



VISTA End of Service (EOS) Guide

Extending your service

You have the option of either reenrolling for a full year, or extending your service for an arbitrary length of time. If you are interested, you should discuss these options with your supervisor and get their blessing.

Check on your **Future Plans Form** whether you are reenrolling or requesting an extension. You should also receive a positive performance evaluation in order for your extension or reenrollment to be approved.

When discussing these options with your supervisor, please be aware that your organization will be responsible for paying an additional Project Fee and other financial obligations for hosting you.

Reenrolling for a Full Year

By reenrolling, you are eligible to receive another Education Award at the completion of your second year (there is a lifetime maximum of 2 Education Awards). Or, you can elect to receive the \$1200 cash Stipend.

Extension of Arbitrary Length

You can serve for any additional length of time (e.g. 3 months). If you do this, you are only eligible to receive a prorated cash stipend (prorated at 1 Year = \$1200).

End of Service Benefits

You will receive either the Cash Stipend or the Education Award based on the benefit you signed up for at the beginning of your service—or changed prior to the 10th month of service.

The Cash Stipend



To Do

If elected, you will receive your \$1200.00 of cash stipend as an additional paycheck that is mailed to you (it will not be direct deposited)—*so make sure we have your updated address* (update on <http://ctcvista.org>). Please note that additional taxes are taken out of the stipend that are not normally applicable to your normal living allowance paychecks (e.g. FICA)

The Education Award

All Education Award payments and management are processed through the official AmeriCorps website. This may take up to a month to be updated following the end of your service:

<http://my.americorps.org>

You can also call the **Official AmeriCorps Support Unit: 1 (866) 473-5733**

You must use the Education Award within *7 years* of receiving it—if you do a second year of AmeriCorps, the clock starts ticking after your *first* year.

Extra Education Award Info



Tip

Some schools will match the Education Award. You can find a list of educational institutions that will match the award on the AmeriCorps website:

http://www.americorps.org/for_individuals/benefits/ed_award_match.asp



Tip

The Education Award can be used for Educationally *Related* Expenses. You can use your Education Award for more than just tuition. Depending upon the college, you may be able to have that money deposited into a general account from which you can make educationally related expenses like textbooks, computers or iPods,



Warning

Using your Education Award counts as taxable income. If you can use the Education Award during the same calendar year as your VISTA service, your tax liability will be much less which means that the Education Award will be taxed at a lower rate.

Loan Forbearance



To Do

If you obtained **loan forbearance** from your loan institution *and elected the Education Award* at the beginning of your service, upon successful completion of your term of service the Corporation will pay for the interest that has accrued on your qualified student loan.

You can access the interest accrual payment process by logging onto <https://my.americorps.gov> and accessing your account. From your member home page, access the link for My Education Award. It will take you to the page where you can access the Interest Accrual Benefit Request. Once you submit the request it is sent directly to the financial institution which will complete the payment request.

Benefit Conversions



Tip

You have the option of converting some of your AmeriCorps benefits and continuing to receive them after your service has ended. *There may be (there probably are) less-expensive options than converting—but you have the option.*

Health Insurance Conversion (COBRA)

Upon termination from service, you may convert from your group health care coverage plan provided by CNCS to a private plan administered by Celtic Life Insurance Company. This conversion option is available to those who do not have other insurance options. Your option to convert to private insurance must be exercised within 30 days of the date of your termination from service. You may receive information about conversion by calling toll free 1-800-365-2365.

Please note that the Right to Convert form, that you will receive from Celtic Insurance, must be sent to SevenCorners (<http://americorps.sevencorners.com/>) with the top portion of the form completed so that it can be completed by SevenCorners and be sent directly to Celtic Insurance.

Life Insurance Conversion:

If you chose to be covered under the life insurance policy during your VISTA term of service, you have the option to convert your Group Life insurance to an individual policy. For more information, call the **Official AmeriCorps Support Unit: 1 (866) 473-5733**

Civil Service Benefits and Eligibility:

Because you have satisfactorily completed one full year of service, you earn one year of noncompetitive eligibility for federal government positions (www.usajobs.gov). Non-competitive eligibility allows, but does not require, a federal agency to hire an AmeriCorps*VISTA alumnus/alumna who meets the minimum qualifications for the position, without going through all the formalities of the competitive process. The decision to hire an AmeriCorps*VISTA alumnus/alumna under non-competitive eligibility is within the discretion of the hiring agency, consistent with the Office of Personnel Management regulations, which contain time limits for the use of this appointment authority. *In most cases, an AmeriCorps*VISTA member must be appointed within 12 months after the member's VISTA service ends.*



Warning

To establish your non-competitive status, you will need to request proof of eligibility from AmeriCorps*VISTA. This letter can be viewed and printed from the My AmeriCorps portal (<https://my.americorps.gov>)

Interpreting Your VISTA Experience

You've just completed a year of National Service through AmeriCorps*VISTA, a 40+ year old program (VISTA is, AmeriCorps is 15 years old). How should you translate that into resumes, job interviews and other self-promotion:

- 📌 **“AmeriCorps*VISTA is the Domestic Peace Corps”:** most people know what the Peace Corps is, and think it's pretty awesome.
- 📌 **Commitment to the Community:** you demonstrated that you have a heart, and could commit to hard conditions. Employers are afraid that a new employee, who they just invested a whole lot of training into, is going to up and quit. This shows you won't.
- 📌 **Teamwork:** you worked with other staff and as part of a national network. Employers love teamwork.
- 📌 **High Degree of Responsibility:** remind people that this wasn't mere volunteering. You managed a complicated project, setting goals, delegating tasks, developing resources and bringing it to completion. Talk that up!

Stay Connected!

We'd like to stay in touch with you after your VISTA service. Sometimes job postings come through or we have some benefits that we can extol upon you (e.g. robot squeeze-toys). At the very least, update your CTC VISTA Profile (<http://ctcvista.org>) with your non-work email address. We'll try not to spam you.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn (<http://linkedin.com>) is a professional networking website that allows you to stay in touch with professional people you may know. We like the Friend of a Friend feature: if there is someone you want to get in touch with, LinkedIn will tell you which of your contacts knows one of their contacts—a perfect introduction. It's free and there aren't photos of drunken teenagers. Join our Alumni Group:

<http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/93820/1BDD77541E58>

FaceBook

Yes, we're on FaceBook (<http://facebook.com>). Join our group:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3184050592>