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Grantee Debarred for Misuse of VISTA Members and Required to Repay \$527,000 in Disallowed Costs

DATE ISSUED 11.30.2016

Closed 2016-11-30

Corporation management reported VISTA Project Sponsor Georgia Center for Nonprofits (GCN), Atlanta, GA, improperly utilized its VISTA members when it directed members to perform staff functions and changed clients for their services.

CNCS-OIG investigators found GCN staff misused their VISTAs and assigned them tasks unrelated to eradicating poverty. GCN staff repeatedly and improperly assigned VISTAs to perform direct service projects and required them to perform staff functions. This activity took place from at least 2009 until early 2014.

Interviews of VISTAs and GCN staff, along with a review of program documents by CNCS-OIG investigators revealed GCN officials violated (1) 45 CFR § 2540.100(f) (prohibits program participants from performing staff functions) when they tasked multiple VISTAs to perform staff functions and other administrative tasks; (2) 42 USC § 5044(c) (prohibits sponsors from receiving compensation for provision of VISTA service) when they collected fees for the VISTAs' service; and (3) 42 USC § 12584(a)(8)(A) (prohibits national service participants from providing a direct benefit for a business organization for-profit) when VISTAs provided benefits to for-profit businesses that paid for memberships with GCN.

CNCS management issued a debt letter to GCN in the amount of \$527,185 and debarred GCN for a period of two years.

Case ID: 2014-015

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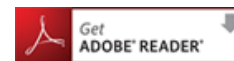
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