

2. Operation

The VISTA program is directed from the headquarters in Washington, D.C. Training of volunteers in general problems of poverty and in specific skills is conducted under contracts with universities or other appropriate private and public institutions. VISTA volunteers are allocated to specific projects approved by the Director of VISTA through arrangements with sponsors. Volunteers normally serve a period of 1 year, although extensions for an additional year are encouraged.

3. History

The VISTA program was authorized under section 603 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. By January 1966, there were 1,678 volunteers at work in 60 urban projects and 153 rural projects in 42 States and the District of Columbia, and there were an additional 395 volunteers in training. Projects involved a wide variety of activities—vocational training; health services; educational advancement; aid to migrants; and the seasonally unemployed, and community action efforts. Areas served were equally diverse, including urban slums, rural Appalachia, Indian reservations, and isolated Eskimo villages in northern Alaska.

4. Level of operations. (See table 1.)

Program: VISTA.

Department or agency, and office or bureau: Office of Economic Opportunity.

TABLE 1.—*Level of operations or performance, fiscal years 1965–67*

Measure	Fiscal year 1965	Fiscal year 1966 estimates	Fiscal year 1967 estimates
(a) Magnitude of the program, volunteers assigned to field or in training (end year)	1,100	3,500	4,500
(b) Participants, project sponsors	50	350	450
(c) Federal finances (millions of dollars):			
Obligations incurred	3.0	15	26
Program costs funded	1.4	14	23
(d) Matching or additional expenditures for the program			
(e) Number of Federal Government employees administering, operating, or supervising the activity	112	270	295
(f) Non-Federal personnel employed in the program	1,100	3,500	4,500
(g) Other measures of level or magnitude of performance			

¹ Volunteers (also included in entry (a)) are non-Federal personnel.

5. *Estimated magnitude of program in 1970.* (This is discussed in later section covering all OEO programs.)

6. *Prospective changes in program orientation.* (This is discussed in later section covering all OEO programs.)

7. Coordination and cooperation

Within the framework of OEO, the VISTA program complements and supplements the other antipoverty programs by providing services in individual poverty situations and in specific areas of need. In addition to supporting OEO objectives in general, VISTA projects are very often coordinated with community action programs and with Job Corps centers, Neighborhood Youth Corps and Headstart efforts. Volunteers work with numerous community organizations, with local educational systems, and with public health projects and other statewide service projects. An example of such cooperation is the VISTA work with mental institutions.