



AmeriCorps VISTA  
250 E Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20525  
NationalService.gov/VISTA

Dear Sponsors and Supervisors,

Greetings from the AmeriCorps VISTA Team!

All AmeriCorps VISTA members and Leaders are required to undergo a criminal history background investigation. This includes a search of the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public website and an FBI criminal history check, which requires members to submit fingerprints.

AmeriCorps VISTA members are required to get fingerprinted independently. Sponsors are asked to assist members in completing this requirement.

- Sponsors will receive fingerprint kits from State Offices and will distribute the kits to their members.
- Members must receive fingerprint kits **no later than the first day of service** and submit the completed fingerprint cards to AmeriCorps VISTA HQ.
- VISTA HQ must receive the completed cards **30 days after their Service Start date**.
- Members who do not submit fingerprints by the deadline will be **terminated from service**.

Fingerprint Kits include:

- Two fingerprint cards
- Instructions for obtaining fingerprinting services and completing the fingerprint cards
- Fingerprint submission FAQ
- Member Disclosure Form
  - This form is a final opportunity for members to disclose criminal history, if it was not listed on the application. **Failure to disclose may result in the member's termination of service.**

Sponsors will receive pre-addressed/pre-paid UPS Next Day Air labels from their State Office.

- Members are directed to contact their supervisor for the labels.
- You will receive several UPS labels. Instead of giving each member a UPS label, you should batch and send completed fingerprint cards in one mailing (or as few mailings as possible).

A minor offense with no relation to member assignment will generally not bar members from service. Should the criminal history check process show that a member is not eligible to serve in the AmeriCorps VISTA program, or fails to disclose criminal history, the member may be terminated from service and all service benefits forfeited.

Sponsors are encouraged to conduct their own criminal history checks, if/as appropriate.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions please email [VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov).

Sincerely,

The AmeriCorps VISTA Team

## **Sponsor/Supervisor Fingerprint Submission FAQs**

### **When is the fingerprint deadline?**

- 30 days after the member's Service Start date (as noted on their oath form).

### **Who can I contact for more information?**

- Email [VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov)

### **Where can I find the member instructions, forms and member FAQs?**

- All materials are available on the VISTA campus: <http://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/criminal-history-checks-and-fingerprinting>

### **Will members be reimbursed for the cost of fingerprinting?**

- All AmeriCorps VISTA members will receive a \$25 fingerprint subsidy in their first living allowance to offset the cost of fingerprinting. Applicants who get fingerprinted but do not start service will not receive this subsidy.

### **Will members be taxed on the fingerprint subsidy they receive from the VISTA Program?**

- Yes.

### **How can I order more UPS labels or fingerprint cards?**

- Email your State Office.

### **What if my member did not turn in their fingerprint card by the deadline?**

- Members will receive multiple reminders to turn in their fingerprint cards. Members who disregard the reminders and fail to turn in their fingerprint cards will be terminated from service.

### **How long does the criminal history check process take?**

- The criminal history check process should take no longer than eight weeks from submission of the completed cards to AmeriCorps VISTA HQ. An AmeriCorps VISTA representative may contact a member if clarification/follow up is needed. Otherwise, members may assume that no contact means that the member is cleared for service.

### **Will members who attend PSO in person be fingerprinted on site?**

- No.

### **Can I get access to the member's criminal history records?**

- No. AmeriCorps VISTA may not legally share member criminal history records with sponsors.

### **What if a member discloses a criminal history and I am uncomfortable keeping the member on board?**

- Contact your State Office.

### **Can members use criminal history checks from Fieldprint or other electronic fingerprinting services?**

- Members must submit completed fingerprint cards to VISTA HQ. AmeriCorps VISTA will not accept electronic reports from Fieldprint or other electronic fingerprint services. Members can use services to print electronic fingerprints onto the cards submitted to VISTA HQ.

### **What criminal history check requirements do grant-funded staff need to observe?**

- Sponsors that receive CNCS grants to fund staff need to follow all statutory requirements (42 U.S.C. §12645g) and regulatory requirements (45 CFR §2540.200 through §2540.207). More resources can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check>