

## National Service AmeriCorps\*VISTA Position

### At Growing Hope in Ypsilanti, Michigan

*Be a part of healthy, sustainable solutions! Help take the lead  
in Growing Food Security in Washtenaw County*

#### POSITION OVERVIEW:

Growing Hope is currently **recruiting applicants for a VISTA Leader position** for a 12-month terms of service, to begin in December 2014 and to run through December 2015. ***See below for details, but please note application deadline is Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014.*** Growing Hope is a community-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to help people improve their lives and communities through gardening and healthy local food access.

All VISTA members will help to strengthen food security, enhance local environments, improve health & nutrition, and provide educational opportunities to community members throughout Washtenaw County—particularly in ways that strengthen access for low-income families— through different roles at Growing Hope and our partners. VISTA members will work to increase organizational capacity by developing program models, partnerships & collaborations, training, and securing financial and human resources. The goals of this VISTA project include:

- Maximizing year-round food availability for low-income households
- Cultivating healthy eaters among low-income youth & adults to increase well-being and reduce risk of chronic disease
- Training youth & adults as urban farmers, and expand opportunities to serve in this area
- Developing economically-viable models of urban agriculture
- Building enduring capacity of these efforts to maximize impact of organizations & projects in urban ag and food security through collaboration and volunteerism; Documenting success & impact using common metrics

Each VISTA member will focus in one of the areas below, although some responsibilities/projects may be shared and adjusted based on the strengths and interests of each member.

**Please specify which position or positions you wish to be considered for.** Please cite both what skills you would bring to the entire Growing Hope team, and specific qualifications for each position you wish to be considered for. *While we outline specific position descriptions below, we may not fill all positions and/or may combine positions.*

Qualified candidates for any of our positions will exhibit the following:

- Passion for Growing Hope and our partners' missions and work. Dedication to working as a member of and in partnership with diverse communities
- Willingness to commit to one full year of full time service to the organization and community, with some preference to those willing to commit to two years of service
- Proven ability to work well and communicate effectively both in groups and independently
- Comfort in use of computers and technology on a daily basis
- Desire to encourage local community members to share ideas, talents and resources; previous knowledge of local resources is a plus!
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong organizational and management skills, including excellent follow-through.

- o Willingness to know more about and respond to needs of communities and schools, and become grounded/involved (if not already) in the communities in which we work
- o Flexibility to work non-traditional hours, including evenings and weekends as scheduled
- o Experience in coordinating and leading teams and working with volunteers
- o Willingness to see projects through—from developing to implementing to evaluating
- o Ability to juggle multiple projects simultaneously
- o Experience or desire to gain knowledge of-and assist in disseminating information about organic gardening or farming, nutrition/health, sustainability, and community food systems
- o Willingness to adapt to changing organizational conditions and extremely limited resources
- o Creativity, flexibility, resourcefulness and positive thinking
- o VISTA members placed at Growing Hope who live in or will relocate to Ypsilanti are preferred

**Additionally, applicants for the VISTA Leader position must meet one of the following requirements as defined for the VISTA Leader opportunity:**

1. **Reenrollment:** a current VISTA member or leader who is committing to another term of service without a gap in service days. They complete one term and must begin their leader term the next day. This often occurs with leaders as many sponsors select their leader from their current corps of VISTA members.
  - a. In this case the member does not apply to the leader service opportunity listing because the leader placement is completed through the Future Plans/Close of Service form in the My AmeriCorps Portal.
2. **Reinstatement:** a VISTA who has successfully completed at least one full term of service and has taken anywhere from a day to 4 years off since their previous term ended.
  - a. In this case the member must apply to the leader service opportunity listing and go through the same review, selection and acceptance process as you would for a member in the My AmeriCorps Portal.
  - b. If there is more than a 120 day gap in service terms, the sponsoring agency is responsible to pay for the candidate to undergo an FBI fingerprint check.
  - c. Reinstated candidates must be sworn into service by our office and complete the Terms, Conditions and Benefits course before they can be activated for service.

**TO APPLY:**

**There are two steps to the application, and until both are completed, we will not review your application.**

- 1) Go to <http://my.americorps.gov> to enter the AmeriCorps online application website. Create your online AmeriCorps application. Once completed, you still need to submit your application to Growing Hope. Do a search for Michigan and Growing Hope and you'll find us among the results—from there you should be able to submit the application to us. Note: until your references have completed their sections describing you on the AmeriCorps website, your application is not complete.

- 2) Submit a resume and 2-page letter describing your interests and qualifications by October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at the latest—but applications will be reviewed and selections made on a rolling basis, so it is helpful to get yours completed right away. You may not be considered if you apply later and applicants are already selected. Electronic applications encouraged; please email (as attachments) to [apply@growinghope.net](mailto:apply@growinghope.net). After receiving materials and completing online application above, applicants will need to be available for interviews in person or by phone (in-person preferred).

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION: Community Engagement VISTA Leader:**

This VISTA leader will focus on both community engagement in Growing Hope's direct work, and coordinating with partners around the community. At Growing Hope, this leader will work to increase and track community engagement in our demonstration farm, support VISTA members in expansion of volunteer base, explore development of job training programs, and build out more educational opportunities/features on sit. She or he will also engage youth and adults at Growing Hope and community sites in education around gardening, urban agriculture, nutrition, and health. She or he will aid in coordinating with community partners around these types of education and outreach so that unnecessary duplication is removed and target audiences are reached most effectively. She or he will be a supportive point person for VISTA members at Growing Hope and partner sites, focusing on raising awareness around the local food system,. This VISTA volunteer needs to be exceptionally skilled at relationship building and follow through, with proactive written and oral communication skills, a high degree of self-directedness, strong organizational skills.

### **BENEFITS**

- o Monthly Stipend of \$1,183.00 (before taxes), or \$14,196/year
- o Health Benefits, optional Life Insurance
- o Child care assistance
- o Educational (\$5,730) or cash award (\$1,500) at end of term
- o Training before and during service term; Opportunities to build resume

### **EXPECTATION OF SERVICE**

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve full-time, for one year with varying work schedules. VISTA members are not allowed to be in school or have other employment during their term of service. VISTA members may be eligible for Food Stamps, childcare subsidies, or other forms of public assistance.

### **QUESTIONS?**

More information about Growing Hope is available at [www.growinghope.net](http://www.growinghope.net). More information about VISTA and other Corporation for National and Community Service programs, see <http://www.cns.gov/>. Additional questions about Growing Hope or these positions, please call us at 734-786-8401 or email [apply@growinghope.net](mailto:apply@growinghope.net).