

**FOREST FARMING AMERICORPS VISTA**  
**JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Application Due Date: January 8, 2020**

**Organization Description**

Since 1995, [Appalachian Sustainable Development](#) (ASD) has been working to propel our mission to transition Appalachia to a more resilient economy and a healthier population by supporting local agriculture, exploring new economic opportunities, and connecting people to healthy food. In the beginning, ASD focused exclusively on 15 counties in northeast TN and southwest VA. Today, our work has expanded to include partners in WV and eastern KY with the creation of the Central Appalachian Food Corridor.

**Agroforestry Program Description**

ASD's [Agroforestry Program](#) was founded in 2010 with the goal of helping farmers adopt agroforestry practices that support both conservation and specialty crop production. Agroforestry is a land use management system in which trees and/or shrubs are grown with crops and/or livestock. This intentional combination of agriculture and forestry has a variety of environmental and economic benefits, including crop diversification, soil erosion reduction, water quality improvement, wildlife habitat enhancement, and much more. There are several agroforestry practices, including: forest farming, riparian forest buffers, alley cropping, silvopasture, windbreaks, and food forests.

Historically, ASD has worked with government agencies to establish multifunctional riparian forest buffers with useful fruit and nut trees and shrubs along waterways, as well as food forests along public walking trails. Currently, ASD has funding to help farmers establish, process and market forest botanicals in a forest farming system. We are seeking a Forest Farming AmeriCorps VISTA to build the capacity of a forest farmer network, while further refining the training, processing, aggregating, and marketing services they need to sell their products to premium priced markets.

- Activity Title:** Forest Farming AmeriCorps VISTA
- Work Location:** ASD is based in Abingdon, VA.
- Hours:** Full time (40 hrs/wk) with some weekend events required. Anticipate 40% seasonal fieldwork, 40% office work, and 20% events.
- Type of Position:** 1 year AmeriCorps VISTA position through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), with opportunity to renew for 1-2 more years. ASD is the sponsor organization and placement site. *Before applying*, visit the CNCS website [here](#) to learn more about AmeriCorps VISTA positions, requirements, and benefits.
- Start-End Date:** 2/18/20 – 2/18/21 anticipated, but start date can be flexible by 1-2 months, if needed.

<b>Education:</b>	Bachelor's degree preferred, preferably in: Forestry, Agroforestry, (Agro)ecology, Environmental Science, Natural Resources, Conservation, Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture or related fields.
<b>Experience:</b>	Some forestry/agricultural experience (i.e. internship, volunteer).
<b>Travel:</b>	Driver's license and car required.
<b>Physical:</b>	Frequent use of a computer. Ability to walk in mountainous terrains and stand for up to 3 hours.

### **Position Description**

The goal of this position will be to increase the adoption and support of sustainable medicinal herb production for environmental and economic benefits in Central Appalachia. The Agroforestry VISTA will build the capacity and long-term sustainability of ASD's Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub by expanding the farmer, partner, and funder network. This work will involve the following activities:

- **Member Activity 1:** Conduct targeted community outreach and engagement to recruit new farmers and cultivate new partnerships by Quarter 2. A) Create a 2020 outreach plan for target audiences. B) Organize and/or participate in at least three outreach meetings/events (i.e. festivals, conferences, etc.).
- **Member Activity 2:** Work alongside the Procurement Coordinator to support the development of a supply pipeline to meet secured demand for medicinal herbs by Quarter 3. A) Schedule site evaluation visits with recruited farmers. i. Conduct population assessments of forest botanicals as needed for certification. ii. Document available supply in a database. iii. Create site visit reports outlining site characteristics, existing species present, and sustainable forest management recommendations. B) Finalize an onboarding folder for new forest farmers. i. Compile onboarding resources for easy access. ii. Develop a "how to" document with details for becoming Organic, Forest Grown certified.
- **Member Activity 3:** Build the capacity of 2-4 local forest botanical nurseries in Virginia to increase the availability of planting stock for forest farmers by Quarter 4. A) Research replicable models. B) Create nursery planting stock applications and criteria for cost-share funding. C) Identify and share the application with local nurseries for recruitment.
- **Member Activity 4:** Assist in planning and implementing at least three medicinal herb trainings and events, including medicinal herb production demonstrations at the Faith in Action (FIA) herb garden, by Quarter 3. A) Identify farmer training needs. B) Confirm event details (i.e. location, date, time, speakers, and agenda). C) Create and manage event budget and determine cost of attendance, if any. D) Develop and disseminate advertisements. E) Evaluate event with surveys for future improvement. F) Complete an internal post-event evaluation form to assess event viability.
- **Member Activity 5:** Work with AH Herb Hub staff to create efficiencies in helping farmers receive, process, package, aggregate, and ship herbs to buyers so they are compliant with regulatory and quality standards by Quarter 4. A) Create an efficient scheduling process/platform for herb hub use. B) Develop a rental agreement to rent Herb Hub equipment for daily use. C) Update Herb Hub procedures as new species and/or equipment are added. D) Synthesize processing information for individual species into an herb processing fact sheet (i.e. cut size, dryer temperature, drying time, dry down ratio, etc.).

- **Member Activity 6:** Secure resources and funding to build the financial capacity and sustainability of forest farming programming by Quarter 4. A) Research, plan, and write grants in support of forest farming adoption and expanded programming. B) Coordinate fundraiser(s), including GoFundMe Campaign, silent auctions, etc. as needed to increase program awareness and financial sustainability.

### **Required Skills and Expertise**

- Demonstrated ability to plan and conduct outreach and training events in large groups and/or one-on-one settings
- Dependable and motivated self-starter that excels working independently or in groups
- Demonstrated ability to network and collaborate with diverse teams
- Critical thinking skills with a proven ability to identify creative solutions to problems or gaps
- Leadership skills with demonstrated project planning and management experience
- Excel in community outreach, public speaking, and partner engagement
- Acute attention to detail with outstanding organizational, record keeping and data management skills
- Superior listening, verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills
- Eagerness to learn and commitment to asking for help when needed
- Proficiency with basic software and technology including MS Office Suite, Google Drive, smart phones, copier, webinar platforms, etc.

### **Preferred Skills and Expertise**

- Familiarity with plant identification and plant survey techniques
- Knowledge of and comfort with forest farming practices
- Familiarity with creating maps in Google Earth, GIS or similar platforms
- Demonstrated success in fundraising, including writing and/or managing grants

**To apply:** submit an application through AmeriCorps VISTA at <http://bit.ly/ForestFarmingVISTA> and a cover letter to [kcommender@asdevelop.org](mailto:kcommender@asdevelop.org) or 1096 Ole Berry Drive, Suite 100, Abingdon, VA 24210 by **January 8, 2020**. Please note in your cover letter where you saw the job announcement.

**Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy:** Appalachian Sustainable Development and parties associated with ASD will not discriminate in any way against a potential candidate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, mental or physical disability, medical condition, age, physical characteristics or marital status.