



# Communities of Transformation VISTA 2023 Subsite Application Overview



## Communities of Transformation

### Our Mission and Vision

The mission of Communities of Transformation (COT) is to move families from surviving to thriving by developing personal leadership skills and building authentic relationships.

The vision of Communities of Transformation is to take the church into the community, to invite the community into the church, and to build relationships that elevate families in the name of Christ. COT embraces the following additional principles:

- Developing transformational leaders
- Creating a nurturing and safe space
- Cultivating community partners
- Addressing systemic issues surrounding poverty

## Our Four Guiding Principles

### Develop Transformational Leaders

COT focuses on the development of every community member involved at a site. Individuals who are struggling with the daily challenges of poverty are able to reflect on their situation, grow their own resource base, and lead their families and community to a thriving future. Volunteers are able to reflect on the traditional response to poverty, grow in their understanding of the realities of poverty, and lead their community to a new, holistic approach to poverty alleviation.

### Create a Nurturing and Safe Space

COT prioritizes creating authentic community as a method to move families from just surviving to thriving. Every weekly meeting includes elements such as a shared meal, good news circle, small groups, and affirmations that create a nurturing atmosphere focused on strengths. A culture of

mutual respect and reciprocity enables COT to move away from the soup kitchen model to the potluck model. According to Michael Rhodes, author of *Practicing the King's Economy*, "If the soup kitchen divides the room up into haves and have nots, at a potluck, everyone gives gifts to everyone and receives gifts from everyone. So, it's not a soup kitchen where everyone gets fed, it's a potluck where everybody brings a plate." Over time, COT members develop trust that others in the community will act in their best interest. This nurturing and safe space promotes learning, personal growth, and leadership.

## Cultivate Community Partners

COT seeks to comprehensively address poverty by building alliances in the broader community. Community organizations, including churches, traditionally operate their own outreach programs. COT seeks to change that. COT sites do not duplicate services that already exist in the local community. Rather, each site collaborates with community partners to provide programs and support for its members. Additionally, each COT site includes leadership and volunteers from various churches and denominations throughout the community as well as other nonprofit organizations.

## Address Systemic Issues Surrounding Poverty

COT is concerned about the systemic issues that make it more difficult for families to move out of poverty. These issues include predatory lending, transportation barriers, limited access to quality education, and lack of employment opportunities among others. Through their participation in COT, members become more aware and engaged in such issues. COT sites may partner with other organizations that bring awareness to systemic issues through education and policy work.

# What is AmeriCorps VISTA?



## Volunteers In Service To America

AmeriCorps VISTA is a federally funded program that places members in community based agencies, full-time for one year, to help implement goals and objectives identified by the community and sponsoring agency. The role of the VISTA in the poverty problem-solving process is focused on mobilizing human and other resources to increase the capacity of low- income communities. VISTA members do not provide direct service. Direct service can mean working directly with clients, manual labor, administrative tasks not created by the member, etc. VISTAs are system builders that involve local communities and organizations in the planning and implementation of strategies and programs. The goal is for the community to operate and sustain the strategies and programs beyond the VISTA Service Member. VISTA members may be particularly helpful with building capacity through solicitation of donations (cash and in-kind), recruitment and mobilization of volunteers engaged in the fight against poverty. In addition, VISTA members can provide research, development, and implementation of innovative anti-poverty programs.

## Appropriate tasks for AmeriCorps VISTA members

All of the goals and objectives in the project work plan and activities in the VISTA Assignment Description should lead to measurable outcomes, with the goal being the sustainability of the project activities by the community being served.

The lists below are based upon CNCS AmeriCorps VISTA project application approved activities.

### AmeriCorps VISTA members should:

- Build partnerships with local and public schools and private sector organizations/businesses
- Recruit, screen, train, and coordinate volunteers
- Write grant applications for funding and other resources
- Solicit donations and other in-kind support for the project
- Publicize the project
- Create community events to support the project
- Mobilize resources around the community in support of the project

### AmeriCorps VISTA members should not:

- Serve as Members of the projects advisory council
- Provide one-on-one tutoring or teaching
- Have direct responsibility for evaluating the AmeriCorps VISTA project, the sponsoring agency, or other related agencies. They can, however, assist in the evaluation process in a supportive role, e.g. interviewing, gathering of information, etc.
- Have the direct lead in drafting/negotiating agreement between the sponsoring agency and other organizations or individuals relative to designated aspects of the AmeriCorps VISTA project
- Be solely responsible for mobilizing financial or material support for the sponsoring agency; they can assist, however, in generating this support

## Who can apply as a Subsite?

Communities of Transformation (COT) is looking for non-profits with current 501(c)(3) status in Alabama to host one or more full-time AmeriCorps VISTA Members for one year. In order to qualify for a VISTA Member, applicants must have the capacity to provide on-site supervision, dedicated workspace, computer and any other equipment necessary to complete required tasks, and mileage reimbursement for any travel required by the site. Interested organizations must complete the following application.

The Corporation for National and Community Service requires COT to pay a cost-share, which is a portion of the living allowance for a portion of our Members. The estimated living allowance for Program Year 2023 is approximately \$17,600.00 per Member. COT covers the vast majority of the cost-share, but does seek to recover a portion of this from participating sites.

Eligible Subsites will demonstrate a history of the following:

- Allocating resources to poverty alleviation efforts.
- Partnering with low-income individuals/neighborhood groups.
- Commitment to community collaboration.

\*This is important to document in your application.

In addition, commit to building the capacity of VISTA Members for future professional opportunities.

## Subsite Fees

Annual Subsite Fee: \$7,200.00

To be paid to Communities of Transformation. \$3,600.00 is due at the start of VISTA service and \$3,600.00 will be due 6 months into service.

These costs may vary from year to year based upon the cost of living increase provided to the VISTAs from the Corporation for National and Community Service, which is set by Congress. If you have questions or concerns about this fee schedule, please contact the Administrative Coordinator Janet Wooten at [admin@communitiesoftransformation.org](mailto:admin@communitiesoftransformation.org).

## VISTA Member Service

Communities of Transformation VISTA members may be used for the following types of projects:

**Economic Opportunity:** The VISTA member can work with programs that aid economically disadvantaged individuals in receiving financial literacy training, job placement, or skill development services.

**Capacity Building:** VISTA members strengthen, expand, and increase the reach of anti-poverty organizations and programs by working on projects with staff and volunteers, rather than directly with people in need. For instance, recruiting volunteers, planning a fundraiser, developing a database, or writing a curriculum.

COT will use the AmeriCorps website as its main recruiting tool. Subsite organizations will recruit within their communities for VISTA Members.

COT supports subsites with recruitment by:

- Posting all VISTA opportunities on [myamericorps.gov](https://myamericorps.gov) and COT Website
- Providing example VADS and supporting documentation
- Providing an interview screening questionnaire.

Recruitment for VISTA Members will begin once the subsite is awarded the VISTA Member slot. Candidates are generally considering more than one program, so interviews must be conducted quickly in order to obtain the person with the best qualifications.

The best practice for successful subsite recruitment is for each subsite to market their open VISTA position with their current network (newsletters, social media, staff/board, etc). While COT does our best to support each subsite and provide tools and resources, ultimately the recruitment of the VISTA Member is the subsite's responsibility.

Once a VISTA Member is interviewed by the subsite and deemed the best candidate the COT VISTA Coordinator completes a brief informational interview with the candidate. The member is then offered the position and the placement process begins.

## Application Instructions + Due Dates

1. Please read through the entire application and instructions.
2. Answer each question in as much detail as possible. Please do not exceed five (5) pages for the narrative sections. The VAD and attachments are not included in this page limit.
3. Be very specific about the goals and objectives of your proposed project.
4. All applications must be completed electronically. You will save the document after you have filled it out and send it back via email to [kwrona@communitiesoftransformation.org](mailto:kwrona@communitiesoftransformation.org). Hand written applications will not be accepted.
5. If applying as a new Subsite, please include the following attachments (in Microsoft Word or PDF format):
  - IRS Determination Letter
  - Project Budget
  - Letter of Support from Board Chair
  - List of Board Members
  - VISTA Assignment Description
6. Please be sure to submit all documents. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Notifications will be made within 30 days after submission.



# Communities of Transformation VISTA 2023 Subsite Application



## ***Organizational Information:***

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_ EIN: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of VISTA Members Requesting (Max of 2): \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Contact Information:***

This information is needed for recruiting purposes. The contact person(s) is responsible for reviewing VISTA applications, conducting interviews, and notifying COT of a final placement decision.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Immediate Supervisor:***

Same as the contact person.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



***VISTA Member Support Information:***

**A. Orientation:** All VISTA sites must conduct on-site orientation for VISTA members. COT will provide guidance in regards to on-site training once a VISTA is recruited for a site.

1. Do you agree to provide on-site training to your VISTA member? Please give a brief description of the orientation.

**B. *Supervisor Orientation:*** If a VISTA is matched with your project, your site supervisor is expected to virtually attend Site Supervisor Training. This training is a two-hour time commitment and is self-paced (you will select the date/time that works best for you). This is **required** and will help with VISTA member onboarding and support.

2. Please provide a statement of assurance the site supervisor for the project will attend these trainings and participate in these meetings.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide a statement of assurance as requested in the text above.

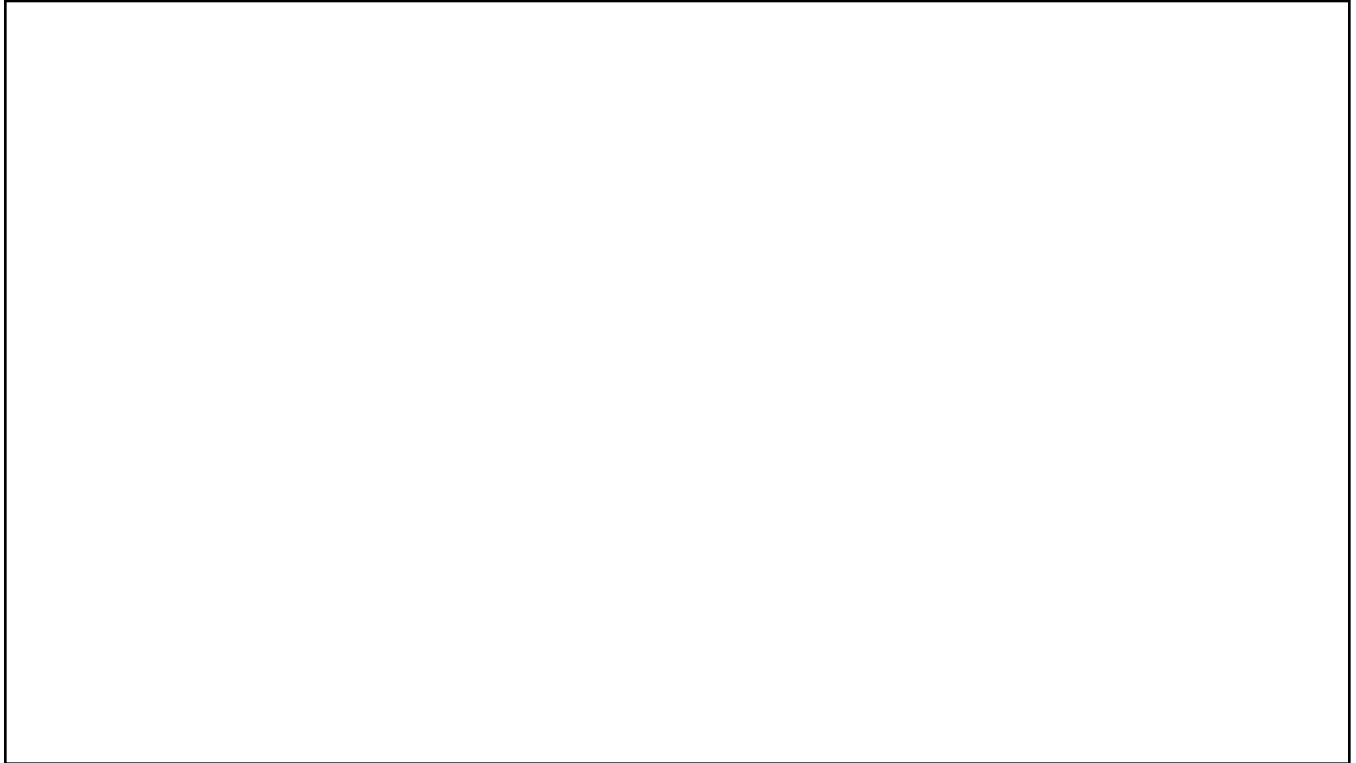
**C. *Project Budget:*** Please include a project budget demonstrating how you will support the member. Be sure to include the \$7,200.00 Subsite fee, computer and any other equipment required to complete their assignment, office supplies, and mileage reimbursement.

**D. Agency Information**

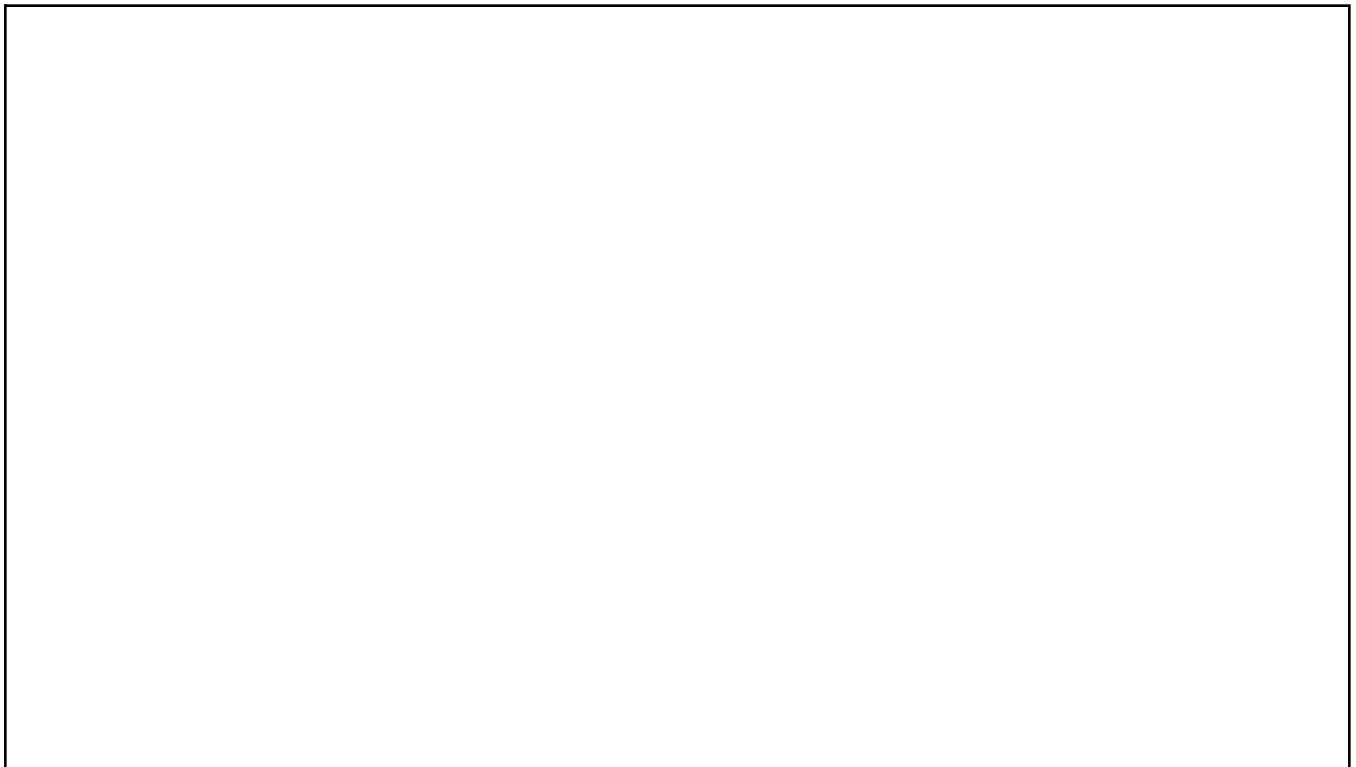
1. What is your organization's mission/vision?

2. How does this mission connect to the mission of Communities of Transformation?

3. What are the major programs and services of your organization?



4. Outline the personnel structure of your organization. Why do you feel your organization would be a good subsite for an AmeriCorps VISTA?



**E. VISTA Member Role**

- 1. Please describe the VISTA Member’s role within your organization. If the VISTA is to develop a specific project, is the project the result of a community planning effort or group strategic plan?

- 2. What are your proposed project’s results? What would be the impact on the community being served?

3. Please outline the tasks and activities the AmeriCorps VISTA member will perform during their service year. This information, along with your project description, will be used by COT to complete the VISTA Assignment Description. This short paragraph will also be used in the recruitment material.

# Sample VISTA Assignment Description

## Goal of the Project

**Connections** is a nonprofit organization which provides a peer support to individuals in mental health and/drug and alcohol recovery. The goal of the project will be to build the capacity of Connections through economic empowerment, fundraising events, and leadership development.

<b>Activity</b>	Economic Empowerment
<b>Planned Period of Time</b>	6/15/2021 – 6/15/2022
<p>The members and tenants that utilize the resources are economically disadvantaged persons in the communities in which the organizations serve. Connections has a operating budget which relies heavily on the support of one funder, a reality that is not sound method of obtaining and retaining resources long term. A method which could both benefit the organizations and the individual, which they serve would be the creation of economic opportunities, such as social enterprise or other entrepreneurial options. The VISTA member will help to development and implement this economic empowerment process.</p>	

## Step 1 Develop an economic empowerment strategy

<b>A</b>	Research economic empowerment strategies in other communities
<b>B</b>	Gain understanding of economic structure of Preble and Lime Counties through local Chambers of Commerce
<b>C</b>	Asses possible members for a economic empowerment task force

## Step 2 Create a economic empowerment class for economically disadvantaged persons

<b>A</b>	Forge relationships with Sunshine University to enlist student assistance in create the class
<b>B</b>	Collaboratively outline, design, and create the components of a class
<b>C</b>	Assemble final draft of class

**\*NOTE: This is one goal. Subsites should include at least three (3) goals for each VISTA position.**

# Your VISTA Assignment Description

## Goal One

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<b>Activity</b>	
<b>Planned Period of Time</b>	

## Step 1

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	

## Step 2

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	



## Goal Two

<b>Activity</b>	
<b>Planned Period of Time</b>	

### Step 1

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	

### Step 2

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	

## Goal Three

<b>Activity</b>	
<b>Planned Period of Time</b>	

### Step 1

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	

### Step 2

<b>A</b>	
<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>	