

Outdoor Recreation Asset Mapping Leader

A one-year full-time AmeriCorps VISTA position out of the Asheville area

Background:

Mountain BizWorks (MBW, mountainbizworks.org) is a non-profit community development financial institution (CDFI) that provides tailored small business lending and peer learning services across Western North Carolina. We do this towards a mission of building a vibrant and inclusive local economy. In fall 2018, MBW received an Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant for a project called the Growing Outdoors Partnership, an initiative of over a dozen nonprofits, businesses, academic institutions, and government agencies working together to expand outdoor industry and build a thriving outdoor economy across 25 counties in Western North Carolina (WNC).

Through this work, WNC is providing a model for Appalachia and for our state as a whole of how rural and urban areas can work together to grow an economy whose benefits accrue to communities across the rural/urban divide; an economy in which people's livelihoods are intrinsically connected with environmental stewardship and quality of place. To this end, the Partnership includes a suite of programs in workforce development, entrepreneurship & access to capital, regional branding & marketing (including helping build pride of place among locals), industry inter-connectivity, and economic development.

In order to accelerate the region's outdoor economy, and expand the capacity of the Growing Outdoors Partnership team to support WNC's rural and coal-impacted communities, MBW is recruiting for two AmeriCorps VISTA positions, based out of our Asheville office.

Purpose:

The overarching goals of the Outdoor Recreation Asset Mapping Leader position:

- Help identify and map outdoor recreation industry assets in Western North Carolina, in partnership with both project partners and the statewide NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office
- Assist with the creation of a resource guide and other interpretive materials to help connect people with the assets that have been identified through this project
- Work closely with Program Director and Community Outreach Coordinator (fellow VISTA) to create and run regional Supply Chain Opportunities events to help connect rural manufacturers, especially in coal- and trade-impacted communities, into outdoor recreation supply chains
- Provide event planning and coordination support, including for a 10/10/19 regional convening to help identify and advance community economic development opportunities
- Support MBW and the Growing Outdoors Partnership's strategic efforts to expand outdoor entrepreneurship and recreation asset development within historically underserved communities

Key Responsibilities & Tasks:

- Help the Program Director and project Working Groups to map outdoor recreation and outdoor business assets including:
 - Outdoor recreation sites, such as trails, crags, parks, campgrounds, and put-ins

- Outdoor recreation businesses, such as gear manufacturers, supply chain partners, retailers, and outfitters
- Educational programs related to the outdoor industry at regional universities, colleges, and other learning centers
- Conservation and recreation partner organizations, such as nonprofit organizations and government agency offices,
- Coordinate with the NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office and other government stakeholders on asset mapping statewide, to ensure that databases and materials created mesh smoothly
 - This includes working with partners like NC Department of Commerce, regional Councils of Government, State Parks, US Forest Service, US Park Service, and other key stakeholders to ensure that data from partners can be effectively imported into larger database, in a consistent way, and that key resources (trail maps, park websites, company information, etc.) are tied into listings.
- Work with project staff, partners, and consultants to develop a “Build It. Test It. Live It.” Guide to help outdoor recreation companies (as well as other businesses led and/or staffed by outdoor recreation enthusiasts) get excited about the opportunities in WNC.
 - This will include providing specialized materials to help entrepreneurs see startup and growth opportunities in the area.
- Work closely with the project team to help coordinate the 10/10/19 Outdoor Economy Conference. This includes:
 - Ensuring that project Working Groups have asset databases and materials needed for meaningful breakout discussions and presentations on their topic areas
 - Engaging with conference participants who want to know more about the region’s assets
 - Assisting with ensuring that assets and other materials are on the conference’s website, including follow-up materials posted after the conference and sent out in newsletters to participants so that they can put data to use
 - And serving as part of the core team planning and putting on the conference
- Identifying, through the asset mapping process, key areas of need and opportunity for outdoor business, workforce, and recreation asset development, especially in underserved and/or coal-impacted areas, and working with MBW staff and project partners to help communities and entrepreneurs address these needs and opportunities.
- Helping develop and run trainings for community leaders and partners, including trainings on data entry and updates, to ensure that mapping tools have a long and fruitful lifespan.

Skills and Knowledge:

- Effectively and correctly communicate ideas in writing and verbally, 1:1 and in groups
- Possess knowledge of data collection best practices and principles.
- Demonstrate strong computer proficiency: Word, Excel, Gmail, Google Docs and *especially* databases; familiarity with GIS or other mapping tools is a plus.
- Accurately input, maintain and update data.
- Keen attention to detail.
- A demonstrated commitment to community development, economic justice and for working with entrepreneurs and innovators.
- Experience in and commitment to working in a team-oriented environment, including with partners from other organizations.
- Self-driven initiative and performance of the highest quality, with keen attention to detail.
- Ability to work with clients and partners from various backgrounds.
- Ability to work independently and to effectively manage time.
- Work proactively with coworkers to reach organizational goals.
- Flexibility to manage the variety of tasks and responsibilities of the position.

- Ability to thrive in an entrepreneurial, team-oriented, mission-driven environment.

Reporting Relationship: reports to Growing Outdoors Program Director

Compensation and Benefits

This is a year-long AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) Member position. If you are not already familiar with the VISTA program, please see “About the VISTA program” below.

VISTA Members receive a monthly living allowance, as well as the following benefits:

- Option of either Education Award of \$6,095 upon successful completion of service OR an \$1,800 End of Service cash Stipend,
- Childcare assistance (if eligible),
- Health coverage*,
- Relocation allowance (if applicable),
- Non-competitive eligibility for federal jobs,
- Student loan forbearance, and
- Training and professional development, both individually and as part of an amazing cohort of VISTAs across North Carolina

** For details about AmeriCorps VISTA healthcare benefits, please visit <http://www.vistacampus.gov/healthcare>.*

How to Apply

Send a resume and cover letter to noah@mountainbizworks.org, using the subject line “Community Outreach Coordinator Application for [your name].” (and please replace the words [your name] with your own actual name.) Applications that do not follow these instructions will not be considered.

Applications will be accepted through June 1, or until the position is filled.

About the VISTA Program

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) members bring passion and perseverance where the need is greatest: to organizations that help eradicate poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve as a catalyst for change, living and working alongside community members to meet our nation’s most pressing challenges and advance local solutions. AmeriCorps VISTA members build capacity in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to help them more effectively generate the commitment of private sector resources, encourage volunteer service at the local level, and empower individuals and communities. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full time for one-year terms.

If you have not already applied to be an AmeriCorps VISTA member, you may visit <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-programs/ameriCorps-vista/join-ameriCorps-vista> to find out more and to apply; applicants who are not already VISTA members are still welcome to apply for this position, but will need to successfully complete the VISTA application process in order to be hired for this position.