AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a national service program dedicated to fighting poverty. VISTA members spend one year serving at not-for-profit or government organizations building programs, raising awareness, leveraging funds, recruiting volunteers, and more. Each year, the Families in Transition (FIT) VISTA Program recruits dedicated individuals to join the team with the goal of improving the quality of life for the most disadvantaged members of our community. The FIT VISTA Program is organized and run by FIT, which partners with organizations called service sites across the state to provide projects for VISTAs. FIT also supports VISTA members by hosting monthly meetings and professional development trainings, tracking VISTA progress and impact, and offering general VISTA support.

Click the images above or search FITNHVISTA on any of the social media platforms.
Another year of service came to a close for the FIT VISTA Program. We are excited to share stories from the 2016-2017 program year that help demonstrate how our members are fighting poverty with passion and making a difference for low-income individuals and communities across the State of New Hampshire.

This year FIT said farewell to our program manager of five years, Emily (Melhorn) Zeien. I joined the team over the summer and am already amazed by the passion that our VISTAs have for serving their communities.

On behalf of our VISTA supervisors and all of our sites, thank you to our 2016-2017 VISTA alumni for your dedication to fighting poverty in the Granite State and another successful year of service. The skills you have developed and relationships you forged will make a lasting impact on the communities you’ve served. It has been a true pleasure watching you grow and learning about all you’ve accomplished!

In Service,

Julie Lynch
Families in Transition Manager of Volunteers and FIT VISTA Program

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
-Mahatma Gandhi
Our 21 VISTA members served in six communities at 14 different nonprofits and government agencies across New Hampshire. Click on each organization’s name to be directed to their website for more information.
## 2016-2017 At a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members served</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>32,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised in Cash and Grants</td>
<td>$921,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised as In-Kind Donations</td>
<td>$229,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>4,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers Recruited</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Housing Service Recipients</td>
<td>1,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals that Gained Access</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
- The year in review covers the 2016-2017 period.
- The image includes a group photo of participants in the FIT VISTA program.
Old Sol Music Hall

Old Sol Music Hall, Inc. is a nonprofit organization based in southern New Hampshire with a mission of leveraging the arts to create positive social and environmental impact. Originally formed to establish a concert venue and community space at the former Rex Theatre in Manchester, the organization has pivoted and begun the process of revisioning its operating model. Old Sol remains committed to delivering a unique blend of cultural and civic programming as a means of building social capital, especially among Millennials living and working in the southern tier of the state.

Cal Inguanti, City Year Boston alumnus and former UConn Husky, served this year as the Community Impact Coordinator for Old Sol. He wore multiple hats, from development to communications, in order to support the organization's programming efforts.

The CareGivers

The CareGivers Inc. provides free nonmedical services to homebound seniors and disabled individuals living in poverty in the Greater Manchester and Greater Nashua areas. Their programs specialize in empowering volunteers to offer transportation, food and companionship to neighbors in need. The CareGivers community hopes to foster the independence of the frail and elderly so that they may live with dignity in their homes for as long as possible.

As the Volunteer Coordinator VISTA, Evan Davis assisted the CareGivers in conducting outreach, managing volunteers and work-study students, and working on special projects. His primary responsibility was to assist with The CareGivers’ Caring Cupboard program to organize free, monthly, personalized grocery deliveries to over 400 homes throughout the community. His other projects have included waste reduction via transporting excess food to the Nashua Soup Kitchen, restructuring the client intake process, coordinating the Holiday Hopes gift program and crafting outreach databases.
Member Spotlights

Julianne DeFilippis
Marketing and Outreach
FIT VISTA Leader

“After completing my first year of VISTA service in Rhode Island, I realized I wanted to stay involved in national service, while also continuing to build my marketing skills. My last site didn’t have any VISTA Leaders, but I knew I wanted to stay in New England, and when I found the position at Families in Transition (FIT), I knew it was perfect for me. I like that it allows me to still do communications and outreach activities that I enjoy, while also working closely with other VISTA members and host sites.”

Michele Talwani
Vice President, Marketing
Families in Transition

“In her time with AIR Lauren used her degree in Womens’ Studies to skillfully represent our organization and further our mission of empowering teen girls through mentoring and the arts. Lauren built relationships with our teens and families and learned about all aspects of working at a small non profit.”

Rebecca Romanoski
Program Director
Arts In Reach (AIR)

“I was lucky enough to be able to see the impact of the work that I did almost every day. Building a relationship with the population that I served and seeing firsthand the growth and progress that each of our teen girls experienced was such a reward. The impact arts education has on children experiencing the effects of poverty is something that is not often talked about and I think it is important to raise awareness around the positive results that come from programs like Arts In Reach.”

Lauren Garza
Program Development VISTA
Arts In Reach (AIR)

“I served as an AmeriCorps VISTA because I needed to break out of my comfort zone and try something new. Joining VISTA has allowed me to move to a new part of the country, and gain valuable work experience I could not have received anywhere else. This year not only allowed me to make a difference for the community I served, but also had a huge impact on my life.”

Conor Murphy
Watch Me Grow Project VISTA
NH Dept. of Human and Health Services

“Conor has made all the difference between slow advances and rapid ones for the development and expansion of our Watch Me Grow system. Without her, we would still be struggling to make an online option for developmental screening available to families of young children in our state.”

Debra Nelson
Administrator
NH Dept. of Human and Health Services
Service Projects

Throughout the year, FIT VISTAs participate in AmeriCorps service days. These service events allow the VISTAs to interact directly with the community and lend a hand where help is needed most. AmeriCorps members across New Hampshire come together to be a visible part of the communities that they are living and serving in.

September 11 Day of Caring 2016

Every year, our AmeriCorps VISTA members take part in Granite United Way’s Day of Caring event, where nonprofits and large companies alike band together in a day of service. This year our members volunteered at the NH Food Bank Garden on Wednesday, September 7. They soaked up some sunshine and got their hands dirty helping to prepare the garden for next year’s planting season.

MLK Day of Service 2017

Each January, New Hampshire AmeriCorps programs come together for a service project to commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For this year’s project, Families in Transition AmeriCorps VISTA members joined other service members in collecting a variety of school supplies for students at five high-need schools around the state. Together, they collected nearly 12,500 items with an estimated value of more than $8,800! In addition to the donation drive, NH service members came together on MLK Day to reflect on their service and its connection to the life and work of MLK.

AmeriCorps Week 2017

AmeriCorps Week is a time to recognize and celebrate the commitment of AmeriCorps members across the country. March 5-12 was designated as this year’s AmeriCorps Week. On Friday, March 11, 173 New Hampshire AmeriCorps members spent the morning serving at 20 sites across the state and then met at the State House in Concord for the afternoon. They had special guests speak about the importance of service in New Hampshire; this included Concord Mayor Jim Bouley, Congresswoman Annie Kuster, NH State Senate President Chuck Morse, Matt Flanders representing former US Senator Kelly Ayotte, and NH State Representative Mel Myler.
Final Thoughts

Lucy Hewitt
Program Coordinator
NH Coalition to End Homelessness

“My time as a VISTA has taught me to look much more broadly at the people and organizations around me. I’ve loved my time here so much and I’m grateful I’ve been able to work with such wonderful people.”

Shannon McCullough
Community Engagement Coordinator
Early Learning NH/Spark NH

“I feel lucky that my VISTA position gave me such a great opportunity to grow professionally while also being a part of coordinating the early childhood system in NH ensuring children who face adversity access to the supports they need.”

Emily Gordon
Special Events & Fundraising Coord.
Families in Transition

“My VISTA year has been filled with the opportunity to increase my understanding of the challenges homeless families encounter while learning and honing professional skills that will help me in my future.”

Cal Inguanti
Community Impact Coordinator
Old Sol Music Hall

“Over my year as a VISTA, I had the privilege to work with countless people, all of whom shared the passion of bettering their southern NH communities. Being around that passion inspired me to continue my work in community development, and will guide me moving forward.”

Gillian Seaman
Communications & Graphic Design
Families in Transition

“Serving a second VISTA year with FIT allowed me to challenge myself and push further in the field I’d like to work in. I’ve really enjoyed getting to use my creativity and marketing skills to raise awareness and funds for such an incredible organization.”

Rachel Crinklaw
Communication Assistant
CASA of NH

“Serving as a VISTA has not only changed my views on poverty, but addiction and family dynamics as well. I feel that I have a much deeper connection with my community and the challenges they are facing.”
Where Are They Now?

Continuing to Serve

• Evan Davis is serving a second year as FIT’s Resource and Reporting VISTA Leader.
• Kendall Ogle and her husband are continuing on to be Peace Corps TEFL Trainers in Ecuador.
• Conor Murphy is serving her second year as CASA’s new Communication Assistant VISTA.
• Elena Karis is serving her second year as Claremont Soup Kitchen’s new Community Food Access and Nutrition VISTA.

Joining the Workforce

• Becky Martin is a part-time cooking teacher for kids at Culinary Playground and a full-time mom.
• Lucy Hewitt is moving to Michigan to work with the Pathways to Potential program.
• Lauren Garza is the Development Associate at Families First & Support Center.
• Cal Inguanti is the Associate Director of Development for the Cabot Performing Arts Center.
• Rachel Crinklaw is the full-time Communications Assistant position at CASA.
• Nicole Clark is a paraprofessional at Goffstown High School, and working per diem with Families in Transition.