



# AmeriCorps VISTA: Volunteers In Service To America

Getting Things Done for America



# Agenda



- What is AmeriCorps VISTA and the Corporation for National and Community Service?
- What do VISTA members do?
- How do organizations apply for VISTA members?
- What are the costs involved when sponsoring a VISTA member?
- What is the 2015 timeline for VISTA placements?

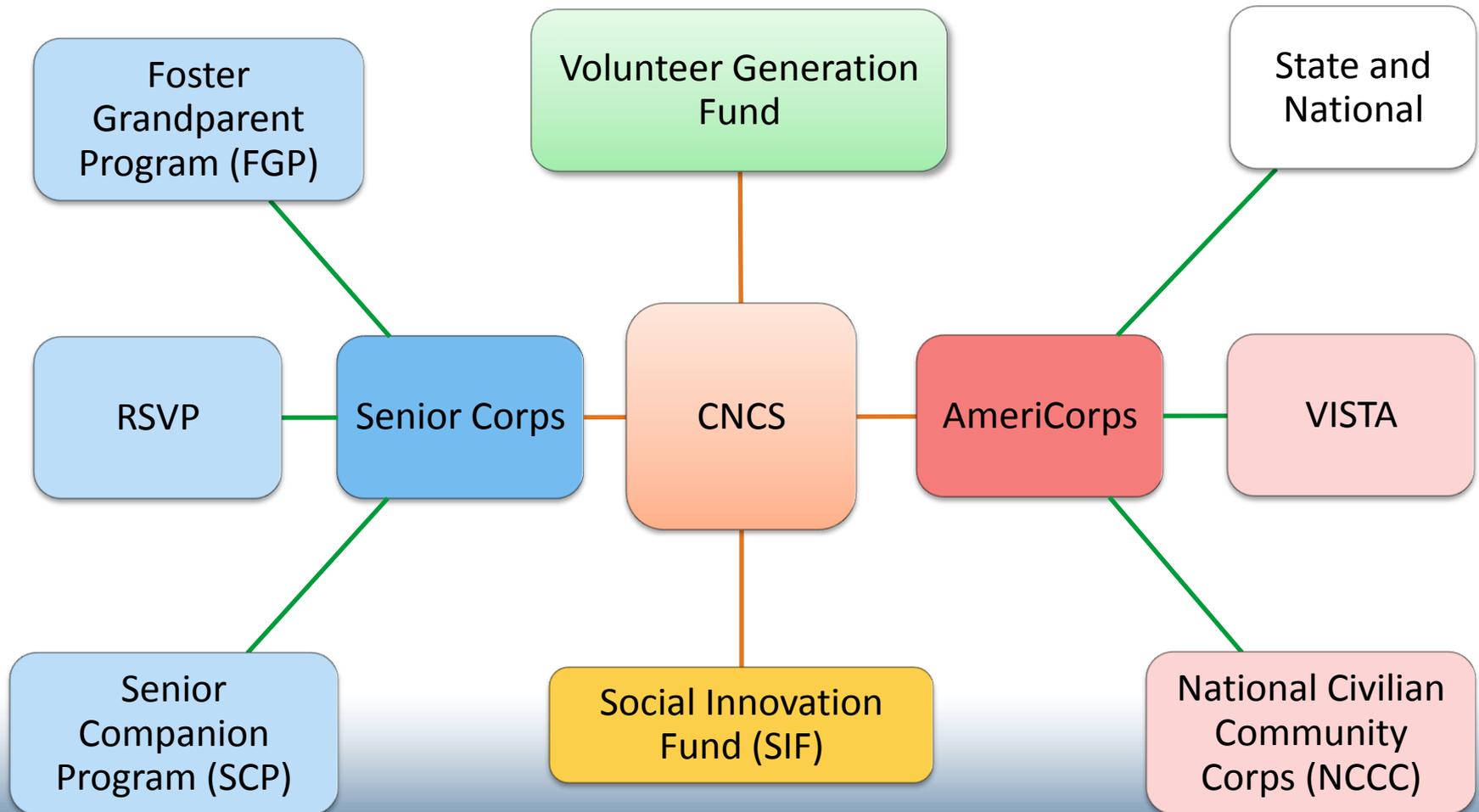
# CNCS



- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its core programs -- Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund -- and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve
- The Corporation is our nation's largest grant maker for service and volunteering



# Overview of CNCS Programs



# CNCS Programs



- **Senior Corps** consists of three programs - RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program - that tap the experience, skills, and talents of nearly 500,000 volunteers age 55 and older to meet a wide range of community needs, from tutoring at-risk children to caring for the frail elderly.
- **Volunteer Generation Fund:** A program authorized by the Serve America Act to support voluntary organizations and state service commissions in increasing volunteer recruitment and retention.
- **SIF:** An initiative enacted under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. The SIF targets millions in public-private funds to expand effective solutions across three issue areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development and school support.



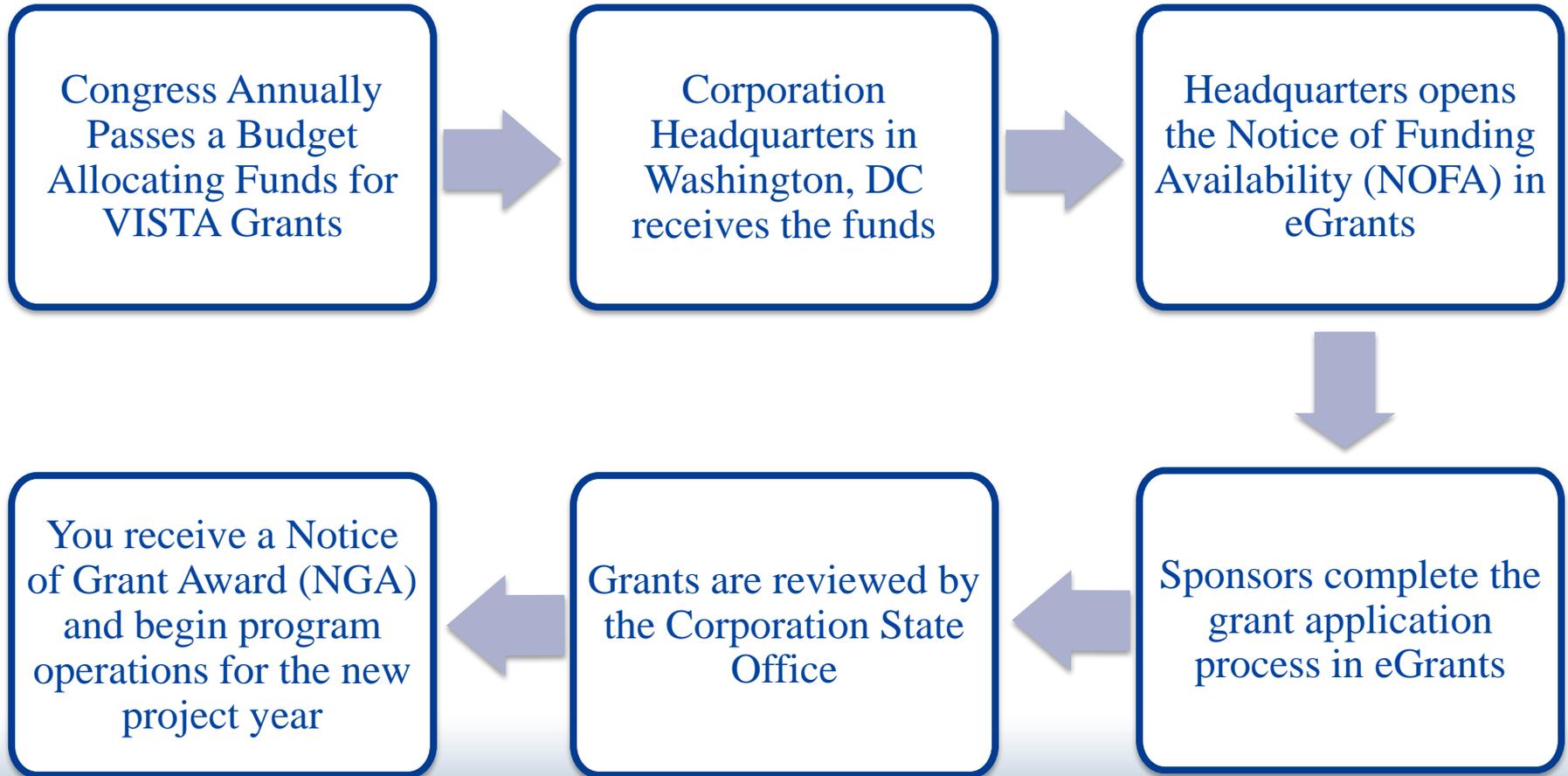
Corporation for  
**NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE**  | **SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND**  
Finding what works. Making it work for more people.

# CNCS Programs (continued)

- AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to service. 80,000 Americans participate each year in three programs:
  - AmeriCorps State and National: the broadest network of AmeriCorps programs. AmeriCorps members meet critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment
  - AmeriCorps NCCC: full-time, team-based, residential program for men and women ages 18–24
  - AmeriCorps VISTA: provides full-time members to nonprofit, faith-based, and other community organizations, and public agencies to create and expand programs that bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty



# Where's the Money?



# 2011 – 2015 CNCS Strategic Plan

- Goal 1: Increase the impact of national service on community needs in communities served by CNCS-supported programs in Six Focus Areas:
  1. **Economic Opportunity:** projects that support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and financial security of economically disadvantaged people. This includes financial literacy, housing needs, and workforce development.
  2. **Education:** projects that provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children.
  3. **Healthy Futures:** projects that meet health needs, including access to food resources and health care, for economically disadvantaged individuals.
  4. **Veterans & Military Families:** projects that either focus specifically on low-income veterans and military families as beneficiaries, or enhance existing projects to begin or better serve low-income veterans and military families.
  5. **Disaster Services:** projects that support long-term recovery efforts.
  6. **Environmental Stewardship:** help establish or expand youth corps' that engage at-risk individuals in hands-on service and job training experiences on public lands, waterways, cultural heritage sites, and community green spaces.

# Top Priorities



- Projects focusing on My Brother's Keepers such as youth mentoring, education, and workforce development
- STEM - Science, technology, engineering, and math education projects that bolster the number of underrepresented students who pursue and obtain STEM degrees
- Refugee resettlement and victims of human trafficking
- Intergenerational food security and ending childhood hunger

# AmeriCorps VISTA



- VISTA was founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 as a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty in America.
- VISTA members provide full-time service for 365 days.
- VISTAs engage in indirect service and capacity building projects.
  - They focus their efforts to build the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that fight illiteracy, improve health services, foster economic development, and otherwise assist low-income communities.

**Fight Poverty  
with PASSION**

# What do VISTA members do?

- Recruit volunteers, build volunteer management, leadership, and training systems
- Market programs and activities
- Create community partnerships
- Grant write and fundraise
- Develop new programs
- Much, much, more...

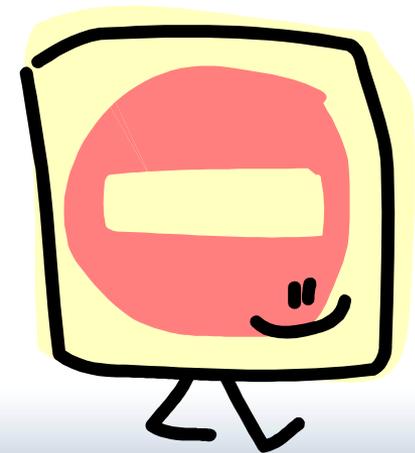


# What VISTA Members Do

Indirect Service	Capacity Building	Sustainability
Coordinate local support to target groups	Develop resources to support participant housing, jobs and transportation	Develop local survival skills handbook and/or resource database
Deliver presentations on projects to local community groups	Develop speakers' bureau for ongoing project presentations	Facilitate long term community partnerships
Organize fundraising events for projects	Develop proposals, write grants, find scholarships	Secure project money, manpower and support for future
Conduct community & mentor outreach	Develop needs assessments, suggest mentor matches	Develop tutor/ mentor pool/ education/ housing/ job resource bank
Recruit community volunteers	Develop tracking systems for resources and needs	Evaluate impact and success

# What VISTA Members Do NOT Do

- Direct service
- Administrative duties
- Part-time service
- Work outside of their VISTA placement, proselytize, or lobby
- International work
- Supervise employees or volunteers
- Replace staff members



# Who Sponsors VISTAs?

- Non-profit 501 C-3 organizations
- Local, state, and federal government agencies
- Educational institutions
- Faith-based organizations
- Tribal governments

# How do Organizations Apply for VISTAs?

An Organization completes a Concept Paper in eGrants, no more than 8 pages

The CNCS State Office reviews the Concept Paper

The State Office invites the applicant to submit an application

Organization completes VISTA Application, including Narrative, Work Plans and Budget for project

Application is reviewed and awarded by State Office

The State Office advises the Organization to join an existing VISTA project as a sub-site

State Office forwards Concept Paper to existing VISTA project

Organization is responsible for following up with that project about process for joining as a sub-site

# What does CNCS Provide?

- \$5,730 Segal Education Award or \$1,500 post-service stipend
- Member living allowance of \$973.00 per month
- Health coverage
- Moving allowance for members relocating to serve
- Child care for income eligible members
- Pre service training for members and supervisors including travel costs
- Liability coverage for members
- Assistance with member recruitment
- Payroll services



# What do Sponsors Provide?

- A project plan and performance measures
- A VISTA Assignment Description or work plan
- An identified supervisor for VISTA members
- An advisory council of community stakeholders to advise the VISTA project
- New VISTA member recruitment using tools provided by CNCS and your own resources
- Physical resources for VISTAs to perform tasks including workspace, phones, computers, supplies, transportation funds, etc.

# Additional Sponsor Responsibilities

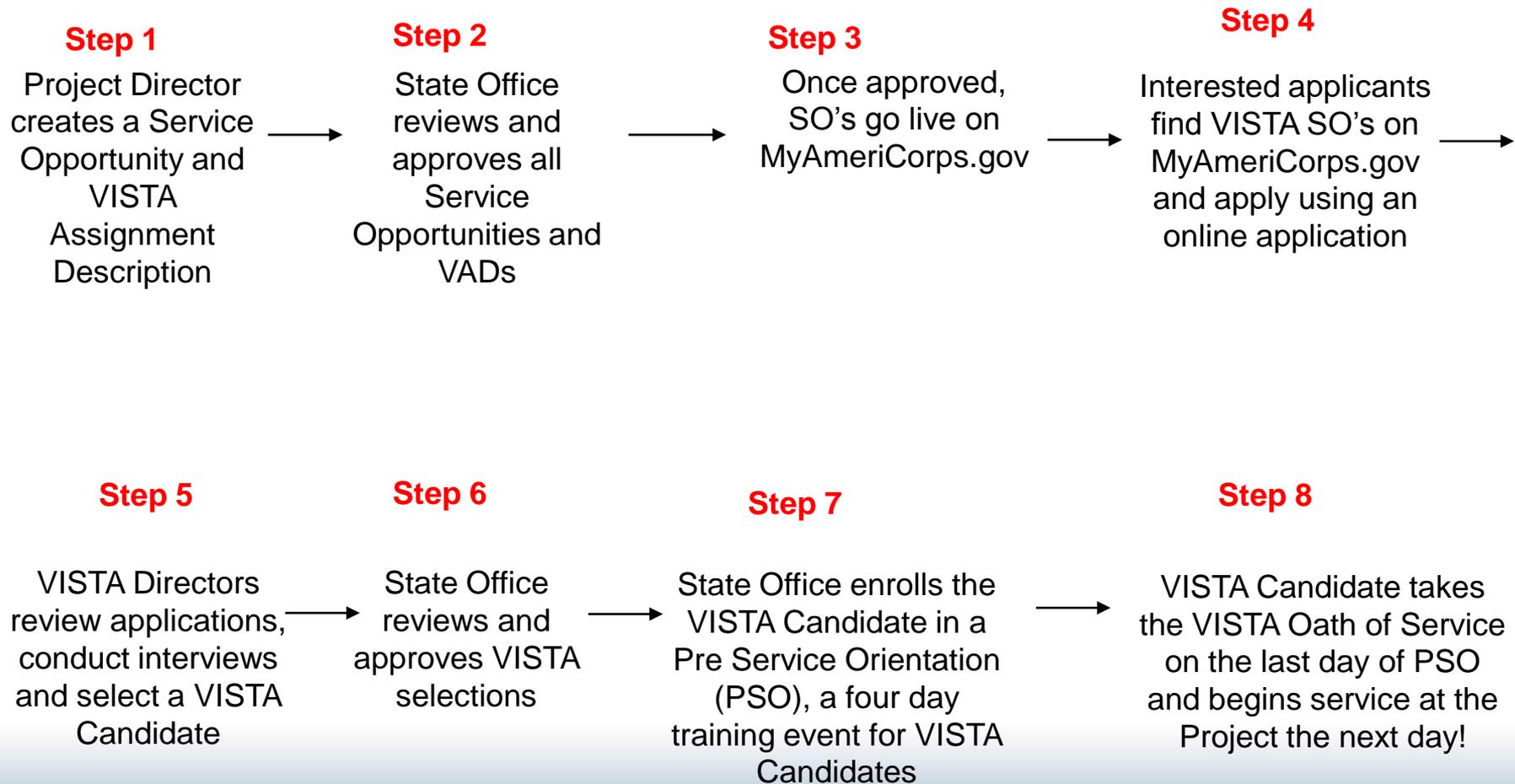
- Create two-week member On Site Orientation and Training
- Introduce VISTA members to the community they will serve
- Conduct member performance appraisals, track time and attendance, and perform other supervisory duties
- Connect VISTA members with training and development opportunities
- Document all project achievements and legacy through Project Progress Reports



# Cost-Share: Added Member Capacity

- There is no required match for AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors, but there is the option to cost-share:
  - VISTA Sponsors cost-share by paying the living allowance of at least 1 of 3 VISTA members
  - Cost Share allows greater project growth by allowing more VISTA members to serve. Cost Share members may also begin service when there are not CNCS resources for standard members
  - The VISTA member living allowance in Kansas and Missouri is approximately \$11,676.00 annually
  - CNCS still provides all other member benefits, including the end of year award, health coverage, childcare for eligible members, moving allowance, Pre service training, payroll and FICA
  - VISTA Sponsors pay Cost Share directly to CNCS and are invoiced every two weeks

# How do Projects Find VISTAs?

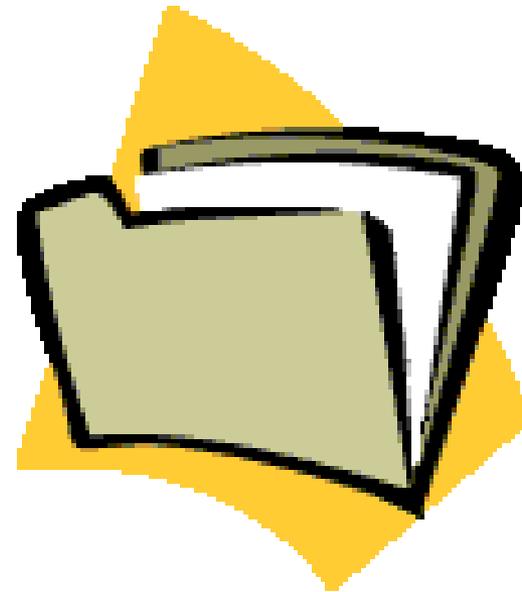


# Creating an eGrants Account

- eGrants is used to create a concept paper and application, write recruitment listings, approved VISTA members, and more
- eGrants is located at <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>
- A tutorial on how to create an eGrants account is at <https://www.nationalservicerresources.gov/videos/create-and-manage-egrants-account-tutorial>

# Concept Paper Elements

- Applicant Info
- Application Info
- Narratives
  - Executive Summary
  - Need
  - Strengthening Communities
  - Organizational Capacity
- Review
- Authorize and Submit



# Consider...



- What changes will you measure in the agencies where VISTA members serve?
- What changes will you measure in the communities and/or people those agencies serve?
- How will you engage community members, particularly representatives from the low income community, in planning and executing the VISTA project?
- How will the VISTA members' work lift people out of poverty?
- How will the systems members create be sustainable beyond the three-year project period?
- How will you know your VISTA project is making progress?

# Timeline



- Spring Application Dates will be announced in January 2015
- To get announcements on our upcoming Spring Application dates, please send me an e-mail:

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# For More Information...

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