
SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSIONS

A. Justification

A1. Need for Information Collection

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) requests approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to conduct an implementation evaluation of its AmeriCorps VISTA Program. The proposed data collection will support AmeriCorps VISTA's mission to strengthen and supplement efforts in low-income communities to eliminate and alleviate poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA engages volunteers from all walks of life, all geographical areas, and all age groups in a year of fulltime service. It builds capacity in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to help them effectively generate the commitment of private sector resources, to encourage volunteer service at the local level, and empower individuals and communities to raise their standards of living.

CNCS has been a leader in building evidence for national service, supporting best practices, and demonstrating how its programs' service solutions improve lives and strengthen communities. Through strong investments in research, evaluation, capacity building, and knowledge dissemination, CNCS has built a solid base of evidence to improve practices in the field to more effectively address critical challenges and needs of communities and the nation. CNCS ensures grantee accountability through program monitoring and performance metrics. The AmeriCorps VISTA program (VISTA) has actively contributed to these efforts.

Founded in 1965 as "Volunteers in Service to America" and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1994, AmeriCorps VISTA strives to lift communities and individuals out of poverty. VISTA engages more than 8,500 individuals every year in anti-poverty activities focusing on education, healthy futures, economic opportunity, and veterans and military families. VISTA members create organizational infrastructure and systems, gather and institutionalize knowledge, develop community relationships, and generate resources to empower individuals and communities to rise out of poverty.

Goal of the Evaluation

The proposed data collection will gather information to generate actionable knowledge about project design and implementation; member recruitment and retention; member development and support; and project development, management, and sustainability. The proposed data collection is a mixed methods study of VISTA project development, management, and sustainability that will use multiple forms of data collection and analysis to address two key objectives:

1. Identify implementation challenges and best practices among a representative sample of VISTA project sponsors that can be utilized to make program improvements and to mitigate potential challenges.
2. Use information gained to develop TTA materials for internal staff and for external AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors to strengthen and enhance VISTA programming.

Need for the Evaluation

Unlike other national service participants typically engaged primarily in direct service (e.g., providing academic tutoring, building affordable housing units, assisting older adults and individuals with disabilities with daily tasks), VISTA members engage almost exclusively in capacity-building work to strengthen their

host organizations and/or communities by developing sustainable systems and bringing in resources. VISTA activities may include recruiting volunteers, organizing fundraising activities, developing databases and other organizational systems and infrastructure, setting up partnerships and collaborations, and developing program materials. VISTA members are supported and mentored by a sponsor within their host organization, who meets with the members regularly and provides them with the resources to successfully complete their service. CNCS proposes to collect data from VISTA sponsors in order to identify successful projects and understand best practices for project development, management, and sustainability.

A2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.

The data collection will be used to identify program implementation challenges and best practices in the areas of program development, management, and sustainability. The data collected will help to make program improvements and mitigate challenges. The data will be used to develop training and technical assistance (TTA) materials for internal staff and external AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors to strengthen and enhance VISTA programming. The primary users will be AmeriCorps VISTA leadership and other stakeholders in the AmeriCorps program offices and in the CEO's office to make decisions about program implementation. AmeriCorps VISTA headquarters and regional campuses will be able to review their programming based on the evaluation report and results specific to their program and will have the opportunity to make meaningful changes to their interventions. External stakeholders, such as researchers and federal partners, may also find value in the evaluation's results as they endeavor to implement similar programs.

A3. Minimize Burden: Use of Improved Technology to Reduce Burden

Participants will respond to the survey electronically from any internet-connected computer, tablet, or phone. Ensuring that the survey can be completed using a mobile device or laptop/desktop computer, enables participants to complete it at a convenient time. If participants cannot complete the survey electronically, an evaluator will follow up to complete the survey via phone.

The survey will enable the exploration of broad trends among VISTA sponsors and analysis of how responses differ according to project characteristics. To reduce burden, the survey does not include questions about the characteristics of the sponsors' service projects; rather, the evaluator will use existing CNCS administrative data for the analysis. Furthermore, information that describes project characteristics including size, maturity, retention rates, and geographic location but will be retrieved from CNCS's administrative data on VISTA sponsors.

A4. Non-Duplication

There are no other sources of information by which CNCS can meet the purposes described in A2. Although VISTA collects some data from sponsors, the existing information does not provide the means to understand best practices for project development, management, and sustainability. The proposed data collection will be combined with existing administrative data to understand implementation topics, such as program development, management, and sustainability of interest in greater depth and breadth, and have been specifically tailored to assess program implementation effectiveness.

A5. Minimizing for economic burden for small businesses or other small entities.

The evaluation will not be administered to small businesses or other small entities.

A6. Consequences of the collection if not conducted, conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

JBS International (JBS), the independent contractor, will administer the survey once. A consequence of not collecting these data will be a lack of information about project implementation, which is vital for understanding recruitment and retention, project development, project management, and project sustainability.

A7. Special circumstances that would cause information collection to be collected in a manner requiring respondents to report more often than quarterly; report in fewer than 30 days after receipt of the request; submit more than an original and two copies; retain records for more than three years; and other ways specified in the Instructions focused on statistical methods, confidentially, and proprietary trade secrets.

This information collection fully complies with 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2). There are no special circumstances that would require the collection of information in any other ways specified.

A8. Provide copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the Agency's notice. Summarize comments received and actions taken in response to comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

The 60-day notice required in 5 CFR 1320.8(d) was published in the Federal Register on 02/05/2020, 85 FR 6532. Zero comments were received.

A9. Payment to Respondents

AmeriCorps VISTA will not compensate VISTA program sponsors for their participation in the survey.

A10. Assurance of Confidentiality and its basis in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Participants' responses to this information collection will remain private to the extent permitted by law. JBS will make clear that individual responses will not be shared. All respondents will be assured that their participation is voluntary, that no adverse consequences will accrue to individuals who do not complete the surveys, and that their comments and opinions will be kept private.

Access to any data with identifying information will be limited only to JBS who will analyze the survey responses. JBS will de-identify the data prior to analysis, so that individual responses cannot be linked to a specific individual. Additionally, all analyses, summaries, or briefings will be presented at the aggregate level so as not to identify individual respondents in any material that is presented. JBS will provide CNCS a de-identified dataset that can be used for further analysis or shared with other research and evaluators for additional secondary analysis.

A11. Sensitive Questions

The information collection does not include questions of a sensitive nature.

A12. Hour burden of the collection

We expect approximately 800 respondents to complete this survey. The frequency of response will not be greater than one time and should not exceed 25 minutes of effort per respondent.

A13. Respondent Burden and its Labor Costs

The estimated **one-time** respondent burdens and labor costs are shown in the following table.

Estimation of Respondent Burden	
Number of respondents	800
Responses per respondent	1
Number of responses	800
Hours per response	.42
Estimated hours (number of responses multiplied by hours per response)	336
Cost per hour (hourly wage)	\$36.04
Annual public burden (estimated hours multiplied by cost per hour)	\$12,110

Notes: The cost per hour is based on the Office of Personnel Management(OPM) General Schedule (GS) hourly rate of \$26.45 for a GS-11, step 1, employee (for calendar year 2020 for the rest of the U.S.) plus the 36.25% civilian personnel full fringe benefit rate from OMB memorandum M-08-13 (\$26.45 + \$9.59 = \$36.04, rounded to the nearest dollar). This corresponds to the median hourly rate of the respondents.

A13. Respondent Costs Other Than Burden Hour Costs

CNCS does not estimate any annual cost burden apart from the hourly burden in Item A12 above.

A14. Cost to the Government

The estimated **one-time** cost to the Government is shown in the following table. It is estimated that it will take the Government 50 hour(s) to review and verify the information contained in a sample of responses. This estimate was developed by staff involved in the management of current activity.

Estimation of Cost to the Government	
Number of responses	100
Hours per response	.5

Estimated hours (number of responses multiplied by hours per response)	50
Cost per hour (hourly wage)	\$56.76
Annual public burden (estimated hours multiplied by cost per hour)	\$2,838

Notes: The cost per hour is based on the OPM GS hourly rate of \$41.66 for a GS-12, step 5, employee (for calendar year 2020) plus the 36.25% civilian personnel full fringe benefit rate from OMB memorandum M-08-13, rounded to the nearest dollar).

A15. Reasons for program changes or adjustments in burden or cost.

Not applicable.

A16. Publication of results

Publication Plan

Reporting and dissemination of results will be in the form of a final evaluation report with supporting graphs and tables on key data points. The main goal of this data collection and the subsequent reporting will be to develop training and technical assistance materials for the VISTA campus. For internal audiences at CNCS, the reporting and TTA materials will be focused on information relevant to project development, management, and sustainability. For external audiences, the final evaluation report may be made available detailing the steps taken to conduct the evaluation and presenting the results; an emphasis will be made on the strengths and limitations of the data and corresponding analyses to ensure appropriate use of the results.

A17. Explain the reason for seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.

Not applicable.

A18. Exceptions to the certification statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement in the submitted ROCIS form.