Overview of Topics

1. About Up2Us Sports and SBYD
2. About VISTA
3. Important Dates and Timelines
4. General Requirements of Host Organizations
5. General Requirements of Up2Us Sports as Lead Organization
6. Program Benefits
7. Recruiting and Screening VISTA Candidates
8. Orientation & Training: Preparing Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs for Service
9. VISTA Personnel Policies
10. Support Resources for Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs
11. Evaluation and Reporting
12. Important Documents
About Up2Us Sports

Up2Us Sports is leading a national effort to ensure that quality youth sports programs are not just preserved but expanded, especially in communities where they can have the greatest impact on childhood health and well-being.

The Up2Us Sports Mission

Our mission is to train and support sports coaches to transform youth, programs, and communities.

Why Service through Sports

- The pandemic has led to budget cuts in sports programs and parks and recreation departments. Under-resourced communities were hit the hardest, where sports are a lifeline to physical, social, and mental health and academic performance.
- Organizations, nationally, are facing uncertainty in programming, funding, and community engagement. Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs will help organizations recruit and support volunteers and rebuild programming to meet the needs of the youth and communities they serve.

Who are Our Members?

Our members are mostly community-based nonprofit organizations, but also include schools, parks departments, faith-based institutions, and government agencies. They serve predominantly low-income youth in under-resourced urban communities, and use single or multiple sports activities that range from traditional team sports to nontraditional sports (more than 60 sports in total).

How Our Members Help Youth

Up2Us Sports members consist of more than 1,000 sports-based youth development (SBYD) organizations across the country serving millions of youth nationwide. Our members pledge to:

- Support at-risk youth
- Leverage sports as a primary method for engaging youth and teaching them life skills
About Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is a federal grant program under the umbrella of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and AmeriCorps. Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs serve for nine weeks at host organizations to build the capacity of nonprofits. Specifically, Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs will help organizations navigate this difficult period and serve programs in the following areas:

● Program implementation (direct service allowed)
● Emergency funding
● Marketing and social media
● Community outreach
● Volunteer recruitment
● Summer programming

Examples of projects that are NOT acceptable for Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs are:

● Only clerical work such as filing, answering phones, entering data, etc.
● Advocacy, lobbying, or any work which attempts to influence legislation

Important Dates and Timelines

Monday, May 18th: Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA Application Launch

Thursday, May 21st: Hosted an Informational Webinar

Wednesday, May 27th: Application Due

Monday, June 1st: Award Letter Sent

Tuesday, June 2nd: MOU/Host Site Orientation at 2 pm EST & MOU Sent

Friday, June 5th: Signed MOU Due

Monday, June 15th: All Nominations Due by EOB

Monday, June 29th: VISTA’s First Day of Service!
General Requirements of Host Organizations

To be eligible to host an Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA, your organization must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- Work primarily with at-risk youth living in low-income communities
- Have a programmatic focus on education as well as sports-based youth development
- Be able to put effort into the recruitment process
- Provide onsite orientation and training to incoming Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs
- Provide supplies needed to perform assignments (We are requiring individuals to have access to their own computers, Internet, etc. If you have the ability to provide these items or services to your VISTA we encourage you to do so, but it is not required)
- Designate a VISTA supervisor to direct and coordinate the VISTA projects and act as a liaison to Up2Us Sports
- Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs are of no cost to host sites and sites can apply for any number of VISTA members

General Requirements of Up2Us Sports as Lead Organization

As lead agent for this VISTA grant awarded by CNCS, Up2Us Sports will:

- Provide VISTA member recruitment tools
- Provide orientation and professional development opportunities for Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs
- Be the lead agent to CNCS for all administrative, financial, and reporting requirements
- Ensure that all VISTA members are paid directly by CNCS
- Ensure that all VISTA members receive either a $1,311 education award or a $311 stipend upon successful completion of service

Program Benefits

Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs have access to program benefits during their nine-week term:

- Living allowance based on the poverty line of the county your organization is in. You can calculate the living allowance by using this chart, finding the day
rate for your county, and multiplying that by 61. (Day rate x 61 = total living allowance)

- Education award of $1,311 or an end-of-service summer stipend of $311
- Comprehensive programming schedule with support from Up2Us Sports VISTA staff

Organizations can also offer VISTAs additional benefits that are not direct cash benefits:

- Rent subsidy paid directly to the landlord
- Internet or cell phone subsidy paid directly to the provider
- Gas or food gift cards
- Transit pass

**Recruiting and Screening VISTA Candidates**

**Step 1: Recruit Candidates**

Since this is a short recruitment period, we highly suggest leveraging your network to recruit Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs. Specifically, you may want to target new college graduates who may be interested in service programs. Your newsletter and social media sites can be great tools. If you are unable to find any candidates, Up2Us Sports may be able to pass along candidates that applied through the portal. However, you should have candidates in mind when you are applying to the program.

**Note:** Regardless of your recruitment method, all candidates be 18 years old or older, a citizen or permanent resident, and have access to the Internet and a computer/tablet.

**Step 2: Interview Candidates**

As you find candidates, you must schedule times to interview the candidate. You may schedule a virtual or in-person interview. Even if you are already familiar with the candidate, you must still conduct a discussion about the program. When interviewing VISTA candidates, you may be asked for background about the VISTA program. The following FAQs will help:

- This is a nine-week summer program that runs from June 29th through August 28th.
- This is a full-time position, so Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs will serve around 40 hours per week. They can work remotely.
● While VISTA members are traditionally capacity builders, Summer VISTAs can provide direct service.
● At the completion of their service, Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs will receive either an education award ($1,311) or an end-of-service stipend ($311).
● The VISTA living allowance is set at the poverty level of the organization’s county and is distributed by CNCS every other week via direct deposit.

CNCS Required Interview Questions

CNCS requires specific questions to be asked during interviews. For the following, be sure to record your VISTA candidate’s responses as they will be needed in the nomination process:

1. Is the applicant currently involved in community service? Describe work and degree of involvement.
2. What relevant skills or strengths can the applicant contribute to this program?
3. What are the applicant’s weaknesses?
4. What type of supervision would the applicant need to function effectively as an Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA?
5. Is the applicant available for service on a full-time basis? Yes/No

In addition to the questions your organization typically uses when screening candidates, the following may be helpful, but are not required, when interviewing VISTA candidates:

● Why are you interested in national service at this point in your life?
● Why VISTA service as opposed to other types of national service?
● How will serving as a VISTA member in this role contribute to your professional/personal goals?
● What experience do you have working in the nonprofit environment?

● Describe your experience initiating, coordinating, and maintaining projects with others.
● With what types of past supervisors have you had the best working relationships?
● Do you have experience meeting hard deadlines?
Step 3: Opportunity Listing

Up2Us Sports has created an opportunity listing for the Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA position, which is posted on the My AmeriCorp Portal. Once you've identified your applicant, you must send them the link to the opportunity listing where they will apply to the Up2US Sports Summer VISTA program. Applicants will be asked to provide basic information, create a motivational statement, outline their skills and experiences, and submit two references.

Once the applicant has applied, you must complete this nomination link including the answers to the required interview questions. We will then work with the applicant to ensure the application is complete and officially nominate the individual. Once CNCS has approved the applicant, they must officially accept the nomination.

All applicants must apply through the Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA Opportunity Listing. They must be nominated and accept the nomination by the EOB on June 15th.

Step 4: Begin Service and Implement the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

The VAD outlines the projects and specific activities that the VISTA will accomplish during the summer. Up2Us Sports has created one VAD for all Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs. The VAD outlines the following duties:

- Develop best practices for program implementation during and after the pandemic
- Disseminate information about COVID-19 to community members
- Manage the grant calendar and track funding opportunities
- Research and apply for emergency funding grants
- Generate social media content on various platforms to highlight programming and the organization’s response to the pandemic
- Pivot in-person events to digital experiences
- Create an outreach plan to recruit and train community volunteers.

Note: Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs should be following the projects outlined in the VAD; however, we understand that your organization may need to tailor the VAD slightly to meet your needs.
Orientation & Training: Preparing Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs for Service

Onsite Orientation and Training (OSOT)

The OSOT is your plan to welcome, orient, train, and support your Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA. The OSOT can be in any form and should take place within the first few days, so the VISTA will be successful. When creating your OSOT plan, consider the following: organization’s mission, programming, office policies and procedures, role and responsibilities, VAD, skills needed to execute the role, community being served, organizational impact on low-income or at-risk youth, anti-poverty outcomes, etc.

OSOTs must address how the VISTA role and assignment fit into your organizational goals or mission, and must be submitted to Up2Us Sports and CNCS for approval before your VISTA starts. Up2Us Sports will also host an orientation for Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs.

Due to COVID-19 and the nature of remote work, please ensure you set clear norms and expectations for online and remote work. Ensure the VISTA is acquainted with your office norms and expectations.

VISTA Personnel Policies

In general, VISTA members must be familiar with both the policies in their VISTA Handbook and your organization’s policies. Please note that policies set by CNCS supersede policies set by your organization. The VISTA Handbook is found on the VISTA Campus.

Work Week

According to their service contract, VISTA members are required to be in service 24/7. This means that while they should work the regular schedule of your organization’s staff, they must also be available for occasional evenings and weekends as dictated by organizational deadlines and events. If, on any day, your VISTA does not report to work and has not reported an absence to you, notify Up2Us Sports immediately.

VISTA members will work remotely. If your state and office begins to reopen, please notify Up2Us Sports and we can make other arrangements.
Leave

VISTAs receive leave on holidays offered by your organization. Personal or sick leave is not available to Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs. The VISTA may request 1-2 absences during the program if absolutely needed; however, the VISTA is required to make this up by serving extra hours or days. If the VISTA requests more than two absences, you must notify Up2Us Sports. CNCS may allow up to 5 days of emergency leave for a death or illness in the family.

VISTA Benefits

Throughout the program, Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs earn a living allowance set at the local poverty level. Rates can be found here. In order to calculate the living allowance, multiply the VISTA daily living allowance rate for your site’s county by 61 (the total number of days in the summer program). The living allowance is deposited directly into their bank account every other week. This living allowance comes from CNCS, so you should not put any VISTA members on your organization’s payroll.

At the completion of their year of service, VISTA members have the choice to receive either an education award ($1,311) or an end-of-service stipend ($311).

Outside Employment

In May 2015, CNCS lifted the ban on VISTA members having outside employment. However, any outside employment must be part-time, and not conflict with a VISTA member’s projects or CNCS required policies. A VISTA member must submit the Outside Employment Request Form to the host site, Up2Us Sports, and CNCS for approval. Under NO circumstances may a VISTA member be an employee of or contractor for the sponsor or project to which s/he is assigned to serve (this means your VISTA cannot be paid or hired by your organization or by Up2Us Sports).

Outside Education

VISTA members may attend school part-time, with approval from you, Up2Us Sports, and CNCS. The approval process must include documentation of class names, schedule, time commitment, and a plan to make up for any school hours that take place during the normal work week. You and your VISTA will need to determine whether or not the class(es) will detract from their commitment to the VISTA project.

The state office can ask a member to withdraw from the course or end their VISTA service.
Prohibited Activity

VISTA members may NOT participate in political, religious, or labor organization activities during work hours. They may participate as a public citizen on their personal time, but cannot be recognized or identified as a service member.

Grievances

It is expected that all VISTA members will be treated fairly and with respect. Should there be a problem, it is expected that you and your VISTA will make every effort to resolve the problem. Up2Us Sports should be considered the first line of recourse if a grievance is not able to be resolved at your level. CNCS is also available to assist, and has a formal grievance procedure that must be followed if you are not able to resolve an issue informally.

Early Exits

If your VISTA is thinking about exiting before their official end date, you must notify Up2Us Sports immediately. Early exiting is rare, but reasons may include personal illness, family illness, taking a job, poor fit, etc.

Support Resources for Up2Us Sports Summer VISTAs

VISTA Campus

An online portal with all policies and procedures that relate to service. There is also a vast library of other resources and webinars to help both VISTA members and supervisors: www.vistacampus.gov.

Program Support

Up2Us Sports will hold VISTA check-ins, host professional development opportunities, and provide opportunities for VISTAs to reflect on their service term. See programming schedule below:

W1: Orientation
W2: Check-in Call
W3: Reflection Activity
W4: Professional Development (SBYD Overview)
W5: Check-in Call
W6: Reflection Activity
In-Service Training

In addition to the OSOT and what Up2Us Sports offers, you should develop opportunities for in-service training for your VISTA. These can include role-specific skills (e.g. grant writing training), introductory trainings on helpful skills outside of the VISTA’s direct role (e.g. volunteer management training), and other professional development topics.

VISTA Leader

Because of the size and scope of the Up2Us Sports VISTA project, we have a VISTA Leader, who is a VISTA member responsible for project support, cohesion, and VISTA member support. The VISTA Leader is available to all VISTAs and supervisors for CNCS and VISTA-related questions. The VISTA Leader will also keep in touch with all VISTAs throughout the program to be aware of their work, provide tips and assistance, and promote networking among the summer cohort.

Project Supervisor

Up2Us Sports employs a Project Supervisor who supervises the VISTA Leader. The Project Supervisor maintains much of the relationship between Up2Us Sports and CNCS and oversees the summer program.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Kim Chinn (kchinn@up2ussports.org) or Danielle Walker (dwalker@up2ussports.org)

VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU)

The VMSU is a department of CNCS available to all VISTAs. The VMSU can answer questions about service benefits, living allowance, the education award, and the My AmeriCorps Portal. The VMSU can be contacted at 800-942-2677.
Evaluation and Reporting

Regular VISTA and VISTA Supervisor Meetings

You should meet with the VISTA weekly to discuss expectations, assignments, and progress. These meetings can be especially helpful for prioritizing and gauging the appropriate level of responsibility for your VISTA.

Progress

Up2Us Sports is required to submit reports to CNCS to track and evaluate the impact of VISTA members’ capacity-building activities at each organization. Up2Us Sports will provide Summer VISTAs with a form to track their own progress.

Close of Service Forms

The VISTA is required to complete a Future Plans Form before the end of their term. This should be completed as soon as possible on the My AmeriCorp Portal.
VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong> Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sponsoring Organization:</strong> Up2Us Sports</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Name:</strong> Service through Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Number:</strong> 09VSANY005</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Period:</strong> June 29th - August 28th</td>
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**Site Name (if applicable):**

**Focus Area(s)**
- **Primary:** Education
- **Secondary:**

**Note:** If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.

**VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities**

**Goal of the Project:** The Up2Us Sports VISTA project builds the capacity of host site organizations working to end the cycle of poverty through intentional youth sports and education programming. The Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA will be placed at various host sites to help programs navigate this difficult period and rebuild their programs. This will result in increased scale and reach.

**Objective of the Assignment: June 2020 - August 2020**

VISTA will work with the Program Team in the development of COVID-19 programming.

- **Member Activities/Step 1:** VISTA will work closely with the Program Directors to implement and develop best practices for alternative programming and programming post-COVID-19.

- **Member Activities/Step 2:** VISTA will work with local agencies to disseminate relevant information to community members.

- **Member Activities/Step 3:** VISTA will implement programming as needed over the summer.

- **Member Activities/Step 4:** VISTA will help develop a continuation of operations plans for the next time a pandemic hits our communities.
### Objective of the Assignment: June 2020 - August 2020

**VISTA will support the Development Team with emergency funding.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Activities/Step 1</th>
<th>VISTA will create an internal tracking system, in partnership with the Development Team, to track all funding opportunities related to emergency funding.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Activities/Step 2</td>
<td>VISTA will research and collaborate with the Development Director to write grants for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Activities/Step 3</td>
<td>VISTA will help manage the calendar and track grant deliverables as they relate to funding cycles and changes in grant expectations due to COVID-19.</td>
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### Objective of the Assignment: June 2020 - August 2020

**VISTA will develop a strategic marketing plan for the roll-out of programming post-COVID-19.**

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<tr>
<th>Member Activities/Step 1</th>
<th>VISTA will develop content for various forms of social media to highlight the work during COVID-19 and to share program implementation post-COVID-19.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Activities/Step 2</td>
<td>VISTA will assist with the writing, copy editing, and development of strategic content for COVID-19 response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Activities/Step 3</td>
<td>VISTA will create content on impact for the website, blog, and social media to share with AmeriCorps and sponsors/partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Activities/Step 4</td>
<td>VISTA will work in partnership with the Marketing Team to strategically develop, plan, and execute events affected by COVID-19 in a digital space.</td>
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</table>
Objective of the Assignment: June 2020 - August 2020
VISTA will act as the Community Outreach Specialist to recruit, engage, and deploy needed volunteers in the community.

Member Activities/Step 1: VISTA will create an outreach plan, in coordination with the Marketing Team, to recruit volunteers for COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 programming.

Member Activities/Step 2: VISTA will refine and change policies and procedures for volunteer engagement and recruitment.

Member Activities/Step 3: VISTA will create new training and orientation modules to onboard volunteers during COVID-19.
Sample Position Listing

Looking to give back to your community this summer? Become an Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA and help sports-based youth development organizations recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Up2Us Sports is a national nonprofit dedicated to inspiring youth to achieve their potential by providing nonprofit member organizations capacity-building resources. Member organizations receive coaches, VISTAs, training, and technical assistance that help them better deliver and expand quality sports-based youth development programming in some of the nation’s most underserved communities. Up2Us Sports believes sports can help fight childhood obesity, end academic failure, and reduce gang participation.

During this health crisis, youth need coaches and mentors now more than ever. Summer VISTAs will play a powerful role in helping to rebuild communities and nonprofits to ensure youth are supported. As an Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA, you will work remotely at [Host Site] in [Location of Host Site]. You will build capacity of the organization by contributing to program restructuring and spearheading a community volunteer plan. You will also collaborate with the development and marketing team to identify and secure funding opportunities and create social media content. During the program, you will have the opportunity to gain skills through professional development, interact with numerous passionate individuals, and positively impact the sports-based youth development movement.

The Up2Us Sports Summer VISTA will be a part of the VISTA summer cohort of 150 members. As a Summer VISTA, you will assist with (1) program development: develop best practices for program implementation during and after the pandemic, disseminate information about COVID-19 to community members; (2) development and fundraising: manage the grant calendar and track funding opportunities, research and apply for emergency funding grants; (3) marketing: generate social media content on various platforms to highlight programming and the organization’s response to the pandemic, pivot in-person events to digital experiences; (4) community outreach: create an outreach plan to recruit and train community volunteers.

If you are enthusiastic about sports and giving back to your community, this nine-week summer program, running from June 29th through August 28th, is the right fit for you! Apply by Monday, June 15th!