



MCNCE VISTA Program Overview

The Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement is the practice of engaging campuses – students, faculty and staff – in service to the community, instilling long-term civic engagement habits in those serving while making a credible contribution to community life. This Request for Proposal and application provides potential host sites an understanding of what it means to be a MCNCE VISTA host site.

As the largest higher education network in Montana, MCNCE is committed to making service, service learning, volunteerism, and civic engagement programming available to students, faculty, and staff. MCNCE's current membership includes representation from Montana's two- year, four-year, public, private, tribal, and community colleges and universities, as well as a state network office located in Missoula.

Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement Mission Statement:

The Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement (MCNCE) advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility.

Program Goal Statement:

The Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement (MCNCE) provides resources and support to campuses and community partners that seek to improve educational outcomes for Montana students and their communities.

MCNCE VISTA:

MCNCE VISTA addresses poverty utilizing campus-community partnerships. MCNCE VISTA offer organizations and campuses the opportunity to build sustainable infrastructure; including partnerships, volunteers and programs.

MCNCE VISTA Project Focuses
Education: K-12 Success and School Readiness
Education: College Access and Success
Veterans and Military Families
Healthy Futures & Food Security

MCNCE Priorities

Annually, the Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement assesses organizational priorities and aligns them with the funder’s priorities to determine the scope of MCNCE VISTA programming for the year. The following section outlines MCNCE funding priorities for AmeriCorps VISTA projects.

MCNCE gives priority to host sites proposing campus-community partnerships in the focus areas of ‘Education’, ‘Veterans and Military Families’, and ‘Healthy Futures’. For campus-based projects, this means projects must address poverty-related problems surrounding higher education. For community-based projects, this means developing a formal partnership with the local campus, teaming up to engage the college campus in the VISTA project.

Education:

MCNCE VISTA will give priority to projects that provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged students and veterans.

K-12 Success and School Readiness: Educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools (enhance college readiness in K to 12 educations).

Post-secondary Success: Preparation for and prospects of success in post-secondary education institutions for economically disadvantaged students (improve college access and retention).

VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES:

MCNCE VISTA will support projects that either focus specifically on low-income veterans and military families as beneficiaries or that enhance existing projects to begin or better serve low-income veterans and military families.

HEALTHY FUTURES:

MCNCE VISTA will support projects that focus on building organizational capacity to fight poverty by improving health outcomes and food security in low-income communities. Core focus areas include food security and nutrition, health care access, and substance abuse and recovery.

RURAL AND TRIBAL COMMUNITY FOCUS:

In the interest of increasing support for rural and tribal communities, special consideration is provided to those meeting the above criteria.

Examples of 2026-2027 MCNCE VISTA projects:
Developing youth cultural enrichment programs at a Boys and Girls Club
Grow campus reuse store and food recycling programs
Develop data systems for veteran's centers to grow student retention and degree completion
Expand programs to at-risk youth transition out of the foster care system
Developing a natural resources curriculum reflective of the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of the area.
Grow and strengthen campus food pantries and food access programming for students and community members