



AmeriCorps VISTA Opportunity:

Energy Unit Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator



Community Legal Services (CLS) of Philadelphia is one of the leading legal services programs in the country. At CLS our mission is to fight poverty, challenge systems that perpetuate injustice and change lives through cutting edge advocacy and exceptional legal representation. CLS helps a diverse client community in issues that impact all walks of life. One of CLS's practice areas is the Energy Unit, which focuses on life-essential home utility service. The Energy Unit fights for people to have affordable water, heat and electricity in their homes. The Energy Unit's cutting-edge legal representation and policy and legislative advocacy promotes the health, safety and well-being of all Philadelphians.

CLS seeks an AmeriCorps VISTA Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator for the Energy Unit to provide critical outreach to Philadelphia neighborhoods in key areas to assist low income and vulnerable Philadelphians to maintain vital utility service. This is a full-time five days per week position to be located at CLS's main office in Center City. **This is a one-year AmeriCorps VISTA position. An overview of VISTA benefits for 2018, including living allowance and health benefits is attached.**

POSITION SUMMARY: The goal of this project is to help CLS develop and then pilot a neighborhood-based approach to providing utility assistance, thereby increasing CLS's capacity to meet the utility affordability needs of more low-income Philadelphians. With this project, CLS hopes to reach more clients, learn more fully the extent of utility affordability concerns of the communities we serve, establish new relationships with key community groups, strengthen existing relationships and develop much needed resource and education materials for our low-income vulnerable communities. The VISTA Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator will be immersed in the community to help CLS serve as a resource for the advocacy related needs of community members. This work will expand the knowledge, reach and effectiveness of low-income utility assistance programs that are vital to preserving affordable housing, family unity and community health.



The VISTA member will have the following **tasks and responsibilities**:

- Identify opportunities for outreach and community education in designated low and vulnerable income neighborhoods, with the goal of increasing CLS's presence and ability to do utility intake and utility affordability advocacy;
- Network with various stakeholders, such as elected officials and their staff, community and faith-based groups and other neighborhood entities to identify their concerns around utility affordability;
- Meet and develop relationships with community partners to identify the needs of community members and provide resources for energy advocacy related needs;
- Identify the language, access, literacy and other community education needs of targeted neighborhoods for utility affordability self-help and education materials;
- Coordinate community outreach and education activities;
- Develop and prepare resource materials.

We seek enthusiastic, committed and diverse VISTA applicants with the following **key qualifications**:

- Passion for public service work, policy and others forms of advocacy
- Community organizing or similar background
- Flexibility and drive
- High emotional intelligence—ability to work with diverse personalities, environments and stakeholders
- Cultural competence and sensitivity
- Resiliency and adaptability
- Experience and ability to work with low-income and vulnerable individuals
- Results-driven and highly motivated individual
- Illustrate a high level commitment to racial justice advocacy
- Fluency in another language is helpful, but not required
- Bachelor's Degree is required
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Technology driven and experience in data entry, database management and full suite of Microsoft Office programs

To Apply: CLS will accept applications until June 3, 2018. You can email your application directly to Brenda L. Marrero, Esq., Deputy Director of Operations at bmarrero@clsphila.org.



What to Include in your application:

Please include a cover letter and resume. Community Legal Services values a diverse work environment and strongly encourages women, people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ, people with disabilities, people who have experienced poverty or homelessness and people who have had prior contact with the juvenile, criminal, or child welfare systems to apply. **CLS invites all applicants to include in their cover letter a statement about how your unique background and/or experiences might contribute to the diversity, cultural vitality, and perspective of our staff and legal services practice.**

AmeriCorps VISTA Member Benefits:

The AmeriCorps VISTA Member Benefits include a living allowance of \$13, 297 per year, end of service benefit, relocation assistance, training, ten days of personal leave and ten days of medical leave to use during the one-year term, health benefits and childcare benefits. To see the details of all member benefits please see the attached sheet outlining each.

Community Legal Services, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer. CLS, Inc. does not discriminate in the selection of employees on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, genetics, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. In addition to federal law requirements, CLS complies with all applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall and transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.



Overview of VISTA Member Benefits 2018 - Pennsylvania

The Corporation for National and Community Service provides a number of benefits to support VISTA members throughout their terms of service. Please review this information along with the [Benefits of Service](#) page and the [VISTA Member Handbook](#) on the VISTA Campus at vistacampus.gov so you can make an informed decision as you consider becoming a VISTA.

Living Allowance

You'll receive your VISTA living allowance biweekly, at a rate determined by your service site's county:

- \$13,297/year in Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties
- \$12,311/year in all other PA counties

If you're a VISTA Leader, you'll get an additional \$2,400 per year. We withhold federal taxes from living allowance payments. You are responsible for your own state and local taxes, and we recommend you budget and save for any tax obligations you may have.

End-of-Service Benefit

Before you begin service, you'll choose between a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award and an end-of-service stipend, which you'll receive when you successfully complete your service term.

- **Segal AmeriCorps Education Award:** This education award is \$5,920 for qualified classes, student loans, and other educational expenses. You can use the award up to seven years after you complete service, and it's payable only to a lender or educational institution. You can earn up to the full value of two education awards if you complete multiple service terms. You cannot transfer your education award, and it's taxable when used. For more information, see the [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Website](#).
- **Stipend:** The stipend is a cash award of \$1,800. We issue the stipend at the end of the service term and withhold federal taxes at that time.

Please note, if you initially choose the education award, you may change your election to the stipend any time before the end of your tenth month of service on your My AmeriCorps home page under the "Edit End of Service Option." You may not change from a stipend to the education award.

Relocation Assistance

If you relocate from more than 50 miles from your service site in order to start your term of service, you may receive a settling-in allowance of up to \$550 and relocation travel allowance of \$0.34/mile (up to \$1,000). We will review your eligibility for these benefits before you begin service. Your supervisor can confirm the amount of any approved settling-in allowance and the VISTA Member Support Unit will confirm the relocation travel allowance. For details on relocation assistance, see [VISTA Travel Fact Sheet](#).

Training

All VISTAs receive orientation to learn about the program and prepare to become members, then participate in the sponsor's on-site orientation and training, which acquaints new members with their projects and communities and trains them on relevant skills. Orientation is offered two ways: in a 3 ½-day in-person training or as a self-directed online orientation. If you're not sure which type of training you'll participate in, please ask your VISTA Supervisor.

Ongoing learning and training opportunities can be found on the [VISTA Campus](#) throughout your term of service. Online courses and webinars are offered on a variety of topics to enhance your skills and make the most of your VISTA year. Be sure to look under Connect & Learn for these training opportunities.

Leave

Each VISTA receives ten days of personal leave and ten days of medical leave to use during a one-year term. Discuss personal leave plans with your supervisor to get approval in advance, and communicate proactively with your supervisor when you need to use medical leave.

Health Benefits

AmeriCorps VISTA provides an optional Healthcare Allowance benefit to members who maintain health insurance coverage, and a basic Health Benefit Plan for those who are exempt from the requirement to have insurance.

- VISTA members who maintain health insurance during their service term may enroll in the AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare Allowance. This allowance is a reimbursement program that covers out-of-pocket costs associated with healthcare, such as charges for qualified medical expenses and limited dental and vision services. The Healthcare Allowance will help offset these expenses up to \$7,350 in 2018. The Healthcare Allowance does not cover costs associated with purchasing insurance, costs for non-essential health expenses, or charges associated with dependents or other individuals covered under your healthcare plan.
- VISTA members who are legally exempt from maintaining health insurance coverage during their term of service are eligible to enroll in the AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefit Plan. The plan is available to eligible members at no cost and covers eligible expenses for medical office visits, limited dental and vision, medical emergencies, surgical and hospitalization expenses, and certain prescription drug costs. It does not cover pre-existing conditions or care for dependents, including your spouse.
- If you ignore the legal requirement to have health insurance, you will be responsible for your own healthcare costs. You may be subject to removal from the VISTA program and may face a penalty under the Affordable Care Act.
- Both starting and ending VISTA service qualify you for a special healthcare enrollment period for the Health Insurance Marketplace. As a VISTA, you can buy insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace within 60 days of your service start date as well as 60 days after your end date.

Please review the resources on [VISTA Healthcare Options](#) available on the VISTA Campus.

Childcare Benefits

You may be eligible for child care benefits if you have a child under 13 and need childcare to serve as a VISTA. The maximum benefit is \$400/month. For details, see the [VISTA Child Care Benefit Tutorial](#).