Welcome to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps Program! We are very excited that you will be joining us for the 2019-2020 AmeriCorps service term and look forward to getting to know you this year!

We are excited to embark on great year of learning and growing together. You will be entering The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) AmeriCorps Program in its 21st year of service in Vermont! As a program, we have learned a lot over the years and are confident that you’re entering into a high quality AmeriCorps program.

VHCB AmeriCorps’ main goal is to support that of VHCB’s, which is to create more stable affordable housing situations for Vermont residents while preserving the natural and working landscape and fostering a greater appreciation of and responsibility for the environment.

Our mission statement reads as follows:

“Since 1997, the VHCB AmeriCorps Program has been serving Vermont communities, cultivating leaders and inspiring collaborative solutions to expand housing opportunities and steward our natural resources. Serving on the front lines of community-based organizations, VHCB AmeriCorps members energize, engage and empower Vermonters to address unmet needs at a local level, collectively creating positive change statewide. Through a grass roots approach, we believe we can bring Vermonters together, incite a spirit of active citizenship and build a healthy future for Vermont”

We will do all of these things for the communities that we live and work in, as well as for ourselves this service term. We hope you are as excited as we are by the possibilities of what we can achieve together.

We are committed to helping you have a meaningful service experience through AmeriCorps. You will have great opportunities to serve Vermont communities while gaining valuable experience that you can take with you both in your professional and personal lives. As AmeriCorps Alums, Francis and Erin know the value of an AmeriCorps experience and how transformative it can be. Our hope is that you will take this opportunity and give all that you can to make sure this experience meets your goals, and help us make this another great year!
Who We Are

Francis Sharpstene is the Program Director. He will be in close contact with you throughout your service term. His primary role is to ensure the program is running effectively and efficiently. He works at every level of the program, with members, supervisors, organizations, and our grantors to maximize its impact and to make certain the AmeriCorps experience is a positive one for everyone involved.

Ashley Swasey is our Program Coordinator. She handles the logistics of the program, member recruitment, and manages member files and support systems of the VHCB AmeriCorps program. In addition, Ashley works diligently to ensure that all of our paperwork is submitted on time and accurately. You can expect to receive regular reminders about paperwork expectations and due dates from Ashley. It will be imperative that you are responsive to her throughout the year, as accurate paperwork is vital to our program’s sustainability.

We encourage you to think of Francis and Ashley as resources for you throughout your service term.

To contact us:

Francis Sharpstene  802.828.3253  francis@vhcb.org
Ashley Swasey  802.828.3249  ashley@vhcb.org

The following material in this handbook will provide you with guidance regarding the VHCB AmeriCorps program. Please read through all of it, it will help to prepare you for the year ahead.

On behalf of the staff of the VHCB AmeriCorps program, welcome aboard!
## VHCB AmeriCorps

### Table of Contents

**SECTION 1: What is AmeriCorps?**
- Americorps
- AmeriCorps Pledge
- AmeriCorps Factsheet
- VISTA Factsheet
- NCCC Factsheet
- CNCS Factsheet
- National Service in Vermont
- Key Differences Between AmeriCorps Programs
- Brief History of National Service
- Why is AmeriCorps Unique?
- Prohibited AmeriCorps Activities
- Prohibited Activity FAQ
- AmeriCorps Jargon
- AmeriCorps FAQs
- Vermont AmeriCorps Family Tree
- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- Loan Forbearance and Interest Accrual
- The AmeriCorps Portal

**SECTION 2: Vermont Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps**
- The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
- VHCB AmeriCorps Program
- VHCB AmeriCorps Mission
- What do members do?
- Performance Goals
- Benefits of Service
- Sponsoring Organizations Map
- Alphabet Soup (VHCB AmeriCorps Acronyms)
- VHCB AmeriCorps Training and Events
- VHCB AmeriCorps Program Initiatives
- Who to Contact

**SECTION 3: Program Practices and Policies**
- Hours Commitment
- Types of Service Hours
- Contracted Term
- Living Allowance
- Member Expectations/Requirements
- Program Benefits
- Benefits Contacts
- Press Guidelines
SECTION 4: Forms and Paperwork
- Forms and Paperwork Overview
- Timesheet
- Timesheet Examples
- Mileage and Expense Reimbursement
- Mileage reimbursement example
- Member Portfolio
- Other Required Paperwork
- Performance Review Sample
- Incident Report Form
- Book Club Form
- ISP Form

SECTION 5: Progress Reporting
- Reporting Deadlines
- Quarterly Progress Reporting Guidelines
- Performance Measures Reporting
- Volunteer Log Example
- Quarterly Progress Report Sample

SECTION 6: Member Resources
- Benefits & Economic Resources Directory
- College Cost Reduction and Access Act
- Food Stamp/EBT Letter from VT Agency of Human Resources re: 3SquaresVT
- Interpretive Memo from VT Agency of Human Resources re: 3SquaresVT
- Example Letter of Explanation on AmeriCorps Living Allowance re: 3SquaresVT
- Information on the EAP Program

SECTION 7: Health Care
- Health Care Options
- Corps Network Plan Overview
- Green Mountain Care: Medicaid

SECTION 8: Member Agreement
- Member Agreement
- Civil Rights Statement