Non-Competitive Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE)?

NCE makes it easier for federal agencies to hire AmeriCorps VISTA alumni who meet minimum qualifications for a given position. It allows federal employers to bypass the formal and lengthy competitive federal hiring process. While it does not entitle an individual to employment, it creates a strong interest from hiring managers and provides a faster application process.

Who makes the decision to hire a former VISTA using NCE?

The decision to hire a former VISTA under Non-Competitive Eligibility status is at the discretion of the hiring agency.

How long does NCE last?

NCE status begins on the date of successful completion of service and expires 12-months from that date. VISTAs who have completed less than one year of service (including training time) will not receive NCE status.

Can NCE be extended beyond one year?

NCE can be extended for an additional two years for a total of <u>three years</u> from the date of successful completion of service.

Extensions are allowed for three reasons:

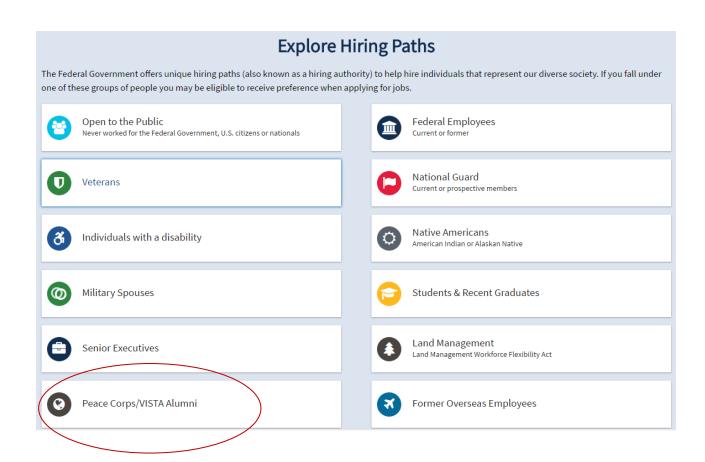
- 1. If, after service, you enter the military
- 2. If you become a full-time student at a recognized institution of higher learning
- 3. If you engage in another activity that the hiring agency thinks warrants an extension*

Who decides if NCE can be extended?

The federal hiring agency decides if your situation warrants extension. This process is not determined by CNCS.

Where are federal positions posted?

- USAJobs.gov
- VISTA Campus Job Board
- Peace Corps' Career Link



^{*}An example of another activity could be interning at a nonprofit, volunteering or actual employment at an organization that is providing you with skills and experience that make you an even stronger job candidate.

How do I make federal employers aware of my NCE status?

We recommend you include the following language in your cover letter and on your resume:

Qualified for unique hiring path, Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE), having successfully served as
an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Active NCE from April 17, 2015 – April 17, 2016.

What should federal human resources specialists know about NCE?

The regulatory authority for an individual to have NCE status is set out under Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, at 5 CFR § 315.605. Under Executive Order 11103, an AmeriCorps VISTA member is granted noncompetitive eligibility for 12 months upon successful completion of service.

How do I prove NCE status?

Once you have completed service, log onto My AmeriCorps to access your account and obtain your AmeriCorps VISTA Verification of Service letter.

- Go to "My Service Letter," select service term dates, select "VISTA Verification of Service" letter type, click "print" and save as a PDF

If I have yet to complete my service term, how do I prove my NCE status?

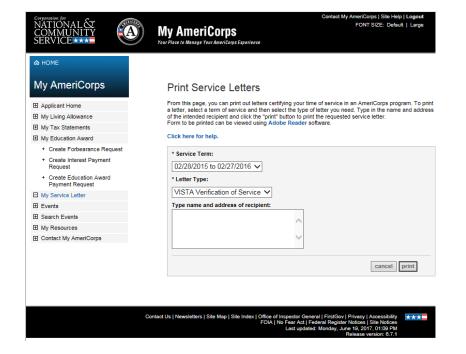
If you begin applying for positions while still in service, include the anticipated date your NCE status will become effective (your close of service date) in your resume and cover letter.

How do I prove NCE without filling in a grade and series on the application?

If a VISTA who is currently accorded NCE status has no grade and series, s/he must contact the employing agency to determine how to should fill out an application that requires a grade and series in order to prove NCE.

Does Non-Competitive Eligibility only apply to federal positions?

Yes. NCE is applicable only to federal government positions. Non-competitive eligibility does not apply to state or local government jobs.





Example of Cover Letter for Federal Position

Department of Health and Human Services Division of Personnel Operations 123 Downtown Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Grant Analyst Position, GS-7 Vacancy Announcement EX-03-03 Non-competitive Eligibility

Dear Selecting Official/Panel:

I am very interested in the above mentioned Grant Analyst position.

I recently completed my year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). Based on the federal unique hiring paths as explained on the homepage of USAJobs.gov, I am eligible for non-competitive hire as of [ENTER DATE OF COMPLETION OF VISTA SERVICE] and meet the requirement under 5 C.F.R. § 315.605.

[In 1-2 short paragraphs, demonstrate why you are qualified for the position and why you would be a good fit for the agency. This letter should cover your interest and purpose, highlight your enclosed résumé by stressing what you can do for the employing agency, and request an interview while providing your best contact information.]

Enclosed is my official VISTA Verification of Service letter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

INSERT NAME PHONE EMAIL