



VIRGINIA HOUSING ALLIANCE

AMERICORPS VISTA PROJECT

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ALLIANCE



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps VISTA Program

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was established in 1965 as a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty in America. In 1993, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs under the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). AmeriCorps VISTA Members make a year-long, full-time commitment to serve on a specific project at a nonprofit organization or public agency. They focus their efforts to build the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that fight illiteracy, improve health services, foster economic development, and otherwise assist low-income communities.

Virginia Housing Alliance's VISTA Project

The Virginia Housing Alliance (VHA), state and national partners, and our service provider partners across Virginia are working to reduce homelessness and expand affordable housing opportunities through education, advocacy, training, and capacity building. The VHA VISTA project provides the human capital necessary to deliver on the ground technical support to agencies developing, providing, or otherwise supporting homeless response systems and expanding affordable housing. VISTA Members will be placed in 18 Host Sites across the state, providing key leadership, guidance, and direction to help VHA's local partners achieve greater impact for their clients.

VHA VISTA Host Site Eligibility

An agency is eligible if it is the lead entity representing a Continuum of Care (CoC) in the Commonwealth of Virginia, local planning group (LPG) that participates in the Balance of State (BOS) Continuum of Care, or a homeless services agency with a history of collaboration with its CoC/LPG. Other eligible agencies include community action agencies, nonprofit housing developers, Faith based or nonprofit organizations with a 501(c) designation, community development financial institutions, planning district commissions, affordable housing providers, other regional service providers, or a government agency: city, county, regional, state, tribal or federal.

Since 2014, the VHA has worked with over 30 agencies across Virginia to become VHA VISTA Host Sites. A few of the agencies that have been VISTA Host Sites include:

- **Piedmont Housing Alliance**, Charlottesville, VA: *PHA is dedicated to improving financial outcomes for individuals and families by offering innovative affordable housing solutions.*
- **Maggie Walker Land Trust**, Richmond, VA: *MWCLT seeks to develop and steward permanently affordable housing opportunities to foster racially equitable communities.*
- **Miriam's House**, Lynchburg, VA: *Miriam's House works to end homelessness by connecting families with stable, affordable housing and providing the skills and supports that lead to self-sufficiency.*



Host Site Requirements

As a VHA VISTA Host Site, organizations are expected to delegate a main Site Supervisor who will work with the VISTA member and the VHA VISTA Program Manager throughout the service year. Host Sites also provide the following:

Project Planning

Host Sites will work with VHA to develop a VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) or work plan with measurable results. These documents are approved by CNCS.

Daily Supervision

VISTA Host Sites oversee the day-to-day management of the project and the VISTA member, including providing support, feedback, guidance, training, and mentoring. Site Supervisors spend an average of 15 hours per month supervising a VISTA (*expect more during the first few weeks*).

Sustainability

Host Sites develop a VISTA project with a goal to phase out the VISTA after 3 years but continue the legacy of the project.

VISTA Member Work Space

Host Sites provide a comfortable and welcoming work environment, including office spaces, computer, phone, and email access.

On Site Orientation Training

Host Sites must provide an on-site training that helps the VISTA member understand their project, meet the organization's employees, and learn the ins and outs of the organization.

Host Site Fees

The VHA VISTA project is a cost-share partnership, in which all parties contribute to the success and outcomes of the VISTA program at their Host Site. Investment by the Host Site and the community is fundamental, as the VISTA resources are intended to be short-term and for a max 3 year cycle.

What Does it Cost to Host a VHA VISTA Member?

Non-refundable Recruitment fee:	\$500
Administrative and Oversight:	\$3,000
Cost Share for VISTA member:	\$4,500
Total per site:	\$8,000

VHA is working on securing possible funding to provide 4 Host Site Scholarships for organizations whose operating budgets are less than 1 million to help cover the Host Site fee. More information can be provided by contacting the VHA VISTA Program Manager by email at hmoore@vahousingalliance.org.

Contributions and Benefits

What a Host Site contributes....

- \$8,000 Host Site Fee due in Aug. 2023
(can be invoiced monthly)
- Position specific training
- VHA Membership
- Daily supervision and support of VISTA
- Office space and equipment
ex., desk, computer, internet, phone
- Recruitment (split with VHA)

What VHA contributes and supports....

- Site Supervisor and VISTA member training throughout the year
- Grant reporting, oversight, and management requirements for CNCS
- Performance measures and data collection on VISTA impact
- Site visits throughout year
- Navigating all CNCS VISTA member benefits
- Assistance with recruitment and on-boarding of new VISTA members
- Waived fees to all VHA Conferences for VISTA
- Professional development training throughout the year for VISTAs
- Work plan (VAD) and Service Opportunity Listings development assistance
- Process VISTA members biweekly living allowance and expense reimbursements

What the VISTA member receives....

- Living Allowance
Members receive a living allowance ranging from \$17,000 to \$21,000.
- Healthcare and Childcare Benefits
- A \$6,435 education award or an \$1,800 service stipend for each VISTA member
- Relocation allowances (if eligible)

What the Host Site receives....

- One full time VISTA to serve 35-40 hours/week for 12 months
- Capacity building services identified as most critical to the organization
- Additional volunteers, grant revenue, and/or in-kind donations that the VISTA member generates for your organization*
- 3 year VISTA cycle with VHA - do not need to re-submit full application each year

**On average, a single VISTA member leverages \$125,000 for their Host Site organization through donations, grants, and partnerships. In 2020, all 14 Host Sites recorded that their organization was made more efficient and effective by their VISTA.*

"To date, Bay Aging has expanded their role in homeless services by assuming the formal role of the NNMPHC Lead Agency as recognized by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, conducting coordinated entry diversion and referral assistance for all individuals in the region experiencing a housing crisis, adopting a Department of Housing and Urban Development-approved homeless preference for Bay Aging's 317 age and income-restricted apartments, and providing COVID-19 related emergency housing assistance. This expansion is attributed to VHA's AmeriCorps VISTA capacity building and technical assistance, which acted as a spark to ignite the potential to increase these services in the area."

- Hunter LeClair, Host Site Supervisor and Program Manager at Bay Aging; Urbanna, VA

"Having a dedicated VISTA member to assist with planning membership meetings more thoroughly has really improved our process. Our VISTA coordinated an LGBTQ+ training for our membership, the first the CoC has had."

- 20/21 VHA Host Site Supervisor
*taken from Site Supervisor 6 month feedback survey

"Without our VISTA member's support, we would have not been able to connect with our community partners and would still be working through our resident list for those that need assistance."

- 20/21 VHA Host Site Supervisor
*taken from Site Supervisor 6 month feedback survey

VHA VISTA Program Priorities

The VHA VISTA program has two program priority areas:

1. **Economic Opportunity:** Virginia Housing Alliance will support capacity building projects that leverage an AmeriCorps member to develop viable communities by promoting integrated approaches that provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate-income persons. **Host Site's projects should either work to expand affordable housing, end homelessness, or prevent evictions.**
2. **Priority Populations:** Rural Communities, Indian Country (term used by CNCS), and areas of deep poverty.

Some examples of capacity building work within these two areas are the following:

Community Engagement

VHA VISTAs engage residents of low-income communities in the planning, development, and implementation of their projects while at their Host Site. They utilize community assessments and surveys to identify areas of need, lifting the voices of those that they are serving.

Sustainability

VHA VISTAs develop systems, relationships, and knowledge which they transfer to their Host Site and their community. VISTAs create a sustainability binder, detailing their work, partnerships, community contacts, and a plan on how to successfully continue their projects long-term.

Capacity Building

VHA VISTA members work behind the scenes on data analysis and implementing systems in order to make their organization more efficient and effective. This data is vital in applying for funding, evaluating programs, and ensuring equitability.

Racial Equity

VHA VISTA members work to update and ensure their organization's procedures, programs, and planning is both equitable and accessible to all communities and demographics.

Technical Assistance

VHA VISTA members approach to training and technical assistance is to connect community members, partners, and other organizations to share best practices on homelessness and/or affordable housing.

Researching Funding Opportunities

VHA VISTA members help to identify new avenues of funding for their organizations, submit grants, and aggregate data to showcase an organization's effectiveness and impact within a community.

Examples of 2020/21 VISTA Projects:

- The St. Joseph's Villa VISTA member redesigned the Crater Area Coalition for the Homeless's (CACH) website in order to increase visibility, search-ability, and traffic for service providers within the region. Alongside the website overhaul, the VISTA restructured the communications strategy by researching and implementing best programs and practices that led to a 20% increase in email open rates amongst members, clients, and providers.
- The Bay Aging VISTA Member completed a Racial Disparities Analysis which looked into racial biases in Bay Aging programs as well as the programs of two other area organizations that serve people facing a housing crisis. The Racial Disparities Analysis findings were presented in a full membership meeting of the Northern Neck Middle Peninsula Housing Coalition and the data from the report has been used in two different grant applications, one of which has been awarded to Bay Aging.
- The Maggie Walker Community Land Trust VISTA member designed and implemented a Buyer Prioritization Policy resulting from a year-long research and data collection study to help prioritize the most marginalized households for housing. This policy helped Maggie Walker Community Land Trust and their board move away from a first-come, first-serve waitlist to a more equitable and just system, helping to serve the most vulnerable populations.



VISTA Work Plan (VAD)

The VHA VISTA project utilizes a work plan, also known as the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), for the year to help Host Sites layout their project into attainable goals for their VISTA member. The VAD serves as an outline for the VISTA's main project, with activities and goals listed under the 4 main objectives that are consistent throughout all VHA VISTA Host Site projects:

Objective 1:

Develop or identify resources that increase capacity and enhance organizational sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

VISTA ACTIVITY EXAMPLES:

Establish a fundraising database to develop, track, and strengthen relationships with supporters.

Provide case examples of program models that have been proven successful in other communities in Virginia and across the nation.

Objective 2:

Enhance community and partner engagement to expand affordable housing and/or homelessness services efforts.

VISTA ACTIVITY EXAMPLES:

Convene stakeholders to advance local affordable housing policy conversations.

Expand participation in CoC/LPG efforts and engage in committees and working groups at the systems level.

Objective 3:

Improve the quality of data collection and use in decision-making.

VISTA ACTIVITY EXAMPLES :

Complete affordable housing needs assessments, market studies, etc.

Benchmark provider's project outcomes against community-wide System Performance Measures.

Objective 4:

Promote best practices in affordable housing development and/or homelessness services

VISTA ACTIVITY EXAMPLES :

Identify racially equitable procedures and policies to reduce discrimination in housing.

Research best practices to make equity driven changes to Coordinated Entry Prioritization.

On average, a single VHA VISTA member...

- Leverages \$125,000 for their host site organization through donations, grants, and partnerships.
- Creates, updates, or enhances 15 systems, procedures, and/or protocols.
- Trains 136 staff and/or community volunteers.
- Writes and submits 4 funding proposals for their host site.
- Recruits 35 new community volunteers.
- Performs 10 community assessments to identify service gaps, resource allocation, and equity throughout programming.

Since 2014, VHA VISTA members have supported homeless services and expanded affordable housing through..

- **1,285** community volunteers recruited.
- **8.8 million** cash resources leveraged.
- **\$528,624** in-kind resources leveraged.
- **833** organizations received capacity building services.
- **28** VHA VISTAs hired by their host site organizations.

Who are the VISTAs?

VISTA members pursue their assignments for a variety of reasons, ranging from wanting to make a difference in their community to advancing their career through invaluable professional development. More often than not, the VHA VISTAs have been recent graduates or folks looking for a career change.

Basic Requirements

- Be at least 18 years old; no upper age limit
- Be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident
- Pass a criminal history review
- Meet knowledge, skill, and ability requirements set by the VHA

Terms of Service

- One year (365 days), full-time assignment
- May re-enroll for a second or third year (up to five terms)
- Work a standard, 40-hour week

Benefits

- While serving, VISTAs receive a modest living allowance that places them at the economic level of the low-income residents of the community where they serve
- VISTAs get an end-of-service education or cash benefit after completing their term
- VISTAs receive health coverage and may be eligible for child care and relocation assistance

Ongoing Professional Development Training

- VISTAs attend a two-day in-person and on-line Virtual Member Orientation focused on poverty issues and run by the Corporation For National and Community Service
- Quarterly in-person trainings focused on homeless services and affordable housing topics
- On-Site Orientation Training provided by the host site to orient the VISTA to their new community and organization
- Attending VHA Conferences and forums
- Free VISTA professional development webinars throughout the year



"Through my experiences, I gained more than a certificate indicating my completion. I gained a sense of community, what it means to serve others, and a broader understanding of the work we have accomplished and the work that remains. I'm now a dedicated advocate and servant in the housing field as we work across the Commonwealth to expand housing opportunities and end homelessness."



"I can say that, without a doubt, the VHA VISTA program has given me career opportunities that I would not have been prepared or qualified for otherwise. I became a VISTA to gain knowledge and experience in the affordable housing industry, with the hope that I would have a clearer sense about taking a step towards graduate school. I was not expecting the wide array of projects and learning opportunities I would be immediately involved with, and the opportunity to be a part of a brilliant, experienced, and capable team. Being offered a full time position with my office after my service year was completed was a real honor, and I can say for certain that I would not have ended up here without first participating in the VISTA program."

- Julia MacNelly, VHA VISTA '18-19,
Program Manager at Maggie Walker Land Trust,
Current Site Supervisor

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How does the program work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

At this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, CNCS has determined that providing VISTA members the option to teleserve, up to and including full time, as needed, is necessary and appropriate support. Thus, until further notice from CNCS, AmeriCorps VISTA members may teleserve, up to and including full time, as needed and until it is appropriate to return to site full time. The VISTA member and the host site can create a teleservice plan that reflects the Host Site's COVID-19 protocol with the understanding that the VISTA is permitted to telework.

Who will employ the VISTA?

The VISTA Member is a volunteer receiving a living stipend through a federal agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The VISTA is regarded as a federal employee for limited purposes. The VISTA is affiliated with Virginia Housing Alliance, the Host Site, and the AmeriCorps VISTA Program. This VISTA will carry the title of VHA AmeriCorps VISTA Member and indicate that s/he is serving with your agency.

What a VISTA Member NOT participate in?

In compliance with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), VISTA Members and their projects cannot:

- Displace a current employee or serve in a regular staff position. VISTA Members cannot fill staff positions.
- Focus on direct-service activities.
- Be involved with political advocacy, religious instruction, voter registration, fundraising for host site match or operating expenses, union organizing, or clerical activities as part of their duties.
- Have full-time employment outside of VISTA responsibilities or be a full-time student

How can host sites be ensured that the VISTA is qualified to assist the community/agency?

The VISTA applicants are screened and interviewed by both the Host Site and VHA. VISTA Members need to be approved by the host site, VHA, and CNCS. CNCS will provide an initial orientation focused on poverty and capacity building. VHA staff will provide a training focused on affordable housing at the federal and state level and the VISTA work plans. The Host Site will orient the VISTA to the Host Site and local community during the VISTA's first few weeks of service.

How many VISTA Members can a Host Site apply for?

One VISTA Member will be placed with each Host Site. Host Sites can apply for a VISTA for up to 3 years. VHA will give priority to Host Sites that are currently in year 2 and 3 of their project to help promote sustainability.

Get to know the 2022/2023 VHA VISTA Cohort!



AHC INC FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS VISTA

Host Site: AHC Inc.

VISTA Project: AHC Inc. develops affordable housing while helping communities thrive by providing its residents with educational and social services programs to help them build more stable and successful lives. The VISTA member will focus on expanding fundraising capability for AHC in general and Resident Services specifically. Primary activities will include proposal research and development, ensuring grants compliance for program oversight, and standardizing practices in AHC's grants and individual giving data warehouses. The VISTA member will also develop targeted social media and communications campaigns to increase AHC Inc.'s visibility and showcase resident voices in the community at a time of groundbreaking organizational change.



VISTA member: Christopher Concepcion

VISTA Bio: Christopher Concepcion is ambitious and excited to join the VISTA program with AHC. He is from a small town called Carbondale in Illinois. He is a recent graduate from George Mason University with a background in Business Management. Christopher is excited to be serving as a VISTA to help give back to the community in a more profound way. He has through the past years taken an interest in the housing affordability initiatives and making sure everyone feels like they have a stable home they can always go to. In his free time, some of Chris's hobbies include volunteering, mentoring, and creating workshops to help advanced marginalized communities. He also enjoys hanging out with friends and touring the national memorials and parks with his favorite being the Lincoln Memorial.

APAH COMMUNITY ANALYST VISTA

Host Site: Arlington Partnerships for Affordable Housing (APAH)

VISTA Project: Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing's (APAH) mission is to develop, preserve, and own quality, affordable places to live, to promote stability and opportunity for their residents, and to advocate with the people and communities they serve. The VISTA member will develop a community needs assessment framework, also known as a community scan, with the goal of enabling APAH to meet their residents' needs more effectively and efficiently. The VISTA will also conduct market research in collaboration with APAH staff, aggregate resident service data to identify gaps and improvements, and develop a lived expertise committee to help compile stories and best practices that will be integrated into APAH's training and onboarding procedures.



VISTA member: Alyssa Parker

VISTA Bio: Alyssa has a Bachelor of Science in Soil and Crop Science from Colorado State University. She realized while attending she found that the causes and effects of food insecurity were of the utmost importance to her. This prompted her to serve as an AmeriCorps Vista with a food bank in Indianapolis, Indiana working to provide access in the rural counties with home delivery. While serving, Alyssa realized that many issues are connected including housing, so Alyssa applied to AmeriCorps Vista position at APAH in Arlington. Alyssa is also an incoming master's candidate at American University in Global Environmental Policy. In her free time, Alyssa enjoys podcasts, working out, being outside, and trying new vegan foods.

CITY OF VB HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM EQUITABLE STANDARDS OF CARE VISTA

Host Site: City of Virginia Beach Homeless Services Division

VISTA Project: The City of Virginia Beach Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, Homeless Services Division is committed to help house the homeless and prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless. The VISTA member will be entrusted to develop and operationalize policies and procedures that contribute to a more efficient and client-centered system of service delivery. These standards of care are critical to promote quality and equitable services across programs, enhancing the system's capacity to effectively reduce the overall number of households experiencing homelessness. The VISTA will work to ensure that all standards of service are equitable in order to effectively identify and eliminate racial and ethnic bias.



VISTA member: Danielle Cantu

VISTA Bio: Danielle Cantu is originally from Gainesville, Georgia but currently lives in Chesapeake, Virginia with her husband, Rodi, and her dog, Hugo. After graduating high school, she enlisted in the Navy and worked as an IT in Hawaii and Japan. After leaving active duty, she moved to Washington, D.C. to pursue a degree in International Affairs at George Washington University. Danielle has always been interested in volunteering and serving others. Over the years, she has volunteered with local shelters, food banks, and local clean-up projects, because she is interested in helping animals and the people in her community. Her desire to serve her community and create meaningful and lasting change drew her to Americorps VISTA program. She hopes that her work with the Virginia Housing Alliance VISTA program will produce more equitable standards of service with the goal to reduce the amount of households experiencing homelessness in her community.

HABITAT RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT VISTA

Host Site: Habitat for Humanity of Virginia

VISTA Project: Habitat for Humanity of Virginia is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. The VISTA will strengthen Habitat affiliate partnerships across the Commonwealth by leading in the design of a Capacity Building conference, identifying new avenues of funding for Habitat's loan fund, and developing resources to help streamline services for affiliates. This project plays a vital role in building the capacity of Habitat affiliates so they can develop more quality affordable housing throughout Virginia.



VISTA member: Mike West

VISTA Bio: Michael West is a retired academic researcher and policy/program analyst, focused primarily in disability services for youth and adults. He has assisted non-profit organizations with pursuing grant funds and conducting project evaluations as either a consultant or as a volunteer. He and his family have resided in Virginia since 1987. In his free time, he enjoys spoiling his granddaughter and participating in online gaming communities. Michael was attracted to the Virginia Housing Alliance's AmeriCorps VISTA program for several reasons. First, he was seeking opportunities to apply his skills to help address community needs in his adopted home state. Secondly, he has had satisfying experiences when working/volunteering with housing and employment services for homeless veterans. Finally, he is a wheelchair user, and the VHA program and H4HVA listing has specific project descriptions in evaluation and monitoring that could be performed with accommodations. Mike is a 2nd year VHA AmeriCorps VISTA, having previously served at the George Washington Regional Commission in Fredericksburg.



HOPE MULTIFAMILY PORTFOLIO SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Host Site: HOPE

VISTA Project: Helping Overcome Poverty's Existence, Inc. (HOPE) works to break generational poverty through enhanced food security and housing stability. The goal of the VISTA is to support HOPE's expanding housing portfolio, implement new equitable systems and procedures that enhance homeless and rapid re-housing services, and research best practices and models for both housing and homeless services. The VISTA will also support HOPE's work with area health care providers in collecting and aggregating critical housing and health data to support funding proposals, evaluate HOPE programs through both a racial equity and social determinant of health lens, and develop surveys that gauge service delivery satisfaction and program gaps.



VISTA member: Satya Fisher

VISTA Bio: Satya Fisher grew up on the island of Maui in Hawaii. Growing up in one of the most expensive housing markets in the United States, Fisher quickly saw the need for affordable housing. Wanting to be a part of the solution, Fisher applied to the real estate program at Virginia Tech. Wanting to specialize in affordable housing, Fisher was eager to apply to the VISTA program at HOPE. Through his year at HOPE Fisher hopes to learn about the development and financing of real estate projects. In his free time Fisher enjoys surfing, beekeeping, and being outdoors.

GWRC AFFORDABLE HOUSING LIAISON VISTA

Host Site: George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC)

VISTA Project: The George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) serves as the Lead Agency of the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care (CoC) and provides oversight and planning support to local efforts to prevent and end homelessness. The VISTA member will formalize a regional affordable housing approach by hosting stakeholder engagement sessions, developing regional affordable housing action items, and preparing the region for securing the resources necessary to add additional units to the region's currently limited affordable housing stock. In addition, the VISTA will develop a tracking mechanism to evaluate and monitor the region's effectiveness in bringing additional affordable housing units online.



VISTA member: Maddie Harris

VISTA Bio: Maddie Harris (they/she) graduated summa cum laude from Virginia Commonwealth University with a bachelor's in Psychology in 2020. Before VISTA, they did a variety of things including working as a research assistant in a child development lab, a behavior technician in autism services, and a teacher in South Korea. They have also volunteered with the Girl Scouts of America and the Children's Museum of Richmond. Maddie's future goals include getting their master's in social work specializing in macro social work and working further in affordable housing and with homeless populations. They became interested in this work with VHA VISTA through having their own and watching others' personal hardships concerning poverty and housing. They wanted to do more to help their community and provide better resources to others on a macro scale. In their free time, they enjoy listening to true crime and other documentaries, cooking food for their friends and family, and following world news.

MHCCV EDUCATION AND OUTREACH VISTA

Host Site: Manufactured Homes Community Coalition of Virginia

VISTA Project: The Manufactured Home Community Coalition of Virginia (MHCCV) is a nonprofit coalition committed to improving financial, legal, and material conditions for residents in Virginia's mobile home parks. The VISTA member will help build substantial capacity for MHCCV to continue its evolution from a "start-up" entity to a fully-formed organization by fulfilling the following five major goals: 1. Improve and preserve Virginia's existing manufactured home communities 2. Position MHCCV as the statewide resource hub for mobile home park revitalization 3. Educate and empower residents in manufactured home communities 4. Advance a positive public image of manufactured housing 5. Build sustainability into MHCCV's leadership, finances, programs, and services.



VISTA member: Noah Dalbey

VISTA Bio: Noah Dalbey, hometown Silver Spring, MD, graduated from The College of William & Mary in May of 2022 with a Bachelors in Sociology where he cultivated interests in working in social justice, affordable housing, and community service. From 2021-22 Noah was a Research Affiliate for W&M's Local Black Histories Project, and was a part of the team that worked collaboratively with The Village Initiative - a local nonprofit - to produce a educational website ("The Local Black Histories Project") which seeks to increase the accessibility and comprehensiveness of Williamsburg's local history. Prior to attending W&M, Noah served a 10 month term of service with AmeriCorps NCCC in the South West region of the US. This year with NCCC initiated a desire to work with nonprofits, and prompted Noah to join the VISTA program after graduating in 2022. He is very excited to be serving in AmeriCorps again, and to be working at MHCCV, helping them reach their crucial mission of improving the quality of life for mobile home residents across Virginia. Noah is especially looking forward to doing outreach and engaging with the residents of Virginia's mobile home parks.

MWCLT DATA ANALYST VISTA

Host Site: Maggie Walker Community Land Trust

VISTA Project: Maggie Walker Community Land Trust (MWCLT) seeks to develop and maintain permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for low and moderate-income households. The VISTA will analyze programmatic data, identify funding sources, and develop strategic outreach plans in order to create new programs and improve existing initiatives. This also includes integrating the homeownership application with MWCLT's front-facing website and their internal Salesforce software, improving their ability to streamline data. The VISTA will also research best practices for Community Land Trusts and improve public participation of the Richmond Land Bank, a program that expands affordable housing by inviting applicants to develop on Land Bank-owned properties.



VISTA member: Leah Coltrane

VISTA Bio: Leah successfully obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Film with an accompanying Minor in Social Justice from Hollins University in May of 2022. During their time studying, they gained significant experience in outreach and mentorship through a variety of roles. Some of those roles include the following: Hollins Activity Board Member, Hollins Film Department Equipment co-Coordinator, Hollins Summer Programming Community Assistant, and Committee Member for Hollins University's 13th Presidential Inauguration. Leah has coordinated events and outreach, designed education and action campaigns, reported to administrative professionals and diverse constituencies, and led new community member orientations. MWCLT attracted Leah's enthusiasm due to the organization's efforts to create more housing opportunities for families in Virginia. In their time off, Leah hopes to explore Richmond's diverse restaurants, enjoy exhibitions at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and spend time at local theaters.

RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN REGIONAL TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT, & EQUITY AMERICORPS VISTA

Host Site: Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission

VISTA Project: The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) acts as the lead agency for the Foothills Housing Network (FHN), a Local Planning Group of the Balance of State Continuum of Care. The VISTA member will focus on enhanced data collection and tracking of LPG projects focusing on disparities in referrals, and services among folks experiencing homelessness, and implementing Housing First training for FHN member organizations using a lens of racial equity. The VISTA will also support efforts by RRRC and FHN partners to increase public knowledge regarding poverty and homelessness within the region through strategic outreach efforts with a particular focus on racially and ethnicity-focused non-profits, faith-based organizations, and healthcare.



VISTA member: Matthew Tobias

VISTA Bio: Matt is a huge Star Wars and Lord of the Rings fan, history buff, and “bug whisperer.” He’s lived in Northern Virginia almost his entire life and is proud to call Loudoun County home. Matt graduated with a BA in history from BYU and enjoys talking with others about the impact of historical and current events. When he isn’t busy volunteering with his church, he likes to watch movies and episodes of Alias, spend time with family, read, listen to music, play strategy games, share links to funny YouTube videos, eat out at restaurants, and catch up with friends.

At his core, Matt is passionate about human and civil rights. He cares deeply about the welfare of the LGBTQ community, which motivated him to volunteer with the Trevor Project to assist LGBTQ youth. Utilizing this experience, he desires to better understand and aid other marginalized groups who are struggling. One of the aspects of the RRRC VISTA project that stood out to him was the chance to help address racial and other inequities that exist in finding affordable housing. Matt strongly believes all people should have access to basic needs like housing and medical care, and he is excited to be part of a team that seeks to make this a reality.



PHA FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER & HOUSING HUB COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VISTA

Host Site: Piedmont Housing Alliance

VISTA Project: Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) creates affordable housing opportunities and fosters community through education, lending, and equitable development. The VISTA will build the capacity of PHA's partner network to engage with and enroll community residents in the Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) & Housing Hub, strengthen the mechanism by which community residents can play a constructive role in guiding the operations, and refine tools for assessing the impact of the hub, with a particular focus on evaluation measures centered on the lived experience of community residents. The VISTA will help deliver on PHA's promise of engaging lower-income community residents, especially BIPOC households, in furthering financial and housing stability.



VISTA member: Kenna Campfield

VISTA Bio: Kenna Campfield was born and raised in Fairfax County, Virginia. She recently graduated from the College of William and Mary with a bachelor's degree, double majoring in both Government and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. During her VISTA tenure, Kenna will be serving in Charlottesville for the Piedmont Housing Alliance. As someone who has spent her whole life in Virginia, she is passionate about aiding lower-income members of her community who have struggled with the rise of gentrification and housing prices. In the future, Kenna is interested in pursuing a career that focuses on helping marginalized communities. She feels as though AmeriCorps is the perfect first step to achieving this goal. In her free time, Kenna enjoys spending time with her cat and two dogs, playing softball, and attending Washington Nationals games.

SCDHC AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT VISTA

Host Site: Southside Community Development & Housing Corporation (SCDHC)

VISTA Project: Southside Community Development & Housing Corporation (SCDHC) creates viable, thriving, and sustainable communities while providing residential and commercial development, homeownership education, financial counseling, employment services, and supportive programs to predominantly low-income Black and Latinx families. The VISTA will increase SCDHC's single- and multi-family affordable housing developmental capacity and improve resident services at each of SCDHC's rental properties by evaluating data management and collection methods, assisting with fund development, and strengthening community engagement in order to identify service gaps and resident needs.



VISTA member: Tyler Howerton

VISTA Bio: Tyler Howerton is the SCDHC Affordable Housing Development VISTA for 2022-2023. Tyler grew up in Charlottesville, Virginia and quickly developed a passion for serving the community through volunteer work. She majored in psychology from Old Dominion University and worked for the Department of Social Services for a year before receiving a Master's in Criminal Justice from Arizona State University. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors, going to concerts, and playing with her dog, Leroy. Tyler was interested in the AmeriCorps VISTA Program because of the numerous impactful and inspiring opportunities for public service. Specifically, she was drawn to Southside Community Development & Housing Corporation due to their commitment toward developing functional and prosperous communities through affordable housing and educational services. Serving with SCDHC and the AmeriCorps VISTA Program will allow Tyler to help increase accessibility and inclusivity, while simultaneously cultivating relationships within the community.

SJV DATA ANALYST AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST VISTA

Host Site: St. Joseph's Villa (SJV)

VISTA Project: St. Joseph's Villa serves as the lead agency within the Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) for the Crater Area Coalition on Homelessness (CACH) and has played an important role in facilitating regional collaboration on addressing homelessness. The VISTA will increase the reach of CACH by enhancing communication strategies to identify and recruit new members while also expanding the community's awareness regarding homeless services resources. The VISTA will also collaborate with local agencies, Built for Zero, and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) board in developing and implementing a plan to end youth homelessness by aggregating critical data, researching similar programs, and conducting a youth Point in Time count.



VISTA member: Adam Harris

VISTA Bio: Adam Harris will be serving with St. Joseph's Villa as their Data and Communications VISTA. He believes that every person should have a safe and orderly place to call home. Adam served on the leadership board for Silence Empowers Violence, a community organization that centers around awareness and advocacy for witnesses to violent crime. He has served the homeless through the community dinner program at his church, where he also manages their social media and web presence. Adams hopes to use his experience in asset and data management to serve his community in new ways.

VCDC MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT VISTA

Host Site: VCDC

VISTA Project: Vibrant Communities Drive Change (VCDC) works to connect communities with human and financial capital that supports locally driven revitalization and is committed to ensuring that everyone in their region not only has access to quality affordable housing, but also to services, programs, and amenities that enhance their quality of life. The VCDC VISTA will develop an internal culture of storytelling that raises VCDC's profile in order to increase community support and awareness of their affordable housing programs and services, gain new strategic partnerships, and raise equity and other investment to direct to quality affordable housing development.



VISTA member: Molly Dye

VISTA Bio: Molly is serving as the Marketing & Communications Assistant VISTA for Vibrant Communities Drive Change (VCDC). She is from Williamsburg, Virginia and graduated from Virginia Tech in May 2021 with a bachelor's in Communication. In November 2021, Molly spent a month in Rwanda on a study abroad program and worked with a local nonprofit with the goal of serving a lively community through sustainable development and relationship building. This opportunity ignited her interest in continuing to serve in her home country, which led her to the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Molly found interest in serving for VCDC after learning about how the organization has connected communities to financial and developmental partners to support local revitalization. She believes that every human being has a right to affordable housing and access to a community where residents can flourish. Molly is excited to serve with VCDC and contribute to the organization's internal and external engagement and outreach. She hopes to translate her VISTA experience into a future career dedicated to community development. In her free time, Molly enjoys scoping out the local art scene, painting, long walks, and brunch.



CONTACT INFO

Interested in becoming a Host Site for the 2023/2024 year? Email:

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