What is AmeriCorps VISTA? What is the GCBH VISTA Program?

Across the nation, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) engages more than 8,000 individuals annually to support community efforts to overcome poverty. AmeriCorps VISTAs serve full-time (approximately 40 hours a week) for one year at non-profit organizations or local government agencies to build their capacity and alleviate poverty. Instead of a salary, VISTAs receive a living stipend that puts them at a poverty line.

Why is the GCBH VISTA Program important?

Access to behavioral health services continues to be a pressing need in Greenville County. Nationally, two in four individuals suffer from a mental illness at some point in their lives, with one out of four developing the symptoms before age 14. South Carolina ranks a dismal 50th nationally in how successfully an individual needing behavioral health services (including services related to mental health and substance misuse) can access them. The need for increased access to behavioral health care was identified as a top priority in separate 2016 studies released by Greenville Health System and Bon Secours St. Francis.

In Greenville County, strong and capable agency partners are confronting challenges related to the rapidly-increasing demand for services. For many of these organizations, requests for programming have doubled or tripled in recent years while financial resources have stayed consistent or declined, forcing agency leaders to concentrate on day-to-day needs rather than prioritizing investments in capacity-building efforts. The Greenville County Behavioral Health (GCBH) VISTA Program is designed to increase access to behavioral health services for the county’s low-income residents in measurable and sustainable ways.
FAQs - Applying to be a GCBH VISTA in 2018

What kind of work can GCBH VISTAs focus on?

VISTAs’ work may not focus on direct service. Instead, their activities must be sustainable and build the capacity of the organization. GCBH VISTA encourages sites to pursue positions focusing on one or more of the following:

- Social Media/Marketing Management
- Fundraising
- Developing/Modifying Programs to Increase Access to Care
- Partnership-Building
- Improving Volunteer Recruitment or Management Systems
- Program or Community Assessment

I understand that the second GCBH VISTA cohort begins in July 2018. Where did the first GCBH VISTAs work, and what were their focus areas?

In 2017, eight college graduates from across the country began a year of VISTA service as the inaugural GCBH VISTA Cohort. Each VISTA worked at one of three local organizations—Greenville Family Partnership, The Phoenix Center, and Mental Health America of Greenville County—and concentrated on expanding access to services related to either mental health or opioid abuse/misuse for low-income individuals. To ensure the program was best supported, an additional individual—with proven service experience—began serving as a VISTA Leader. A generous grant from Greenville Women Giving provided funding for Year One supports (including mileage reimbursement during the service year, uniform costs, supplies, etc.).

How many GCBH VISTA positions are available for 2018-2019 (Cohort Two)?

The Greenville County Behavioral Health VISTA Program currently expects that Cohort Two will have a 12 VISTA and one Leader positions for the 2018-2019 program year, with a total of five VISTA positions focusing on mental health access and the remaining VISTA positions focusing on services related to opioid use disorder. These positions will be serving a total of five sites.

How do I apply for a Year Two GCBH VISTA position?

Visit www.mhagc.org to learn more about the program, view the current positions, and access the online application! We look forward to hearing from you.