

Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA Member

About Cities of Service

Cities of Service helps mayors build stronger cities by changing the way local government and residents work together. We help our coalition cities tap into resident insights, skills, and service to identify and solve critical public problems. Founded in 2009 by New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Cities of Service supports a coalition of more than 280 cities, representing more than 84 million people across the Americas and Europe. Now situated at Johns Hopkins University, you can learn more about Cities of Service at citiesofservice.jhu.edu and by following us on Twitter [@citiesofservice](https://twitter.com/citiesofservice).

Since its founding, Cities of Service has helped cities implement change through the use of its [Impact Volunteering](#) strategy. This signature strategy engages resident volunteers to identify and solve pressing public problems alongside municipal government. It is a participatory process in which residents and city officials develop a shared vision, set short- and long-term goals for their community, and then work together to achieve those goals. As partners, they communicate throughout the process and reflect on their work – discussing and evaluating what they have done and holding themselves accountable for results.

About Love Your Block

The Cities of Service Love Your Block program brings city leaders and residents together to build stronger neighborhoods, one block at a time. Typically, cities implementing Love Your Block invite community groups to identify priority projects and award mini-grants to support neighborhood-driven solutions that the community can implement. From turning vacant lots into community gardens to helping elderly neighbors with home repairs to avoid fines and safely age in place, resident volunteers are “loving their blocks” and making them, and their cities, better places to live.

The benefits of Love Your Block go well beyond physical improvements. [A 2021 Urban Institute study](#) found that social networks sparked by deep resident-to-city-hall engagement can instigate neighborhood-level improvements in addition to larger, sustainable improvements to municipal practices and policies. Love Your Block activates and builds social networks between residents, their neighbors, and city hall. This resident-to-city hall engagement can lead to collective efficacy that is often bidirectional: city officials can leverage neighborhood social capital in service of mayoral goals and residents can leverage greater responsiveness from officials to address their needs and priorities. In other words, Love Your Block is a starting point for cities to more meaningfully engage their residents and improve communities in holistic and sustainable ways.

Position Overview: Love Your Block AmeriCorps VISTA members' term of service begins on **November 8, 2021**. Cities of Service is seeking to fill 12 [AmeriCorps VISTA member](#) positions to support the Love Your Block program in the following eight cities:

One VISTA position available:

- Albany, New York
- Nashua, New Hampshire
- Shawnee, Oklahoma
- White Plains, New York

Two VISTA positions available:

- Erie, Pennsylvania
- El Paso, Texas
- Jackson, Tennessee
- Salt Lake City, Utah

Responsibilities include:

- Create Love Your Block mini-grant application and timeline for potential grantees
- Work with the Love Your Block team to develop an orientation and training program for mini-grant recipients
- Conduct mini-grant application information sessions and other outreach in neighborhoods of focus
- Develop an outreach plan to effectively engage with diverse community members and promote the program and mini-grant opportunity to potential grantees
- Cultivate and maintain partnerships among stakeholders such as community organizations, city agencies, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and block groups
- Review and coordinate service requests from grantees with internal departments
- Draft press releases pertaining to program activities
- Design program flyers and brochures
- Develop Love Your Block handbook for grantees
- Work with neighborhoods to recruit volunteers for the Love Your Block Program
- Create and maintain a database of Love Your Block projects and partners
- Assist in managing mini-grant recipient and partner relationships
- Build social media presence for the city's Love Your Block program
- Write stories about the impact of the Love Your Block projects
- Collect project metrics from grantees
- Ensure that before-and-after photos are taken of each mini-grant project site as well as photos of volunteer work days
- Help secure funding to sustain and expand Love Your Block
- Other duties as assigned

To learn about what some of our previous AmeriCorps VISTA members have learned during their year of service and what they are doing now, check out some of our [AmeriCorps VISTA member profiles](#) on the Cities of Service website.

Duration and Compensation

This is a one-year, full-time AmeriCorps VISTA commitment commencing on November 8, 2021. A [living stipend](#) is provided and an additional end-of-service award is provided contingent on successful completion of the service year. Relocation assistance is provided if needed.

Qualifications

- Associate degree or higher preferred. Applicants without a college degree are encouraged to apply if they have 5 years or more of related work experience
- Certifications in community engagement considered
- Experience working in public or non-profit sector preferred
- Experience working in community engagement preferred (more specifically, we're interested in candidates with experience in communications, conducting community outreach, and facilitating training sessions)

To Apply

- To apply for this position in one of the eight cities, please visit <https://my.americorps.gov/>;
- Click "Search Listings" (located under the login information);
- Select "AmeriCorps VISTA" for Program Type;
- Then search for "Love Your Block" under Program Name.