

Literacy Leadership Program Requirements and Benefits

Literacy Minnesota AmeriCorps VISTA



Review this list for important details of AmeriCorps VISTA service. [The VISTA Member Handbook provides more information.](#) **Questions?** Contact Melissa Laubach at mlaubach@literacymn.org or 651-251-9088.

- The Literacy Leadership program is focused on **building capacity**. Literacy Leaders **do not directly serve** learners or program participants, but instead improve the effectiveness of programs or increase the scale and reach of programs.
- AmeriCorps service in the VISTA program is a **full-time commitment** for a **full calendar year**, which typically means serving **Monday – Friday, business hours**.
- Literacy Leaders must be available for **both Virtual Member Orientation webinars** prior to and on the first day of service. Service start dates will be announced soon but typically occur at least once monthly.
- Part-time employment and part-time enrollment in classes outside service is **allowed with prior approval** from a direct supervisor and Literacy Minnesota if it **does not conflict with service or policies**.
- **AmeriCorps members** receive a pre-tax biweekly living allowance based on the poverty rate of [the county their service site is located](#). Federal taxes are taken out, but state taxes are not.
- **AmeriCorps members** are eligible for a **\$7,395** Education Award (can be used within seven years for future tuition or to repay qualified federal student loans) or a **\$1,800** cash stipend. Both are awarded upon successful completion of service.
 - **VISTAs Leaders** are eligible for a **\$7,395** Education Award (can be used within seven years for future tuition, or to repay qualified federal student loans) or a **\$3,000** cash stipend, which is awarded upon successful completion of service.
 - The Education Award is only available to U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals or Lawful Permanent Residents.
- AmeriCorps members **relocating from at least 50 miles away** qualify for a Settling-In Allowance (**\$750** for moving expenses, a security deposit on apartment, etc.) and a Travel Allowance (**\$0.40 per mile** reimbursed for travel from home of record to service site). The move must be at least 50 miles from your **permanent address** (not a temporary/college address) and must occur within **two months** on either side of your start date.
- AmeriCorps members with health insurance (through family, Medicaid or the Health Insurance Marketplace) are eligible for the **AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare Allowance**, which covers up to **\$7,900** of out-of-pocket healthcare costs. Those without health insurance may enroll in the **AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefit Plan**.
- AmeriCorps members are eligible for **transportation reimbursement** according to the federal mileage rate (currently **\$0.67 per mile**) by Literacy Minnesota for Literacy Leader trainings and by host site for travel required for their service beyond the daily commute. Service-related travel reimbursement includes **both public transit and car**.
- AmeriCorps members may be eligible for **federal student loan forbearance** while serving, and interest reimbursement after successful completion of service (**NOTE:** you must have qualifying loans *and* elect the Education Award as your end-of-service benefit).
- AmeriCorps members may qualify for **childcare assistance benefit** if they meet eligibility requirements. To qualify for a monthly childcare benefit, your household income must not exceed the limit determined by your state; you must not receive a childcare subsidy from another source for the same child; and your child must be under 13. For more information, visit <https://americorpschildcare.com>.

- > **Public assistance benefits** received prior to starting service are unaffected by serving, but the living allowance is considered income if you apply for public assistance benefits *after* starting service.
- > Candidates **must disclose incidents** that may come up on the **criminal history check before accepting a position**. Those selected for AmeriCorps service will undergo a federal criminal history background check.
- > **Virtual Member Orientation (VMO)** is required. Enrollment and details will be managed directly through the AmeriCorps, the federal agency that oversees the Literacy Leadership AmeriCorps VISTA program.
 - **VISTA Leaders** are required to attend a Leader Orientation in the fall after the service year starts. VISTA Leaders who served with AmeriCorps immediately prior to their VISTA Leader service do not need to attend the Virtual Member Orientation.
- > Literacy Leaders must participate in an **Early Service Training** with Literacy Minnesota, as well as other **monthly** professional development trainings throughout the term of service.
- > Literacy Minnesota partners with organizations to provide AmeriCorps members with additional resources and benefits to make your year of service even more meaningful. **Additional benefits include** but are not limited to:
 - Free monthly professional development opportunities.
 - \$750 in housing assistance funds per service year.
 - \$150 of individual professional development funds per service year.
 - Access to a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program.
- > **PLEASE NOTE:** Host sites are encouraged to provide **even more** benefits to Literacy Leaders to the degree they are able, such as housing allowance, cell phone reimbursement, grocery or gas cards, or emergency funds. **Be sure to ask about benefits with individual host sites at the time of your interview.**