

## Non-Competitive Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What is Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE)?

NCE makes it easier for federal agencies to hire AmeriCorps VISTA alumni who meet minimum qualifications for a given position. It allows federal employers to bypass the formal and lengthy competitive federal hiring process. While it does not entitle an individual to employment, it creates a strong interest from hiring managers and provides a faster application process.

### Who makes the decision to hire a former VISTA using NCE?

The decision to hire a former VISTA under Non-Competitive Eligibility status is at the discretion of the hiring agency.

### How long does NCE last?

NCE status begins on the date of successful completion of service and expires 12-months from that date. VISTAs who have completed less than one year of service (including training time) will not receive NCE status.

### Can NCE be extended beyond one year?

NCE can be extended for an additional two years for a total of **three years** from the date of successful completion of service.

### Extensions are allowed for three reasons:

1. If, after service, you enter the military
2. If you become a full-time student at a recognized institution of higher learning
3. If you engage in another activity that the hiring agency thinks warrants an extension\*

\*An example of another activity could be interning at a nonprofit, volunteering or actual employment at an organization that is providing you with skills and experience that make you an even stronger job candidate.

### Who decides if NCE can be extended?

The federal hiring agency decides if your situation warrants extension. This process is not determined by CNCS.

### Where are federal positions posted?

- [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov)
- [VISTA Campus Job Board](#)
- [Peace Corps' Career Link](#)

### Explore Hiring Paths

The Federal Government offers unique hiring paths (also known as a hiring authority) to help hire individuals that represent our diverse society. If you fall under one of these groups of people you may be eligible to receive preference when applying for jobs.

 <b>Open to the Public</b> Never worked for the Federal Government, U.S. citizens or nationals	 <b>Federal Employees</b> Current or former
 <b>Veterans</b>	 <b>National Guard</b> Current or prospective members
 <b>Individuals with a disability</b>	 <b>Native Americans</b> American Indian or Alaskan Native
 <b>Military Spouses</b>	 <b>Students &amp; Recent Graduates</b>
 <b>Senior Executives</b>	 <b>Land Management</b> Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act
 <b>Peace Corps/VISTA Alumni</b>	 <b>Former Overseas Employees</b>

## How do I make federal employers aware of my NCE status?

We recommend you include the following language in your cover letter and on your resume:

*Qualified for unique hiring path, Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE), having successfully served as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Active NCE from April 17, 2015 – April 17, 2016.*

## What should federal human resources specialists know about NCE?

The regulatory authority for an individual to have NCE status is set out under Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, at 5 CFR § 315.605. Under [Executive Order 11103](#), an AmeriCorps VISTA member is granted noncompetitive eligibility for 12 months upon successful completion of service.

## How do I prove NCE status?

Once you have completed service, log onto [My AmeriCorps](#) to access your account and obtain your AmeriCorps VISTA Verification of Service letter.

- Go to “My Service Letter,” select service term dates, select “VISTA Verification of Service” letter type, click “print” and save as a PDF
- If your letter is incorrect or the portal cannot locate your record, please contact the VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) at [VMSU@cns.gov](mailto:VMSU@cns.gov) or 800-942-2677.

## If I have yet to complete my service term, how do I prove my NCE status?

If you begin applying for positions while still in service, include the anticipated date your NCE status will become effective (your close of service date) in your resume and cover letter.

## How do I prove NCE without filling in a grade and series on the application?

If a VISTA who is currently accorded NCE status has no grade and series, s/he must contact the employing agency to determine how to should fill out an application that requires a grade and series in order to prove NCE.

## Does Non-Competitive Eligibility only apply to federal positions?

Yes. NCE is applicable only to federal government positions. Non-competitive eligibility does not apply to state or local government jobs.

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

My AmeriCorps  
Your Place to Manage Your AmeriCorps Experience

Print Service Letters

From this page, you can print out letters certifying your time of service in an AmeriCorps program. To print a letter, select a term of service and then select the type of letter you need. Type in the name and address of the intended recipient and click the "print" button to print the requested service letter. Form to be printed can be viewed using Adobe Reader software.

Click here for help.

\* Service Term:  
02/28/2015 to 02/27/2016

\* Letter Type:  
VISTA Verification of Service

Type name and address of recipient:

cancel print

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Corporation for National and Community Service  
NationalService.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to verify that the following individual served full time as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer In Service To America) for the term of service indicated below:

Name:

\*Dates of Service:  
\*\*Stipend or "deemed" value of Education Award:

AmeriCorps VISTA, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), places individuals in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to support efforts to alleviate poverty. Since 1965, more than 200,000 VISTAs have served low-income communities in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. While AmeriCorps VISTAs are authorized, trained and supported throughout their service by the VISTA program and CNCS, the sponsoring organization operates the service project. Should you wish to gather information about the VISTA's service activities or performance, you should contact the sponsoring organization directly.

INFORMATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYERS

**Federal Employment Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE):**  
VISTAs who successfully complete a year of service have noncompetitive eligibility for federal hire for a period of one year after completion of the VISTA's service (dates listed above). This is in accordance with Executive Order No. 11103 as applied to service under Title I of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) of 1963, or under Title VII of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Sec 42 U.S.C. § 5056(d), 45 C.F.R. § 2556.348. An employing agency may extend the period for two more years to a total of three years if the former VISTA, after the qualifying service, is in the military service or studying at a recognized institution of higher learning, or is engaged in another activity which, in the opinion of the appointing authority, warrants an extension.

**Federal SCDs for Leave, RIF and Retirement:**  
Having enrolled on or after October 1, 1973 for an enrollment period of at least one year under Title I of the DVSA, the former VISTA should receive credit for the purpose of computing Federal Service Computation Dates (SCD). See 42 U.S.C. § 5056(g). VISTA service shall not be credited toward completion of any probationary or trial period. This service is creditable to SCD for Leave and SCD for Reduction in Force (RIF) upon hire. This service is also potentially creditable for CSRS/FERS retirement under the same conditions that apply to a creditable period or periods of non-deduction service. Both CSRS and FERS employees may make a service credit deposit for VISTA service. (Federal HR - see CSRS and FERS Handbook Ch. 20 Section 203.2.1.2)

\*Indicates period of service which is creditable for SCD for Leave and SCD for RIF, and potentially creditable for CSRS/FERS retirement.  
\*\*Indicates payment to be used for computation of civilian service credit deposit.

If this office can be of further assistance, please contact us at 800-942-2677 or [VISTAverify@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAverify@cns.gov).

Sincerely,  
*Eileen Conesbury*  
Eileen Conesbury  
Acting Director, AmeriCorps VISTA

250 E Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20525  
202-606-5000 | 800-942-2677 | TTY 800-633-3722

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

## Example of Cover Letter for Federal Position

Department of Health and Human  
Services Division of Personnel  
Operations 123 Downtown Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Grant Analyst Position, GS-7  
Vacancy Announcement EX-03-  
03 Non-competitive Eligibility

Dear Selecting Official/Panel:

I am very interested in the above mentioned Grant Analyst position.

I recently completed my year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). Based on the federal unique hiring paths as explained on the homepage of USAJobs.gov, **I am eligible for non-competitive hire** as of **[ENTER DATE OF COMPLETION OF VISTA SERVICE]** and meet the requirement under 5 C.F.R. § 315.605.

*[In 1-2 short paragraphs, demonstrate why you are qualified for the position and why you would be a good fit for the agency. This letter should cover your interest and purpose, highlight your enclosed résumé by stressing what you can do for the employing agency, and request an interview while providing your best contact information.]*

Enclosed is my official VISTA Verification of Service letter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

INSERT NAME  
PHONE  
EMAIL