Below is a list of support that your organization may provide to national service members. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is a site required to provide any such support.

Financial or in-kind support for VISTA members may be provided under the following conditions:

* Support is offered and available equally to all national service members at a site.
* Cash or checks (unless for reimbursable expenses) are not given directly to the national service member.
* For formal support over a value of $600, the member should receive notice ahead of support that they will receive a 1099 from the organization and should plan to file their taxes accordingly with the knowledge that they will need to pay taxes.
* For informal support under $600 (i.e. sporadic gift cards), the member should not anticipate being awarded a 1099.
* **AmeriCorps Only:** the living allowance may be increased up to double the maximum amount. The living allowance increases each year. To increase the living allowance, HHCK will distribute in each member’s living allowance payments. The site should **not** issue the increase directly.
* **VISTA Only:** Support offered does not violate VISTA’s legislation that mandates VISTAs must, to the maximum extent practicable, make a commitment to live among and at the economic level of the people served.

**Relocation Assistance**

1. **Additional relocation travel assistance** – Sites may arrange and pay for or reimburse members for the travel and/or shipping costs that exceed the support provided by CNCS (VISTA only) without regard to the number of miles the member moved. Sites must purchase the travel or reimburse the member (member provides receipts) for such costs. Only in circumstances of reimbursement may funds be given directly to the member. Funds may not be given directly to the member under any other circumstances.
2. **Match settling-in allowance (VISTA only)** – Sites may provide an additional settling-in allowance up to the settling-in allowance set by CNCS without regard to the number of miles the VISTA member moved. This support can help cover costs associated with settling into a new city that often exceed CNCS’s settling-in allowance (i.e., rental or lease application fees, credit check fees, security deposit, first and last month rent, deposits to turn on gas and utilities, etc.). Sites must pay the funds directly to the landlord or leading agent, utility company, etc. or reimburse the VISTA member (member provides receipts) for such costs. Only in circumstances of reimbursement may funds be given directly to the VISTA member. Funds may not be given directly to the VISTA under any other circumstances.
3. **Donated furniture, appliances, equipment** – Sites may give donated or used items to member in order to furnish their homes.

**Housing**Member may accept offers of low-cost or free housing from community members, local organizations, educational institutions, or sites. Examples of housing support include –

1. **Rent/Mortgage –** assistance can be provided through a monthly rent or mortgage payment. All housing support must be paid directly to the landlord. A site *cannot* offer money directly to the member to supplement their living allowance or pay utilities or other housing costs. A 1099 should be issued to the landlord, rather than the member, since the landlord is receiving the taxable cash benefit. The member is not.

**Transportation**Sites may provide transportation support.

1. **Parking permits/passes** – Sites may pay parking permit or pass fees associated with a service site (e.g., a permit to park at the service site), without regard to whether the same support is provided to all staff.
2. **Public transit pass** – If public transit is required for service-related transportation or travel, Sites may provide a monthly or annual public transit pass in lieu of reimbursing the member for actual transit costs. Sites may provide members with transit passes to offset the costs of commuting provided they use sponsor funds.
3. **Mileage and gas gift cards for use of privately owned vehicle (POV)** – Sites may reimburse members at a mileage rate established by the sponsor for VISTAs that use a POV for service-related transportation or travel. Members may not receive gas gift cards in lieu of reimbursement. Sites may provide members with gas gift cards to offset the cost of commuting provided they use sponsor funds.

**Food**

1. **Meal plans associated with housing or free access to the sponsor’s cafeteria** – Sites may provide meal plans associated with housing or free access to their cafeteria.
2. **Grocery card** – Sites may provide gift cards to grocery stores to members without regard to whether it is provided to all staff.

**Support Services**

1. **Client support services** – Sites may allow members access to support programs that their organization administers and that are available to the public. Members must follow the same objective criteria, qualification guidelines, and other processes that members of the public follow, without exception. Members must not be involved in the administration of processing of any of these programs. In reviewing a member’s application for such assistance or services, the sponsoring organization must adhere to its policies and processes for awarding such services. The member’s involvement must not present concerns where a reasonable person would perceive favoritism or a conflict of interest on behalf of the parties involved. For example, if a member wants to apply to receive food from the food bank where they serve, they are subject to the same eligibility criteria and processes (application review, wait times, level of food distribution) as the public (e.g., member cannot receive preference to “jump the queue” for benefits). CNCS is never involved in a member receipt or denial of such assistance or services.
2. **Employee benefit programs (health, dental, employee assistance program)** – Sites may provide members access to employee benefit programs.
3. **Emergency assistance** – Sites may assist members who experience emergency situations that fall outside the program’s standard emergency support (e.g., illness of a service animal, flair up of a medical condition not covered by the health care plan). The assistance is allowable when it does not present concerns that a reasonable person would perceive favoritism or a conflict of interest on behalf of the parties involved (e.g., a member cannot receive preference to “jump the queue” for benefits).

**Other**

1. **Access to sponsor managed facilities –** Sites may allow members to access their gymnasium, recreational facilities, library, or computer labs without regard to whether all staff is granted the same privileges. Sites may also assist members with accessing local centers that provide similar services.
2. **Birthday, holiday, and other special occasion gifts** – Sites may provide gifts provided they do not exceed existing employee or community volunteer appreciation gifts.
3. **Career and education support** – In keeping with AmeriCorp’s commitment to provide educational and professional development, Sites may provide support with regards to attending professional conferences and classes – such as the payment of conference fees, travel, lodging and meals, or per diem that applies to standard employees.