



CIVIC BRIDGERS FELLOWSHIP HOST OVERVIEW 2026-27

About Civic Bridgers

Civic Bridgers is a nonprofit based in St. Paul, MN that strengthens American democracy by training leaders to bridge divides.

The Civic Bridgers Fellowship immerses early-career professionals in 12 months of full-time service at a Host: a nonprofit, public agency, or corporation. Every assignment is different, but one thing holds true: Fellows model, apply, and transfer bridging skills in service of their communities.

Two Models for Hosting

As a host, you provide the Fellow with a full-time, one-year position.

In the past, all CB Fellows completed their year of service as AmeriCorps VISTAs. Today, we also offer a **Direct Service Fellowship**. The Direct Service Fellowship offers more stability for all parties – Civic Bridgers, Fellows, and Hosts – in the event of government shutdowns and/or AmeriCorps grant cancellations. Whereas VISTAs focus on anti-poverty work and capacity-building, Direct Service Fellows are eligible for an unlimited range of service assignments. In both cases, Civic Bridgers provides professional development in bridging skills. Host provides full-time, project-based employment. The table below summarizes the differences.

Type	Direct Service Fellowship	AmeriCorps VISTA Fellowship
Fellow Employee Classification	1099 Contractor (contracted to work for Civic Bridgers; subcontracted to the Host)	AmeriCorps VISTA
Fellowship Experience	SOLO OPTION: Fellowship begins at any time, kicks off with a 3-day hybrid orientation, and continues with 1:1 monthly mentoring for one year.	Fellowship begins with a week-long orientation in August. Fellows join a cohort of 8-10 peers and engage in ongoing PD and mentorship throughout the year.



COHORT OPTION: Fellows may join the VISTA timeline (see-right) and complete an August-August calendar year with 8-10 peers.

Role constraints	Roles must fulfill at least one clear and specific bridging objective .	- Roles must fulfill at least one clear and specific bridging objective. - Fellows cannot engage in any political, partisan, or religious activity while in their work capacity - Fellows cannot perform direct-service roles (e.g. duties such as stocking a food pantry or staffing the front desk)
Fellow Compensation Model	Paid twice monthly by Civic Bridgers	AmeriCorps provides VISTA a living stipend and other benefits.
Fellowship Duration	1 year	1 year
Timeline	Begin any time; if a cohort experience is desired we suggest beginning with VISTAs in August 2026	Employment begins August 10, 2026 (start date with the Host on August 17, 2026)
Orientation	3-day hybrid orientation (in person, virtual, and asynchronous components) based on start date	4-day in-person orientation (overnight retreat) plus 1-day virtual onboarding
Ongoing Development	1:1 Monthly mentorship with a guided, evidence-based curriculum	- 1:1 Monthly mentorship with a guided, evidence-based curriculum - Once monthly practicum with peer cohort
Work agreement	Fellow works for one year on a project basis at full-time capacity for the Host	Fellow takes an oath of service as an Americorps VISTA and works full time at Host for their service year
Fellow benefits	None; contractors are ineligible for benefits	All benefits granted to VISTAs per the handbook (healthcare, relocation stipend, education award)



Geographic Availability	Anywhere in the USA	Minnesota
Work mode	Role may be remote, hybrid, or in person	Role must be based in Minnesota but may be remote, hybrid, or in person
Host fee (this is paid to Civic Bridgers)	Major metros*: \$55k Smaller metros / rural: \$40k	\$24k paid to Civic Bridgers

* Major Metros include: New York, NY; Honolulu, HI; San Jose, CA; San Francisco, CA; Boston, MA; Washington, DC; Seattle, WA; San Diego, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Chicago, IL; Sacramento, CA; Denver, CO; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; Tampa, FL; Charlotte, NC; New Orleans, LA; Dallas, TX

About AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a national service program that fights poverty. VISTA members serve full-time for a year with nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and tribal governments. Their work helps create or expand programs that empower communities to overcome poverty.

About Hosts

Hosts are nonprofits or public agencies (or corporations, for Direct Service Fellows) where Fellows serve for 12 months. Hosts share Civic Bridgers' commitment to bridging divides with humanity, humility, and accountability.

Benefits to Hosting a Civic Bridgers Fellow

- **Hosts save about 50-70% compared to the cost to hire a full-time staff member per year when factoring in recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, and providing salary and benefits.**
- Hosts build capacity to fulfill their missions with fewer human resources – Civic Bridgers recruits, screens, and onboards highly skilled young professionals and supports them year-round with bi-weekly professional development.
- Hosts benefit from having a full-time team member trained in the knowledge, mindsets, and skills to bridge divides.
- Hosts join the Civic Bridgers Host Network: a cohort of organizations, public agencies, and corporations that receive cross-promotion and amplification through mutual democracy-strengthening work



Program Logistics

What do Fellows do?

Fellows undertake roles that bridge divides. For example, Fellows might:

- Bridge trust gaps: Foster community connection and enhance cross-cultural understanding
- Bridge resource gaps: Lead awareness campaigns, facilitate resource sharing or access to amenities
- Bridge ideological gaps: Engage communities in dialogues to build understanding
- Bridge institutional gaps: Advance policymaking for more representative or responsive government
- Bridge civic gaps: Lead campaigns or drives to increase participation in public life (e.g. use of libraries, public parks, community centers, etc.)

We prioritize Hosts and assignments that:

- Increase the capacity of Hosts for long-term community engagement
- Increase the number and diversity of people and perspectives engaged in community life
- Convene community members across differences and divides
- For VISTAs: Contribute toward alleviating the causes or symptoms of poverty
- Center solutions and opportunities generated by the community
- Demonstrate the capacity to support Fellow(s) to be successful in their project
- Anticipate that one year is an adequate time frame to complete the proposed activities

VISTA Assignment Descriptions (VAD)

This section only applies to Hosts who prefer an AmeriCorps VISTA.

VISTA refers to your Fellow. The VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) is their job description. When you decide to move forward as a Host, you will use a [template to create your VAD](#).

For exemplars, see:

- [26/27 Program Engagement Coordinator Exemplar](#)
- [26/27 Enrichment Programming Developer Exemplar](#)
- [26/27 Volunteer Engagement Specialist Exemplar](#)



- 26/27 Program Development Fellow Exemplar

Timeline

This section only applies to Hosts who prefer an AmeriCorps VISTA or wish for their Direct Service Fellow to start in August as a cohort with their VISTA peers. Hosts may be onboarded on a rolling basis for Fellows who begin service outside of the cohort cycle.

- May 8, 2026 - Deadline to submit [Host Application](#) and draft of VAD (for VISTAs) or project description (for DSFs)
- May 15, 2026 - Hosts Confirmed
- May 20, 2026 - VAD or project description finalized and confirmed
- May 29, 2026 - Fellowship Application Closes
- June 26, 2026 - Matches Finalized
- July 2026 - Orientation and Training (OT) plan due
 - August 10-14, 2026 Week-long Civic Bridgers Orientation
 - August 17, 2026 Fellows begin service with Host

Fellow & Host Matching Process

Our exceptional Fellow candidates undergo a rigorous vetting process and typically have multiple excellent job options. For this reason, it is vitally important that we match Fellows in a transparent, efficient, and streamlined manner in order to cement their commitment.

Here's what to expect of the matching process:

1. We will nominate Fellow(s) for you based on (1) the Fellow's fulfillment of your role criteria, and (2) the Fellow's interest in your specific role. We will email you the candidate's application materials.
2. You will have 2 business days to review the materials and either accept or reject the candidate.
3. Within one week of acceptance, the candidate will meet with you for a placement confirmation conversation.
4. You will communicate your decision to accept or reject the candidate to Civic Bridgers within 24 hours.
5. If you accept, Civic Bridgers will confirm the placement with both the Host and Fellow and we will celebrate!

Our goal is to send you one strong candidate and forge the match. You may pass on any candidate prior to the placement conversation but you will be limited to one pass on candidates you choose for placement conversations. We will not accept rejections outside of our criteria (outlined below).



Rejection criteria:

1. **Misalignment with role, mission, vision, or goals.** For example, expressed values or past actions that demonstrably clash with the core mission and values of the organization.
2. **Lack of necessary skills, experience, credentials, or materials.** For example, the candidate lacks specific, essential skills required for the job (This must be balanced with the understanding that Fellows are early-career professionals who are willing to grow). Or, the Fellow does not have a car for a role that requires frequent local travel.
3. **Poor engagement, communication, or professionalism.** For example, behaviors during the interview process such as poor verbal communication, late arrival and/or absence, or disregard for workplace conduct expectations established in advance.

Fellow Qualifications

- **Academic Requirement:** Applicants must have earned (or will earn by the start of the Fellowship) an associate's or bachelor's degree or trades certification from a recognized institution. In the absence of a degree or certification, equivalent workforce experience will be considered.
- **Eligible Degrees:** All academic disciplines and trades.
- **Leadership:** The Fellowship looks for applicants who have demonstrated leadership abilities in their academic, professional, or extracurricular pursuits. This can include leadership in student organizations, professional work, social impact projects, or other leadership roles where you made a meaningful difference.
- **Language:** Applicants must be fluent in English, as all programs are conducted in English. This is a general requirement for our programs.

Supervision

Hosts must determine a reporting supervisor for the Fellow. The supervisor should meet with the Fellow at least once per week to provide guidance, coaching, and accountability. We encourage Hosts to also identify other mentors, including peer mentors, within the organization and community who can support the Fellow.

Work Schedule

Fellows work full-time from their start date or (if they join the VISTA cohort) from August 2026 through August 2027. They spend the first full week of the program in Civic Bridgers Orientation, followed by bi-weekly cohort meetings on Fridays.

- Fellows serve full-time during the Host's regular business hours, typically 30-40 hours per week.



- Direct Service Fellows are ineligible for PTO because their work is project based. As long as they meet project deliverables and deadlines, they are entitled to time off without supervisor approval, though we encourage it as a matter of professional courtesy.
- VISTA Fellows follow the [AmeriCorps leave / PTO benefits](#), and also follow the Host's holiday schedule. For example, if the Host is closed for a week during Eid, the Fellow will also receive that time off without deducting from their AmeriCorps leave.

Location

Fellows are expected to live in or near the community they serve. Hosts may determine their worksite location and any hybrid or remote arrangements.

Reporting

Hosts complete a brief pre- and post-program survey. Supervisors participate in brief quarterly check-ins with Civic Bridgers (approximately 30 minutes each). Fellows submit monthly reports to Civic Bridgers, which Supervisors will have access to review. We encourage Supervisors to collaborate with Fellows to ensure accurate reporting.

Host Fee

The Host Fee is the cost paid to Civic Bridgers. It is the only cost of having a Fellow. Fellows do NOT join the Host's payroll or employee benefit plans.

Host Fee for Direct Service Fellow	Host Fee for AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow
Major metros*: \$55k Smaller metros / rural: \$40k	\$24k

* Major Metros include: New York, NY; Honolulu, HI; San Jose, CA; San Francisco, CA; Boston, MA; Washington, DC; Seattle, WA; San Diego, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Chicago, IL; Sacramento, CA; Denver, CO; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; Tampa, FL; Charlotte, NC; New Orleans, LA; Dallas, TX

Our partners with annual budgets over \$1 million typically pay the full cost. We never want the cost to be a barrier to participation, so please reach out if the cost is prohibitive.

How does Civic Bridgers use the Host Fee?

When you partner with us as a Host, your fee directly supports the comprehensive infrastructure that makes our Fellows successful. This includes:

Recruitment and Onboarding



- A robust and rigorous 4-stage vetting process
- Highly tailored candidate: Host matching
- Orientation: 3-4 days of evidence-based professional development in bridging

Professional Development & Support

- 1:1 mentorship with a structured, evidence-based curriculum
- 1:1 support in development and implementation of practicum

Administrative Work

- Federal AmeriCorps grant management (as relevant)
- Program reporting and data management
- Provision of food, housing, and transportation for events
- Honoraria for speakers who enrich the Fellows' experience
- Quarterly check-ins with Fellows and Hosts

Additionally, your contribution supports our dedicated Programs Team, whose members provide both collective and individualized support to Fellows, develop impactful programming, and work diligently to ensure strong, productive relationships between Fellows and host organizations like yours.

By hosting a Fellow, you're not only gaining a dedicated team member, but also investing in the development of the next generation of leaders who will strengthen democracy for years to come.

How to Apply

[Apply here.](#) Optionally, connect with Jill Carey ([calendar](#)) about your vision for the scope of work for a Fellow. We consider Host proposals on an ongoing basis.