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# **Fellowship Handbook 2022-2023 Program Year**



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## Introduction

### Welcome to Move for America's VISTA Fellowship Program!

You made it! Welcome to the Move for America Fellowship. This year is designed for you: your growth and your impact. It is also designed for the community: to elevate residents' voices in decisions that affect their lives. And finally, it is designed for all of us: to heal our nation, we must listen closely and learn to see each other more fully. That is what we will do together this year. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Move for America partners with nonprofit "host sites" throughout Minnesota. These organizations are leaning into authentic community engagement, and your service is designed to build their capacity to do so.

Although Move for America has one unified work plan that all VISTA Members contribute to through performance measures, there are a vast range of projects VISTA Members work on that are specific to their sites. For a list of Move for America's current placement sites and the VISTA Members currently serving at each site, please visit:

<https://www.move4america.org/meetourhosts>

As you work at your host site, you will have many questions. This handbook is designed as a reference for you to combine with knowledge gained during Virtual Member Orientation (VMO, coordinated by AmeriCorps VISTA) and On-Site Orientation Training (OSOT, coordinated by Move for America) to help you navigate your new work environment.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout your year of service, please feel free to contact a member of the Move for America team.

Libby Stegger: [libby@move4america.org](mailto:libby@move4america.org)

Shanara Mercer: [shanara@move4america.org](mailto:shanara@move4america.org)

This handbook was created to clarify the expectations for Move for America's VISTA Fellows as you work through your year of service. Remember that this handbook is specific to Move for America. If you have a question about a policy and cannot find an answer in this handbook, you should refer to the VISTA Handbook that can be downloaded at

<https://americorps.gov/membersvolunteers/vista>. VISTA Members should refer to both handbooks before consulting Move for America or Site Supervisors.



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## About Move for America

### Mission

Catalyze a generation of leaders who bridge divides and strengthen civic dialogue.

### Vision

American democracy will be grounded in civic participation and understanding.

### Why is this work important?

Polarization in the United States is rising. Divisions are tearing at the fabric of the U.S. democracy and the relationships of everyday people. Our collective antipathy- “us vs them” mindset has escalated. To bend the curve toward collaboration, we must strengthen our skills and opportunities for civic dialogue and *take intentional actions to face our cultural divisions*.

### How do we achieve our mission?

To deliver our program, Move for America partners with local nonprofit organizations (host sites) and the AmeriCorps VISTA program.

Through these partnerships, Fellows have support from multiple individuals on their project service. Fellows gain both professional and leadership development along with ongoing networking opportunities. Here is a brief explanation of each organization’s role and responsibilities as it relates to Fellows

- **Move for America:** Move for America is responsible for monitoring the activities of Move for America Fellows at all sites and overseeing each project on an organizational level, including **reporting Fellow and Site data to AmeriCorps. Move for America staff also develop and host professional and leadership development sessions for Fellows.**
- **Host Site Supervisor:** Fellows will be assigned a direct/daily supervisor, who is an employee of the host site. This supervisor will be responsible for the Fellow assignments and schedules on a day to day basis.
- **AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps VISTA:** Ultimately, Fellows are responsible for upholding AmeriCorps policies and regulations. Move for America is a partner in placing, monitoring, and supporting AmeriCorps VISTA Members (Fellows). The federal and regional AmeriCorps offices work closely with Move for America administration to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps policies and mandates.



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## Fellowship Guidance

### Move for America, VISTA, and Host Site

- During service, Move for America Fellows create professional objectives to help meet site needs and Move for America project performance measures. These objectives and performance measures are a part of Move for America's project-wide commitment to fulfilling AmeriCorps grant requirements.
- Move for America Fellows report monthly on the progress of objectives and performance measures by completing online reporting forms and discussing data and impacts at site visits.
- Move for America Fellows will also have projects and tasks assigned by the Site Supervisors that have been previously approved by Move for America.
- It is the Move for America Fellow's responsibility to collaborate with the Host Site Supervisor to incorporate service objectives and performance measures into a cohesive work plan. Move for America Fellows will be supported in this process.
- If a problem arises, or if Move for America Fellows have a concern while serving at site, Move for America staff or AmeriCorps VISTA Leader are happy to assist.
- Move for America Fellows should always attempt to handle concerns at the site level first through open discussion with the Site Supervisor. Everyone communicates differently, and Site Supervisors may not realize there is a problem unless Move for America Fellows express concerns.
- If Move for America Fellows feel like they need support to address concerns, they can talk to Move for America staff to discuss the best course of action to solve the issue. In some cases, a Move for America staff member may offer to reach out to the Host Site Supervisor.
- If an issue arises with health benefits, monthly living stipend, end of service award, or other VISTA provided benefits, Move for America Fellows can speak to their AmeriCorps VISTA Leader or contact Move for America staff.

### Communication

Email is the most vital mode of communication between Move for America and Fellows. It is the primary method of contact between Move for America Fellows and the Move for America Office, and it is the Move for America Fellow's responsibility to provide Move for America office staff with their preferred email address for receiving correspondences from Move for America. Move for America Fellows should check their work email at least once each workday, read all correspondences thoroughly and completely, and respond to emails and other



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correspondences within 1 business day of having received a message. Move for America Fellows are also strongly encouraged to communicate with other members of their Fellowship cohort directly when needed.

### **Fellows Portal**

Move for America also uses a password protected portal on the Move for America website to share tools and resources. Move for America Fellows should become familiar with this platform, as they will greatly assist them throughout their term.

Portal link: [www.move4america.org/fellows-portal](http://www.move4america.org/fellows-portal)  
Password: SharedFuture

### **Workday Expectations**

Move for America Fellows should always check in briefly with a staff member, preferably the Host Site Supervisor, when arriving and leaving their site. This helps build relationships with staff and lets the Host Site Supervisor know when Move for America Fellows are present and available. For days working remotely, please see the section below on Remote or Hybrid Work.

Work Day and Week Daily schedules differ across sites, but all Move for America Fellows are required to work full time, 40 hours per week, as mandated by the AmeriCorps federal agency. Move for America Fellows and Host Site Supervisors are expected to decide on a Move for America Fellow's work shift, including times and location, and to communicate directly and in a timely manner if adjustments must be made. Move for America Fellows are expected to be respectful of any work schedule or location arrangements. Move for America Fellows may not make adjustments to their own schedules without prior approval from their Host Site Supervisor.

Overtime: There is no cap on the number of hours Move for America Fellows can work at their sites and Move for America Fellows do not earn compensatory/comp time (i.e., time accrued to be used later). Every effort will be made to be respectful of Move for America Fellow time, and the work week should not greatly exceed 40 hours on a consistent basis. However, Move for America Fellows who work more than 40 hours in a work week should not expect to come late or leave early because they have reached 40 hours per week. This arrangement is occasionally acceptable, only when pre-arranged as part of a temporary work plan with the Host Site Supervisor.

Remote or Hybrid Work:

Host sites may have remote, in person, or hybrid work. Fellows are responsible for making sure they understand what is expected of them according to their supervisors. There may be times where you won't go to the office everyday and will work remotely. If you are working remotely this does not mean less work time. Find a nice quiet place to work inside your home



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or a public space where you will not be interrupted. When you are working remotely your professional expectations are still as follows:

- Regularly and respectfully participate in discussion.
- Contribute to project assignments.
- Self monitor your actions, communication, and behavior.
- Attending all meetings via call/zoom if directed.
- Dressing appropriately to ensure you feel work ready.
- No leisure cell phone or social media use.

### Time Off

Lunch break: Lunch arrangements should be determined by agreement between the Host Site Supervisor and the Move for America Fellow. Host Sites are not required to provide a lunch period, but they are strongly encouraged to do so. Fellows may use brief breaks or non-working lunch time for personal engagements (e.g., personal phone calls/texts/emails, schedule appointments, etc.). These activities should be kept to a minimum during the regular work days.

Breaks during the Day: Short breaks of 5-10 minutes may be offered at the discretion of the Host Site Supervisor. When arranged, breaks should be considered part of the regular work day (do not “clock out” on time card).

Arriving Late or Leaving Early: If you are going to be late or need to leave early due to unforeseen circumstances, you must let the Site Supervisor know as soon as possible, in advance if possible. This expectation is the same for situations when you will be late or need to leave early from a mandatory Move for America-hosted activity. You should communicate these circumstances to a Move for America staff member. For foreseen circumstances (e.g., personal meetings or appointments), you should request approval to arrive late or leave early at least one week in advance, if possible. Requests should be made to the Host Site Supervisor, if missing scheduled site-related work, or a Move for America Supervisor, if missing mandatory Move for America-hosted activities. E-mail is the preferred method of communication for all approval requests so there is a written record of the agreement. If a verbal agreement is made, it is best practice to send a follow-up email.

Make-Up Hours: As per guidance from the AmeriCorps federal agency, if a Move for America Fellow needs to take brief amounts of time off – 3 hours or less – for personal reasons, the Host Site Supervisor or a Move for America Supervisor may allow time to be made up within that work week if ALL of the following conditions are met:

1. All procedures and protocols for notification and approval have been followed (i.e., advance notice in writing).
2. The total time to be made up does not exceed 3 hours (over 3 hours would be 0.5 of a personal or sick day).
3. The schedule adjustment is convenient for the Site Supervisor or Move for America Supervisor.
4. The time is made up within the same calendar week that it is taken (the same week as indicated on the monthly time card).
5. Make-up time requests have not been received more than once per month.



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6. The Move for America Fellow does not have a history of absenteeism or tardiness.

These arrangements are completely at the discretion of the Host Site Supervisor or Move for America. All hours missed and corresponding make-up hours must be accurately logged on the time card. Frequent failure to comply with these procedures may result in disciplinary action or removal from the project.

Time off and Leave: All Move for America VISTA Fellows receive 10 days of personal leave and 10 days of sick leave to take as needed throughout their service term. There are additional types of leave available to Move for America Fellow. In all cases, leave hours count as hours towards the 40 hours per week minimum requirement and should be recorded accurately and appropriately on the monthly time card. Types of leave and other leave details are described below:

- **Personal leave** can be used for vacation, non-work events and activities, graduate school interviews, personal emergencies, etc. Personal leave can also be used for medical circumstances. Move for America Fellows have 10 days of available personal leave.
- **Medical/sick leave** can be taken as needed for personal illness, immediate family illness, mental wellness/self-care. Medical leave does NOT function as personal leave. Medical leave is appropriate to use when Move for America Fellows are sick, have a doctor or dentist appointment, have a scheduled surgery, are recuperating from an illness or surgery, have an immediate family member who is ill, or require self-care. Self-care, also referred to as mental wellness, is time that is taken for a Move for America Fellow to be at their best, physically or emotionally. This time can range from needing to cope with personal issues to recuperating after stressful work-related or personal events. Move for America Fellows have 10 days of available medical leave.
- **Bereavement leave** is designed for Fellows who experience the death of an immediate family member. Bereavement leave can be requested for more than one incident during a Move for America Fellow's service term. Please refer to AmeriCorps VISTA Handbook for additional information.

## Reporting

Time Tracking: Fellows will track their time using Clockify. Fellows will receive detailed instructions and login information during their On-Site Orientation. Linked below is a detailed walkthrough of how to track time and submit your timesheet.

[Clockify Tutorial](https://clockify.com/tutorial)  
[tinyurl.com/mfa-clockify](https://tinyurl.com/mfa-clockify)

Monthly Reporting: Fellows are required to submit monthly reports. This is an online form and includes an upload of the Fellow's monthly time card. Use the link: [tinyurl.com/mfa-fellows-monthly-report](https://tinyurl.com/mfa-fellows-monthly-report) to submit the monthly report by the first Friday of each month.

Reporting surveys will cover information about Move for America Fellow/VISTA Member activities from the previous month. For example, reports due in May would contain



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information from the month of April. Information collected from these monthly reporting documents is used for federal reports that are submitted to the AmeriCorps federal agency. Move for America Fellow/VISTA Members are required to fill out their reports completely and on time. Move for America Fellow/VISTA Members will be asked to revise or re-submit forms lacking sufficient information.

### **Benefits and Compensation**

Fellows are paid their living stipend bi-weekly via direct deposit to their desired account. The living stipend and other AmeriCorps benefits are paid directly from AmeriCorps to the Fellows. Therefore any questions or concerns about AmeriCorps benefits should be directed to AmeriCorps. You may reach out to your AmeriCorps Leader or to the **AmeriCorps Member Help Line: 1-800-942-2677**

In addition to the AmeriCorps living stipend and benefits, Move for America pays \$500 per month for housing. Move for America will pay your landlord directly. Funds are sent directly to your landlord on the first business day of each month. Direct deposit can take 3-5 days to process, and mailed checks can take 7-10 days to arrive.

Fellows are only eligible for these benefits so long as they continue to meet the Move for America and AmeriCorps VISTA expectations and regulations.

### **Additional source of income**

Fellows are permitted to seek an additional source of income outside of their fellowship. You must discuss this additional job with your host site supervisor and Libby. Coordinate with your outside job and MFA to ensure that there is no overlap in your work and it does not interfere with your community engagement progress. Fellows must complete and submit a form [here](#) and it will be processed and reviewed.

### **Professional Expectations**

Move for America Fellows are expected to serve full-time in their matched local nonprofit organization on defined community-engagement activities while establishing and maintaining professional relationships as an AmeriCorps VISTA. This requires self-awareness, balance, self-directed behaviors, and maturity. Fellows are expected to assume these behaviors and complete professional responsibilities conscientiously, present oneself professionally on social media, and maintain appropriate boundaries when engaging with all communities.

- Regularly and respectfully participate in community discussions at your host site
- Display positive, honest behavior
- Arrive on time
- Contribute to team discussions and project assignments to reflect good preparation, self-reflection and critical thinking skills
- Provide work that shows quality effort and appropriate time spent
- Assume and complete all project assignments and professional responsibilities conscientiously



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- Complete project assignments timely; avoid missing deadlines
  - Take responsibility for material and work missed
  - Self-monitor interactions, communications and behaviors to responsibly present oneself on and offline, maintaining appropriate boundaries in accordance with professional and ethical guidelines
  - Even when stressed, never act verbally hostile, abusive, or dismissive
  - Careful not to distract others (socializing, sleeping, leaving early or during project events/meetings, reading unrelated material, doing work for another role or wearing inappropriate attire)
  - Maintain appropriate boundaries and confidentiality in any public statements or posts
  - Adhere to workplace norms about playing music or wearing headphones at your work space or around the office. Regardless, remove headphones during conversations with others and in shared social spaces in and around the office (e.g. break rooms, lunch spaces, etc.)



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