



About Cottonwood

Cottonwood ALC fosters curiosity, play, trust, respect, equity and autonomy in our members. We support a growing community through age-mixing, valuing personal choice and celebrating the individuality of everyone's learning. The greater mission to build community through self-directed learning is realized through offerings of an agile after-school program, adult and organizational programming, community center events, mission-related space rental and summer camps. We serve and connect two communities: Helena, MT and Brooklyn, NY. *This position will serve at the Montana location.*

In Montana, we intentionally located our educational spaces in downtown Helena where our cultural and natural landscapes are as much a part of our classroom as the interior spaces of our building. As a result, Cottonwood learners can be found interacting with their community every day and helping to create meaningful engagement and connections. As often as possible, we extend the classroom to places our learners might otherwise never visit.

The environment that we strive to create at Cottonwood is one that is positive and attentive to the whole human. Keeping our class size small, every day we work to empower individual learners to approach their life with agency and to broaden their horizons in order to identify possibilities based on their unique interests and strengths. Learners and staff alike come to Cottonwood because they seek a place where they can thrive.

Position: VISTA Summer Associate

Stipend: Paid by AmeriCorps, the living allowance for members is \$513.00 bi-weekly (pre-tax). Those who select the Segal Education Award will receive \$1,342.42 upon completion of service while members who opt-out of the Segal Education Award will receive an End of Service Cash Award of \$345.80. What is the Segal Education Award? It's a voucher awarded to AmeriCorps and VISTA members who successfully complete a term of service. It must be used within seven years of issue and may be used to pay back qualifying student loans and costs of attendance at most higher education institutions. For more information, contact AmeriCorps VISTA Program Manager Callye Foster at 813-362-2684 or visit links below.

Dates: Monday, June 7, 2021–August 15, 2021

Hours: 40 hours / week

Lodging: Housing is not provided and is the associate's responsibility. However, we have an incredibly supportive community and encourage any VISTA member to indicate their needs. We will do our best to support them in finding low-cost housing.

Application Deadline: Friday, April 23, or until positions are filled.

Position Summary: The goal of our programming is to empower individual learners to approach their life with agency and to broaden their horizons in order to identify possibilities in their life based on their unique interests and individual strengths. Summers at Cottonwood are designed to be a time and place where all individuals can thrive. By radically shifting the way we think about learning, education, and what it means to be in community, we will ignite the fire of curiosity in our learners--and staff!--with the hope that it will fuel them and break down barriers in all areas of their life.

Cottonwood Agile Learning Center is looking for a creative, energetic leader to join our Summer Camp Team. Activities will include working directly with learners ages 4-17 and Cottonwood staff. Opportunities for development will include observing, learning, and engaging as an educational facilitator and assisting behind the scenes with administrative staff to gain skills for organizing and executing a summer youth educational program.

This position is in collaboration with and supported by the AmeriCorps Summer VISTA program and located at Cottonwood ALC in Helena, MT.

Essential Functions. Summer Associate responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Act as a model, space-holder and mentor to learners in a self-directed learning environment and in intentional culture creation. Facilitators need to be grounded in the perspective of trusting children and committed to fostering curiosity and individual empowerment.
- Observe and assist during full-day programming from lead facilitators.
- Use what was learned during the day to lead end-of-day experiences for students participating in Extended Day.
- Actively co-create and engage with staff and students to develop tools and practices to support positive culture creation based in trust, communication and practical needs of learners.
- Use or develop tools and practices for students to articulate intentions, steps for setting goals, progress and reflection.
- Participate in regular check-ins to determine if learners need more, less or different support to reach goals and intentions.
- Assist in administrative support.
- Help coordinate and plan field trips.
- Provide communication support between staff, learners and parents.
- Maintain a clean space to welcome learners each day.
- Other duties as assigned.

Benefits:

- **After-hours access to the space.** Our Agile Learning Center is equipped with art supplies, instruments, games, a full kitchen, library and workshop space. We invite you to use the Center after hours as your playground. Host a game night, bake a cake, play music...
- **Learn about agile tools and approach.** We consider the tools and practices we use at Cottonwood as tools for life, and we can't wait to share them with you!
- **Once a Cottonwood kid, always a Cottonwood kid.** Join a community that will extend beyond the summer.
- **Gain knowledge about operating and maintaining a learning center and other professional development.**
- **VISTA alumni network.**
- **Get to be creative, explore what you love, and approach every day as an adventure all while on the job.**
- **Come play in beautiful Helena where you can always explore trails, run a river, bike to historic downtown or do whatever makes you feel alive!**
- **Fun, exciting and social work environment and access to the rich Helena community.**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Excellent communicator
- Detail-oriented
- Demonstrates strong organizational skills
- Is an agent of play
- Curious with a desire to learn
- Enjoys working with young people

Other Requirements:

- Must be U.S. citizens.
- Pass a background check and an NSOPW search.
- Must be over the age of 18.

- A candidate related by blood, marriage or adoption to the staff or Board of Directors of Cottonwood ALC is not eligible for this position.

For more information about:

- **The Summer VISTA Summer Associate program:**
 - Campus Compact of Montana, an organization that implements this program in Montana: mtcompact.org
 - Job listing on the AmeriCorps website: <https://bit.ly/3dIRxUS>
 - What does it mean to be a Summer Associate or VISTA member? Check out the AmeriCorps Member Handbook: <https://bit.ly/32Im7rk>
 - Summer Associate Benefits: <https://bit.ly/3stV33z>
- **Cottonwood ALC and our summer programming:** <https://www.cottonwoodalc.org/summer-camp>
 - Foundational tools and practices of Cottonwood: <https://www.cottonwoodalc.org/curriculum>
- **Helena:** helenamt.com

Apply here online: <https://bit.ly/3glejxM>. For more information about the position and Cottonwood, contact Director of Strategy and Innovation Lindsey Carroll at lindsey@cottonwoodalc.org. For more questions about the VISTA Summer Associate program, contact AmeriCorps VISTA Program Manager Callye Foster at 813-362-2684 or foster@mtcompact.org.