Serve New York: AmeriCorps VISTA
Fighting Poverty, Empowering Communities, Changing the Nation!

Serve New York mobilizes AmeriCorps VISTA members to serve organizations, government agencies, and educational institutions focused on the needs of military families and veterans and improving and expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The goal of Serve New York is to strengthen communities across the State, and to allow organizations within them to better provide

**WHAT DO SERVE NEW YORK VISTA MEMBERS DO?**
AmeriCorps VISTA members work behind-the-scenes at organizations to build capacity, create sustainability, and indirectly serve the organization’s clients. Typical VISTA responsibilities include: grant writing, community outreach, fund development, curriculum building, creating partnerships, and program development and execution.

**Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**
- Interest and commitment to national service
- Previous volunteer experience
- Ability to adapt to changing environments
- Strong writing and communication skills

**Required Academic and Experience Qualifications:**
- Must be a U.S. Citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien
- 4 year degree in any major required
- Able to provide the following documentation: birth certification, driver’s license or state photo ID, social security card, and high school diploma or college degree
- Must undergo a national criminal history check *REQUIRED*

**Benefits members receive:**
- An annual living stipend of $11,676, which is paid out in bi-weekly increments.
- An AmeriCorps Eli Segal Education Award of $5,775 OR $1,500 cash stipend provided after the successful completion of the term of service
- Post Service federal employment incentives and opportunities
- Basic health insurance
- Ability to put qualified federal student loans on forbearance during the term of service
- Child Care assistance to those who qualify
- Monthly professional development and multiple training opportunities

This program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, age, gender, political affiliation, or religion.

Want more information about the program and how to apply?
Contact Hannah Spalding, Serve New York VISTA Program Specialist
Email: hspalding@tscwny.org  Phone: 716.418.8500 ext. 116
BUFFALO PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD (BUFFALO, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (BPN) is a unique collaboration working to transform a community through strategies centered on academic achievement and neighborhood revitalization. BPN builds on a 20 year partnership between Westminster Community Charter School and M&T bank by expanding services to include parents, partner organizations, and community members to transform a 97 block radius encompassing three schools: the BPN Children’s Academy, WCCS, and Highgate Heights Elementary School.

The VISTA member will serve in the Community Engagement division of BPN and work directly with community members and partners. The VISTA member will facilitate volunteer committees including a Housing, Livable Communities, and Healthy Food Initiative. The VISTA member will also partner with existing and new partner organizations to increase the number of individuals receiving housing services including but not limited to; minor home improvement, tenant rights, and first time homebuyer workshops.

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE COMMUNITY ACADEMIC CENTER (BUFFALO, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

SUNY Buffalo State is dedicated to supporting the intellectual growth of its students through campus and community collaborations. The Community Academic Center (CAC) is located at the heart of the West Side and thus serves as a direct extension of the campus into the neighborhood. Programming is developed in collaboration with campus and community partners. Activities range from outside of school time enrichment to instruction for refugee youth and parents.

The work of the VISTA member will provide educational opportunities that respond to the needs of refugee families shortly after their resettlement and in the post-resettlement period. Additionally the member will engage Buffalo State students and community volunteers in efforts to increase access to educational programs and health initiatives for residents of the West Side. The project aims to raise social consciousness and establish effective responses to the existing challenges and social injustices in the community.

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED (BUFFALO, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

For over 25 years, Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled (CSDD)’s agency mission has been to assist people with developmental disabilities, and their families, to achieve their highest level of independent living, and participate as productive and contributing members of the community. Learning work skills and growing towards competitive employment is a crucial life need for many of the over 1,200 people supported by CSDD.

The VISTA member will help develop a communication system between the Employment and Community Relations Departments for tracking current and future business & community partners. They will develop an outreach campaign and materials and will research, and along with agency staff, solicit possible future business partners. The member will also

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Facilitate working groups, develop plans for creating community engagement opportunities, and assisting with other outreach and fundraising events.

**Fillmore Forward, Inc (Buffalo, NY)**  
**Start Date: July 2016**

Fillmore Forward’s mission is to create a sense of place, improve quality of life, and restore economic vitality in Fillmore Corridor neighborhoods through community involvement, volunteerism and public/private partnerships. The organization’s work is based on the National Main Street Center® Four Point Approach®.

The VISTA member will provide vital start up and growth assistance to this newly incorporated, community-based organization dedicated to revitalizing the commercial centers of the Broadway-Fillmore and Martin Luther King neighborhoods. The member will work closely with the Board to promote and administer an eight-week entrepreneurial training program. In order to accomplish this, the member will develop processes of operation, identify funding opportunities, recruit volunteers, and create marketing materials.

**Finger Lakes Addictions Counseling & Referral Agency (Clifton Springs, NY)**  
**Start Date: July 2016**

Finger Lakes Addiction and Referral Agency, Inc (FLACRA) believes in making a difference one life at a time. FLACRA is a client-centered, strength based treatment agency with a mission to serve all who are in need. The agency has a long history of providing innovative clinical, residential, and housing treatment and services for individuals experiencing alcohol and substance use disorders in the NYS Finger Lakes region.

The VISTA member will review and enhance the existing marketing resources with the goal of developing and implementing a quality marketing strategy that incorporates all of FLACRA’s rapidly expanding services. The member will focus specifically on housing for veterans, especially those who experience substance abuse. The member will also identify and recruit veterans groups to volunteer for FLACRA programming. The member will coordinate and conduct an orientation for all volunteers.

**Hilbert College (Buffalo, NY)**  
**Start Date: July 2016**

The goal of this VISTA project is to create the foundation for an Office of Veteran Affairs that will provide veteran services to both the Hilbert College and St. Bonaventure campuses. The overall project objective are as follows: Increase access of educational opportunities to veterans in an effort to decrease poverty, homelessness, and unemployment in the veteran population.

The member will increase veteran student retention; Facilitation of veterans transition to higher education; Increased awareness of veteran services at Hilbert College and St. Bonaventure University; Increase availability of user-friendly resources for veterans and their families; Enhanced collaboration within both institutions to work towards providing academic, mental health, and disability related support to veterans to maximize their opportunities for success in their program of study and as they re-enter the community and work worlds.

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FOODLINK, INC. (ROCHESTER, NY)  
START DATE: JULY 2016

Foodlink is the Feeding America regional food bank serving Rochester, NY and the surrounding 10 counties. Founded in 1978, its mission is to end hunger and to leverage the power of food to build a healthier community. The VISTA member will be part of the Food Access (FA) Programs team, which coordinates market- and community-based programs that seek to address the root causes of hunger by improving access to fresh, healthy and local food and the skills and knowledge to grow, buy, cook and eat it.

In this role, the VISTA member will provide critical capacity-building support: managing and expanding FA volunteers, figuring out how to get more youth and young families participating in FA programs, developing new produce distribution strategies and working with Foodlink’s summer youth workers.

JOURNEY’S END REFUGEE SERVICES (BUFFALO, NY)  
START DATE: JULY 2016

Journey’s End Refugee Services, Inc. welcomes refugees without regard to ethnic origin or creed to assist them to become healthy, independent, contributing members of the community. This year, Journey’s End will resettle over 450 refugees from around the world, and provide an array of services including employment, legal, youth and adult education, and interpretation, to a total of over 3,000 clients.

The VISTA member will expand and improve both the interpreting department and the volunteer program. The VISTA member will develop and implement an interpreter-training program by completing the following activities: research existing interpreter training programs, identify resources available for trainings, and conduct outreach to recruit volunteers for to facilitate the training. The member will work closely with the volunteer management team to identify best practices, identify grants, and secure funding for the projects.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OF WESTERN NEW YORK, INC- EDUCATION (GENEVA, NY)  
START DATE: JULY 2016

LawNY® is a not-profit law firm providing civil legal assistance to low-income clients in a fourteen-county region in the Finger Lakes and Western New York State. The Geneva office serves the following counties: Livingston, Wayne, Seneca, Ontario, and Yates and provides representation and advice, primarily in the areas of housing, family law, government benefits, elder law, education, civil rights, veterans benefits and consumer law.

The VISTA member will serve with LAWNY’s Educational Advocacy Project. The member will work to expand the education law department by increasing both the number of referrals received from community partners and the number of in-house professionals and pro-bono attorneys who are ready to litigate the cases. To accomplish these goals the member will foster current community partnerships, research and form new partners, identify and apply for grants to secure funding for the project’s expansion, and stream-line the intake and case management process.

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LEGAL ASSISTANCE OF WESTERN NEW YORK, INC- VETERANS (GENEVA, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

LawNY® is a not-for-profit law firm which provides civil legal assistance to low-income clients in a fourteen-county region in the Finger Lakes and Western New York State. The Geneva office serves five of those fourteen counties (Livingston, Wayne, Seneca, Ontario, and Yates) and provides representation and advice, primarily in the areas of housing, family law, government benefits, elder law, education, civil rights, veterans benefits and consumer law.

The VISTA member will work to expand the medical-legal partnership with the Canandaigua Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The member will increase the number of veterans and military families served. To accomplish this, the member will: recruit private attorneys to assist with the pro bono attorney project, coordinate the veteran pro bono attorney project (train and support pro bono attorneys, develop system for scheduling attorney meetings at VAMC), and seek funding to ensure sustainability for the project in the years to come.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OF WESTERN NEW YORK, INC- ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (ROCHESTER, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

LawNY is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal representation to low-income and disadvantaged individuals across fourteen counties in Western New York. The Rochester Office serves Monroe County. LawNY Rochester’s Employment and Re-entry Unit focuses their services on individuals recently released from incarceration or those with a prior criminal record and seeks to reduce barriers to Housing and Employment through effective legal intervention.

The LawNY Rochester Office seeks a talented and dedicated AmeriCorps VISTA Member to help improve and expand access to housing and employment for low income populations. The VISTA member will conduct the following activities to address the consumer needs of economically disadvantaged individuals in Rochester: (1) The development of community partnerships in order to target populations disproportionately impacted by errors in credit reporting. (2) Coordinate and implement legal clinics/workshops in collaboration with community based nonprofits to educate individuals on their credit rights related to specialty credit reports and (3) Create outreach and training materials for the program.

LEGAL SERVICES OF THE HUDSON VALLEY (WHITE PLAINS, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley was founded in 1967 to make “justice for all” a reality by providing support, advocacy and legal representation for civil matters to low-income families and individuals. LSHV’s 129 staff positions: 82 attorneys including supervisory and administrative attorneys, 47 support staff of paralegals, specially trained intake paralegals, and clerical support staff. Our administrative and support infrastructure ensures that our staff has adequate supervision and support. With 2 new additional offices, we have 8 locations among our 7 county service area in Spring Valley, Kingston, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, White Plains, Peekskill, Yonkers, and Mount Vernon. We have a Veterans Unit that has recently benefitted from significant NYS funding for attorney services, a Foreclosure Unit, a Disability Unit, a Family Law Unit, and a Child Advocacy Unit and a Child Support Hotline. We handle a list of legal issues that includes homelessness prevention, domestic violence, disability, elder, bankruptcy/consumer/foreclosure, discrimination, benefits, Medicaid/Medicare, income protection and maintenance, preserving affordable housing, and general practice for the chronically ill.

The VISTA member will continue efforts to grow community networks, conduct outreach, and promote civil legal education. One member will be assigned to the lower counties of Westchester, Rockland and Putnam and the second member will serve

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the upper counties of Orange, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan. Through targeted outreach, the VISTA members will work to expand the organization’s impact in the veterans’ community by educating veterans through civil legal clinics focusing on housing rights, a variety of benefits, and other topics. In addition, the VISTA members will create county-specific plans with a focus on networking with community organizations and informing the veterans’ community of our services. By accomplishing this goal, the organization will increase its work to fight poverty, as more veterans will be knowledgeable of their civil legal rights as well as seek out free civil legal services provided by Legal Services of the Hudson Valley in times of need.

LEGAL SERVICES OF THE HUDSON VALLEY (POUGHKEEPSIE, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley was founded in 1967 to make “justice for all” a reality by providing support, advocacy and legal representation for civil matters to low-income families and individuals. LSHV’s 129 staff positions: 82 attorneys including supervisory and administrative attorneys, 47 support staff of paralegals, specially trained intake paralegals, and clerical support staff. Our administrative and support infrastructure ensures that our staff has adequate supervision and support. With 2 new additional offices, we have 8 locations among our 7 county service area in Spring Valley, Kingston, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, White Plains, Peekskill, Yonkers, and Mount Vernon. We have a Veterans Unit that has recently benefitted from significant NYS funding for attorney services, a Foreclosure Unit, a Disability Unit, a Family Law Unit, and a Child Advocacy Unit and a Child Support Hotline. We handle a list of legal issues that includes homelessness prevention, domestic violence, disability, elder, bankruptcy/consumer/foreclosure, discrimination, benefits, Medicaid/Medicare, income protection and maintenance, preserving affordable housing, and general practice for the chronically ill.

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LITERACY NEW YORK BUFFALO NIAGARA (BUFFALO, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

Literacy New York Buffalo-Niagara (LNYBN), the region’s sole provider of free, one-on-one adult literacy services, has been providing basic reading and English Language Learning tutoring to a variety of diverse adult learners since 1965. The specific geographical area we target and serve is Erie and Niagara counties in Western New York State. LNYBN provides programming in areas of concentrated poverty, with 33% of families living on incomes less than $15,000 per year, and 46% under $20,000 per year. The program consists of two main categories- the English Language Learner (ELL) Program provides non-native English speakers with tutoring to improving their English communication skills. The Basic Literacy Learner (BLL) Program provides individuals tutoring to improve their reading and writing skills. Current programs serve approximately 300 adults on an annual basis and are comprised of approximately 50% ELL and 50% BL students. Individuals who are functionally illiterate (reading at or below the 5th grade level) adults or adults seeking assistance in learning the English language are the agency’s target population.

The VISTA member will improve job placement services to LNYBN clients/students. The member will achieve this by selecting locations for neighborhood Drop In Centers & English Conversation groups, working to create training for current tutors around Workplace Literacy and job placement, and creating marketing materials for the program. Nearly 80% of students are

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Currently unemployed and available to work. The member will be key in creating neighborhood Drop In Centers, where students can receive tutoring from trained literacy volunteers.

**MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE PROJECT (BUFFALO, NY)**
**START DATE: JULY 2016**

The mission of the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) is to nurture the growth of a diverse and equitable community food system to promote local economic opportunities, access to affordable nutritious food and social change education. MAP’s Growing Green Program is a year-round youth development initiative that involves youth, ages 14-20, in solving Buffalo’s challenges related to nutrition and health food access, while preparing them for the next step of entering college or the workforce. The program trains urban youth in urban agriculture, food systems issues, microenterprise development and leadership. MAP values creativity and cooperative principles and our staff work closely as a team.

The youth training and support coordinator VISTA will work closely with MAP’s youth education director and past practices to continue to develop the MAP Your Future program which includes helping youth to envision potential career avenues, assist with the college or trade school application process and improve college and workforce readiness. The VISTA member will work to include MAP Your Future events in Growing Green programming/curriculum by creating schedules and evaluation systems so that all areas of youth education are as effective as possible.

**MATT URBAN HOPE CENTER (BUFFALO, NY)**
**START DATE: JULY 2016**

The Matt Urban Hope Center, a department of the Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of Western New York, acts as a one-stop resource center for the Broadway-Fillmore community and surrounding areas. The Hope Center’s primary goals are to increase access to services for low income individuals and families and to empower community members to improve their quality of life. The agency accomplishes these goals through collaboration with a wide network of community agencies, volunteers, and with a strength-based approach to client engagement.

The VISTA member will build upon Hope Works, the current job development program, to provide a more comprehensive job development and job search program to better serve the needs of the community and formerly homeless individuals. In addition, the VISTA member will research what long-term adjustments and improvements may be feasible in the Buffalo area to further strengthen the program.

**THE PARENT NETWORK OF WNY (BUFFALO, NY)**
**START DATE: JULY 2016**

For 28 years, the Parent Network of WNY (PNWNY) has specialized in informing and supporting families of individuals with disabilities and the professionals who work with them. The agency has a wealth of expertise in educating families about special education, disabilities, behavior challenges, and community services. The agency’s primary funding is from the NYS Education Department and the Federal Office of Special Education Programs. This project will focus on meeting the needs of military families by conducting needs assessments, adapting resources and curricula, developing videos and providing training.

The VISTA member will develop a marketing plan for military families. The results enable families to learn about special education rules, services and roles and responsibilities; for family members by PNWNY and the community. The VISTA member will assist to: Identify unmet needs of military families, Develop/update PN resources targeting the needs of military families, Provide targeted outreach to military families to learn about PNWNY and community supports.

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Plymouth Crossroads (Lancaster, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

Plymouth Crossroads provides transitional housing to homeless youth, ages 16 through 20. Our mission is to provide safe shelter and services to abused, runaway and homeless youth. As a voluntary residence, services are aimed at preventing youth from returning to homelessness, while promoting a more stable and productive living situation and preparing them for independence. The goal for every resident is to transform himself into a contributing, productive member of society. Plymouth Crossroads’ Philosophy affirms the right of every child to food, shelter, safety and assistance in growing into a healthy adult.

The VISTA member assigned to our home will complete research on issues affecting health care access for adolescents and assist in developing coordinated approaches to planning and advocacy for the health and wellness of this population. Our VISTA member will cultivate community partnerships, bringing speakers to the home to increase our resident’s awareness and knowledge of agencies and community programs offering services to benefit our youth’s health. Through outreach and research, our VISTA member will assist the youth at Plymouth Crossroads gain a better understanding of how the healthcare system works with particular attention to benefits and assistance programs that apply to their needs.

Resource Council of WNY Inc (Buffalo, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

The Resource Council of WNY, Inc is a collaboration between the Buffalo Sabres Foundation, True Community Development and Saving Grace Ministries. The organization’s main objectives are program delivery for the community center and support for the affordable housing on the second and third floor for Veterans and their families. The Resource Council’s mission is to make 347 East Ferry Street a pillar of our community and bring stability, hope and inspiration to the families served through extraordinary programs that include youth and adult education, athletics and veteran services.

The VISTA member will develop and coordinate educational programs that will include afterschool mentoring for students K-12, tutoring, mentoring, homework assistance and linkage to school, family tutoring and parental involvement and increased economic opportunities for Veterans and their families. The member will develop a social and traditional media plan and community outreach in order to grow and promote programs that will increase academic achievement in students while providing increased access to activities and supports for families of Veterans.

Seneca Street Community Development Corporation (Buffalo, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

The Seneca Street Community Development Corporation (SSCDC) is a community center operating in the Seneca Babcock neighborhood of South Buffalo. SSCDC’s mission is to provide a supportive environment to overcome educational, social, and economic barriers. SSCDC continues to increase food security and academic achievement for neighborhood youth while providing a safe, secure and supervised place to spend their afternoon and summer hours. As a growing non-profit, SSCDC has been steadily increasing the number of youth served.

The VISTA member will work to build capacity for the program and work with neighborhood families and staff to improve food security. The member will accomplish this goal by planning and implementing the NYS Child and Adult Care Food

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Program, fundraising for the organization's operating funds, engage with the community gardens, and perform outreach to the community to allow more members of the community to access the programs.

**Squeaky Wheel Film and Media Center (Buffalo, NY)**

**START DATE: JULY 2016**

Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Art Center has a mission to continue a legacy of innovation in media arts through access, education, and exhibition. Squeaky Wheel envisions a community that uses electronic media and film to celebrate freedom of expression and diversity of voice.

The VISTA member will spearhead new methods to strengthen and improve ongoing program outreach, implementation, and project evaluation protocol. The member will strengthen evaluation and assessment for education projects, promote and publicize agency activities, and fund-raise for organizational sustainability. The desired impact of this capacity building project is to provide updated materials and procedures that will increase effectiveness and efficiency of the agency’s ability to thrive during a critical period of growth and result in long-term benefits for the organization.

**The United Way of Buffalo and Erie County- Education (Buffalo, NY)**

**START DATE: JULY 2016**

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County has convened community partners in education and advocated for systems change and collaboration for over the past 20 years. In recent years, they have also increased their data collection efforts, to ensure the community is receiving the most possible positive impact.

The VISTA member will strengthen and expand the Erie Niagara Birth-8 Coalition which is convened by the United Way. The member will create a communications plan for Birth to 8 Coalition initiatives that will increase awareness of Birth to 8 needs, with the goal of generating community support that will result in at least one new program or service. In addition to Coalition work the VISTA member will also support the education platform by coordinating and collecting data from the organization’s Full Service Community Schools initiative.

**The United Way of Buffalo and Erie County- CASH (Buffalo, NY)**

**START DATE: JULY 2016**

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County has convened community partners in education and advocated for systems change and collaboration for over the past 20 years. In recent years, they have also increased their data collection efforts, to ensure the community is receiving the most possible positive impact.

Creating Assets, Savings & Hope (CASH) Buffalo works to increase the financial stability of low-to-moderate income families in Buffalo and Erie County. The coalition consists of over sixty member organizations, including foundations, banks, credit unions, nonprofits, faith-based and community groups, educational institutions, employers, and concerned citizens. The VISTA member will expand and strengthen the coalition to focus on a variety of proactive, community-based asset building strategies including: securing working family credits and other income supports (including Earned Income, Education, and Child Tax Credits); improving the coordination, reach, and consistency of local financial education programming; supporting education and employment opportunities; and encouraging homeownership and other asset development through Individual Development Account (IDA) matched savings accounts.

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WESTMINSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE, INC (BUFFALO, NY)
START DATE: JULY 2016

WEDI empowers economically-disadvantaged people who live and/or work in Buffalo’s west side community. Since 2006, WEDI has served the West Side of Buffalo by tutoring children, building and rehabbing housing, and developing businesses through business training, micro lending, and a cultural and restaurant business incubator. We currently run the following programs: Business Training and Technical Assistance, West Side Bazaar, Microloan, ENERGY Literacy for Children, and FLY After-School programs.

The VISTA member will develop funds for WEDI through the annual fundraiser, Winterfest 2017, and other fundraising campaigns. The member will develop and improve the operating procedure for WEDI’s Financial Capability Training and associated performance, milestone, and outcome tracking. The member will improve the Business Coaching program by recruiting and training viable volunteer candidates and developing effective partnerships. The member will also participate in and improve Marketing and Publicity for the organization.

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