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Mayor Fulop Announces Jersey City’s AmeriCorps VISTA Program Now Accepting Applications for 2016-2017 Projects

In Second Year, Federally-funded Program Launched by Fulop Administration Expands City Services Through Volunteerism and Community Service

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** today announced that Jersey City’s AmeriCorps VISTA Program is now accepting applications for the program’s 2016-2017 cycle, continuing the administration’s focus on supporting and promoting volunteerism and civic engagement while expanding services for residents.

Brought to Jersey City by Mayor Fulop last year, JC VISTA is a federally-funded volunteer project under the umbrella of AmeriCorps that works to address the needs of low-income residents. Team members serve for a one-year period on projects to advance economic and workforce development, community outreach, and youth development. Jersey City is the only municipality in New Jersey to have an AmeriCorps VISTA program.

“Jersey City’s residents and their spirit of civic engagement, volunteerism, and sense of community are hands-down some of our strongest assets,” said **Mayor Steven Fulop**. “The JC VISTA program is organized around the core principle that empowering local residents with the tools they need to make their community better is one of the best ways to improve our city.”

Jersey City’s 2016-2017 VISTAs will have the opportunity to serve embedded in a variety of City divisions and will work on interdepartmental initiatives focused on poverty reduction, community outreach, and youth development. Open positions include opportunities with the Jersey City Hudson Workforce Partnership, the Jersey City Department of Public Works, the Resident Response Center, the Division of Community Development, and more.

VISTA volunteers will help create, manage and sustain systems for collecting data through focus groups, surveys, interviews, legislative reviews, research, analysis, and other activities. Their work will largely involve outreach to key community stakeholders, including non-profit leaders, advocates, clergy, businesses, faith-based leaders, and other key components of anti-poverty programs in the community.

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Additionally, volunteers will be actively communicating with local businesses, small and large, to encourage buy-in and investment in the local workforce by supporting training for current and future labor force needs and playing an active role in job placement. VISTA volunteers will be critical to establishing these connections with community partners from various sectors, helping to facilitate the connection between the needs of low-income residents, the prescriptions employed to address those needs, and the goals and objectives for individuals in poverty and the program as a whole.

The VISTA program is a part of the AmeriCorps volunteer services. AmeriCorps VISTAs work with nonprofits and local governments on building organizational capacity and developing programs to strengthen and support local communities. Last year's JC VISTA initiatives included the highly successful JC Shovels program as well as the newly launched Serve Jersey City website (<http://volunteer.jerseycitynj.gov>) which connects residents to volunteer opportunities throughout the city.

JC VISTA is currently accepting applications for one-year positions split into two cohorts – one starting in July, the other starting in August. Open positions include:

JULY Cohort

- Cities of Service Associate at the Office of Community Engagement and Volunteerism
- Neighborhood Service Analyst at the Jersey City Department of Public Works
- Neighborhood Service Coordinator at the Jersey City Department of Public Works
- Workforce Investment Coordinator at the Jersey City Hudson Workforce Partnership
- Data Analyst and Volunteer Coordinator at the Jersey City Resident Response Center

August Cohort

- Immigration & New Citizen Service Coordinator at the Office of Welcoming Communities
- Workforce Investment Analyst at the Jersey City Hudson Workforce Partnership
- Youth Services Associate at the Division of Community Development
- JC VISTA Leader (requires one year of previous experience as an AmeriCorps VISTA)

JC VISTA members will receive an annual living allowance of \$13,296 before taxes. They will also be given the opportunity to enroll in the VISTA Health Benefits Program. After completing one full year of service, JC VISTA members can choose to receive an Education Award of \$5,730 or an End of Service Stipend of \$1,500.

Applicants will be required to complete a criminal background check. The deadline to apply for the July cohort is June 16, 2016. The deadline to apply for the August cohort is July 11, 2016.

For more information or to download the application, please visit:

<http://www.jerseycitynj.gov/JCVistaProgram/>.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at jenniferm@jcnj.org or 201-376-0699. ////