mobilize volunteers. The Member will also work with the LTRCs to help them build capacity to ready communities for future disasters.

Member Activities include:

- Assist in organizing public meetings, help create fliers and draft press releases, and contact local media sources to publicize meetings.
- Facilitate break-out groups during public meetings and write-up meeting minutes
- Assist with the development of recovery plans and projects that address community recovery needs within specific sectors (i.e. housing); this may include drafting text and creating tables, graphics, and timelines.
- Research funding opportunities for proposed projects, including private foundations, state, and federal programs.
- Assist with the identification and mobilization of organizations that will provide their support services as part of the LTRC.
- Assist in the completion of a minimum of 5 grant applications for LTRC projects identified in recovery plans or listed as priorities by the State of Iowa and the local community.
- Recruit community volunteers to serve, primarily on a part-time basis, in various capacities to meet the overall needs of the project; help set up infrastructure that will address ongoing long-term recovery needs after major disasters have occurred, including development of volunteer assignment descriptions.
- Develop and deliver 3 Sustainable Resource Fairs/Education/Outreach workshops in conjunction with EPA, DOE, nonprofits, etc. in flood-impacted communities; target public education of environmental and sustainable issues.
- Facilitate grant-writing workshops for 3-10 communities impacted by the disasters.