



# CIVIC BRIDGERS FELLOWSHIP 2025-26

FULL-TIME, 12-MONTH AMERICORPS VISTA PROGRAM

Young Americans report acute levels of polarization, declining trust in democratic institutions, and unprecedented receptivity to non-democratic models of governance. This highlights an urgent need to develop Civic Bridgers: leaders who restore trust and heal divides in service of their country and local community.

## About Civic Bridgers

Civic Bridgers is a Minnesota-based nonprofit that strengthens American democracy by preparing emerging leaders to bridge divides.

In partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA, the Civic Bridgers Fellowship immerses early-career professionals in a year of bridge-building service at a Host (nonprofit or public agency). Every assignment is different, but one thing holds true: Fellows model, apply, and transfer bridging skills in service of their communities.

## Fellowship Structure

### AMERICORPS

Provides Fellows a living stipend and other benefits.



### CIVIC BRIDGERS

Provides Fellows with professional development in bridging skills.



### HOSTS

Provide Fellows a full-time job where they exercise bridging skills.



## About AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a national service program that helps fight 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.

---

The Civic Bridgers Fellowship is offered in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA





## About the Fellowship

The Fellowship offers a challenging, uncommon opportunity for young professionals to expand their perspective and launch into a life of impact by bridging cultural and ideological differences.

It begins with an immersive, week-long training in bridging. Through workshops and applied practice, participants learn evidence-based strategies for moving from conflict to convergence.

Topics of study include:

- **Moral Foundations Theory:** a psychology-based theory of the origins of human morality
- **Intercultural Conflict Styles:** a culturally responsive model that measures approaches to conflict
- **Media Literacy:** a model for determining the veracity of media sources in an atomized, user-generated landscape
- **Digital Citizenship:** a model for constructive online engagement
- **Bias:** the neuroscience of tribalism and the cognitive shortcuts that inform the stories we tell ourselves

When Fellows move into their full-time roles with Hosts in late August, they embark on projects that build capacity and bridge divides at local nonprofits and public agencies. Throughout the year of service, bi-weekly professional development sessions with the Fellowship cohort deepen bridging skills and impart essential professional skills. The Fellowship concludes with a Capstone event where each Civic Bridger presents their story of impact.

## Eligibility

- Must be 18 years old by service start date.
- Must be a U.S. citizen, legal permanent resident, refugee, asylee, or DACA recipient.
- Must be able to commit to a year-long program from August 2025 - August 2026, with a full-time work week (a typical workweek is 35 hours per week daytime hours, Monday-Friday, but individual host sites may have their own guidelines).
- Live and work in Minnesota during the 2025-26 term of service

## 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.

---

The Civic Bridgers Fellowship is offered in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA





- **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.

## Responsibilities

- **Interview and Match with a Host:** On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., all selected Fellows convene at a Twin Cities location for brief interviews with our Hosts. Hosts and Fellows submit match-request rankings, receive their final pairing, and participate in a brief orientation.
- **Attend Orientation Retreat:** From August 11-15, 2025, we host orientation at [Mt. Olivet Retreat Center](#), a nature-rich getaway with nutritious meals, quiet lodgings, and scenic trail systems. (Please note, Civic Bridgers' programming is both nonpartisan and secular; this retreat center has spiritual roots but welcomes all people of all backgrounds and spiritualities.)
- **Build Bridging Skills:** Every other Friday, Fellows gather virtually or in person for evidence-based professional development focused on three principles of bridging: common humanity, intellectual humility, and shared accountability.
- **Serve full-time as AmeriCorps VISTA member in a local nonprofit or public agency.**
- **Fully participate in activities planned for Fellows, and in the life of the community.**
- **Present Final Capstone Project:** In late August 2025, our Fellows present their Capstone project, which highlights the impact of their work over their year of service.

## Application Process

### STAGE 1: Application and Screening

- Apply no later than May 31, 2025. Applicants accepted on a rolling basis.
  - Letter of recommendation (usually from professors, mentors, or professionals who know you well and can speak to leadership potential)
  - A resume detailing academic achievements, work experience, leadership roles, and any community service or extracurricular activities.
  - Personal statement that explores your leadership experiences and your vision for strengthening American democracy through bridging.
- 15-minute phone screening.

### STAGE 2: Interview & Offer

- 30-minute virtual or in-person interview.

---

The Civic Bridgers Fellowship is offered in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA





- The interview process is competitive and typically focuses on assessing the applicant's leadership potential and alignment with the program's mission and norms.

### STAGE 3: Match with Host & Participate in Orientation

- Sign agreement with Civic Bridgers and undergo AmeriCorps employment eligibility check.
- Interview with partners (local nonprofits and public agencies) to find a mutual match for their year of service. Both Hosts and Fellows are guaranteed placement (contingencies notwithstanding) but may match with a second or third choice depending on mutual fit.
- Fellows participate in an in-person, week-long orientation in principles of bridging.

## Living Stipend and Benefits

See the full list of VISTA member benefits [here](#).

- \$24,962 annual living stipend (\$960.07 bi-weekly)
- Up to \$1,000 in relocation reimbursement assistance (based on the direct mileage between the ZIP code of your home of record and the ZIP code of your project site)
- Earn a \$6,895 education award for current/future education costs OR opt for the end-of-service cash stipend benefit of \$1,800
- 80+ hours bridging training
- Professional and peer mentorship

## Values

Civic Bridgers holds our staff, advisors, Fellows, and partners to the values of humanity, humility, and accountability.

- **Humanity** – The recognition that all people have equal inherent worth even while imperfection is the human condition. Common humanity allows us to live into our strengths, express our innermost values, celebrate wide-ranging expressions of self and culture, and build appreciation of diversity. Related virtues include: dignity, compassion, respect, autonomy, and fairness.
- **Humility** – The practice of seeking understanding, recognizing biases, embracing uncertainty, and modeling a growth mindset. Intellectual humility allows us to uphold ancient wisdom, storytelling, and spiritual systems as sources of knowledge alongside scientific research and academic or institutional knowledge. Related virtues include: curiosity, love of learning, creativity, forgiveness, and perspective.
- **Accountability** – The recognition that we exist in community and that individual actions redound to the common good, or common harm, and we take responsibility accordingly. Shared accountability allows us to shift from “calling out” to “calling in” and from “canceling” to “restoring” without undermining individual agency. Related virtues include: teamwork, bravery, self-regulation, and judgment.

---

The Civic Bridgers Fellowship is offered in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA





## Commitment to Fairness

To thrive as a diverse, plural society, communities throughout America must address local and national issues with compassionate dialogue, intercultural competency, and collective action. Civic Bridgers is designed to meet this need so that our diverse country can be an inclusive and thriving society where all voices matter and where no person is marginalized for their identity. This is an aspirational goal toward which we can contribute but not achieve alone. We commit to establishing partnerships that fuel the people, institutions, and collective movements that are catalyzing a more empathic, collaborative, and inclusive society. Additionally, we commit to elevating narratives that affirm the power and possibility of bridging divides, and counter narratives that seek to divide us.

## Equal Opportunity Employer Statement

Civic Bridgers is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any kind in any part of our business and partnerships. Building a diverse and inclusive team is key central to our values and mission, and essential for our success. We humbly strive to ensure that the Civic Bridgers team environment is intentionally inclusive and reflective of the communities we serve. We hire talent with a transparent and equitable process for all who apply. All employment decisions are made without regard to age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, medical history, or any other protected statuses. We believe our differences make us stronger and encourage all interested candidates to apply.

If you need application assistance or reasonable accommodation due to a disability, please contact [jill@civicbridgers.org](mailto:jill@civicbridgers.org).

---

The Civic Bridgers Fellowship is offered in partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA

