

October 22, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Corporation State Offices  
Area Managers  
Corporation Service Centers

FROM: David Caprara, Director of VISTA

SUBJECT: AmeriCorps\*VISTA End-of-Service Cash Stipend  
Policy Number: 04-01

The purpose of this memorandum is to replace Policy Memorandum Number 01-05, dated May 29, 2001, from former AmeriCorps\*VISTA Director, Matt Dunne. The subject of the memorandum was AmeriCorps\*VISTA 10<sup>th</sup> Month Option and Stipend Eligibility. The following new procedures are effective immediately:

After completion of Pre-Service Orientation, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members who selected the end-of-service cash stipend begin accruing a stipend of \$100 each month. When appropriate, the stipend is intended as a post-service readjustment allowance to offset transitional expenses after termination. As such, the cash stipend, in the amount of \$1,200 is made available to members after they complete their year of service.

If after serving a period of service, a member is authorized to extend his/her service for less than a year, he/she will only be eligible to receive the cash stipend. Upon completing the extension period, he/she will receive a stipend corresponding to the length of the extension.

**Stipend Selection**

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members select either the end-of-service cash stipend (\$1,200) or the education award (\$4,725) during the applicant's application process on the AmeriCorps\*VISTA Member Benefits Election Form. Prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> month of service, an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member may want to request a **one time** switch from the education award to the end-of-service stipend. Switching from the end-of-service stipend to the education award is not allowed. The Corporation State Program Director has the authority to approve this one time switch.

**Pro-Rated End-of-Service Cash Stipend**

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members do not automatically receive pro-rated cash stipends upon early termination of service. AmeriCorps\*VISTA member can receive a partial stipend only if he/she completes at least 55 days of service and was not terminated for cause and left early due to compelling personal reasons. The portion of the cash stipend will correspond with the portion of time served by the member. Again, the Corporation State Program Director has the authority to approve the member's eligibility for partial stipend under compelling reasons such as:

1. Serious or critical illness of the member;
2. Death or critical illness of an immediate family (spouse, parent, sibling, child or guardian);
3. Conclusion of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Corporation and the AmeriCorps\*VISTA sponsoring organization and the inability to reassign the member to another project in order to complete a full term of service. If the Corporation offers another project assignment and the member refuses to accept the assignment, early termination for cause may be proposed.
4. Early termination for lack of suitable assignment.

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members who are authorized an extension of service can receive a partial stipend only if they are not terminated for cause and leave early due to compelling personal reasons.

### **Cash Advances for the Accrued Stipend Balance**

Cash advances (or withdrawals) may be made for unanticipated, emergency expenses occurring during service that could impact the member's service. No cash advances will be made that lower the member's accrued stipend balance below **\$400**. This will ensure some readjustment allowance for the member as well as cover any overpayments prior to the completion of service.

A request for a cash advance from a member must be made in writing to the Corporation State Program Director stating the reason for the request. The authority to approve cash advances and determine whether a cash advance is warranted, is delegated to the Corporation State Program Director.

### **Payment of Accrued Stipend**

Members who serve for a year receive **\$400** from their accrued stipend on the next to last subsistence allowance check. The balance of the accrued stipend will be paid with the last subsistence allowance check if all termination documents have been submitted to the Corporation State Office.

Federal income tax and Social Security (FICA) deductions are withheld from the cash stipend at the time of any payment. Members are responsible for all other taxes and deductions.