



Welcome to

8 VISTA Member Retention Strategies You Can't Ignore

To join the audio portion by phone, please dial: **888.483.1644**
Passcode: **7562488**

While you wait, practice using the chat box: List one fun fact about your organization?



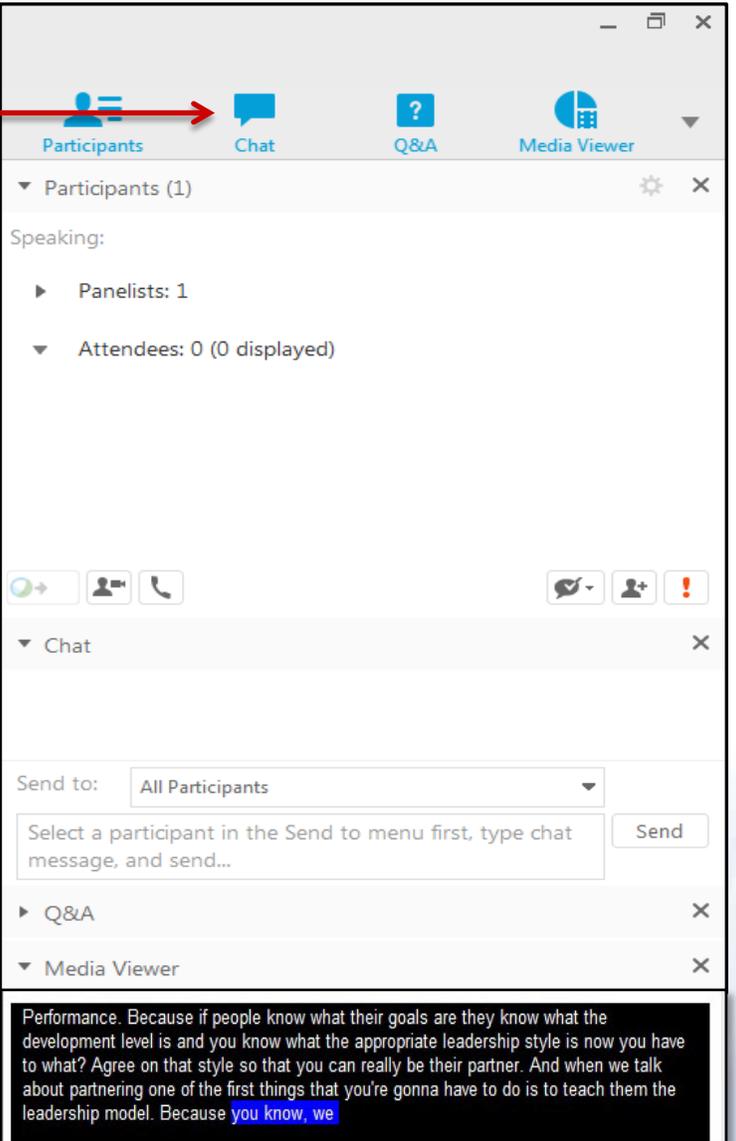
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Tips for Participating

- Audio broadcast by phone and online
- View Closed Captions in the Media Viewer panel
- Share comments and ideas in the Chat panel. (send to “All Participants”)
- Ask questions in the Q&A panel. (send to “All Panelists”)
- Links and recording will be available after the session

Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.



The screenshot shows a meeting interface with a top navigation bar containing icons for Participants, Chat, Q&A, and Media Viewer. Below the navigation bar, there are three main panels: Participants (1), Chat, and Media Viewer. The Chat panel is currently active and shows a 'Send to:' dropdown menu set to 'All Participants'. A text input field contains the instruction: 'Select a participant in the Send to menu first, type chat message, and send...'. A 'Send' button is located to the right of the input field. The Media Viewer panel at the bottom displays a video feed with a black background and white text: 'Performance. Because if people know what their goals are they know what the development level is and you know what the appropriate leadership style is now you have to what? Agree on that style so that you can really be their partner. And when we talk about partnering one of the first things that you're gonna have to do is to teach them the leadership model. Because you know, we'.



Welcome to

8 VISTA Member Retention Strategies You Can't Ignore



Today's Speaker



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Corporation for
National &
Community Service



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Education Northwest

Session Goals

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to:

- Access resources to help orient staff at your organization to what VISTA is and what the VISTAs role is at the organization
- Implement simple activities to support and encourage VISTA members through the VISTA lifecycle
- List organizational and community entry strategies that lead to a sense of belonging for VISTA members
- Identify techniques and resources for member professional and skills development

How did VISTA members respond to these questions posted to Reddit?

1. What can I do to make them have a great year?
2. What have your supervisors done to make you feel valued?
3. Where have your supervisors gone wrong?



1. Ensure all staff understand VISTA & the member's role

“Way too many VISTAs wind up being treated like interns or entry level employees. If the organization wants interns or entry level office staff, they should make an effort to get them. Don't let the organization treat VISTA like a temp agency...”



1. Ensure all staff understand VISTA & the member's role

Strategies

1. Share the mission of VISTA & Core principals
2. Clarify the capacity building role
3. Build your member(s) credibility by sharing why you selected them
4. Ensure staff knows details about the position

Activities

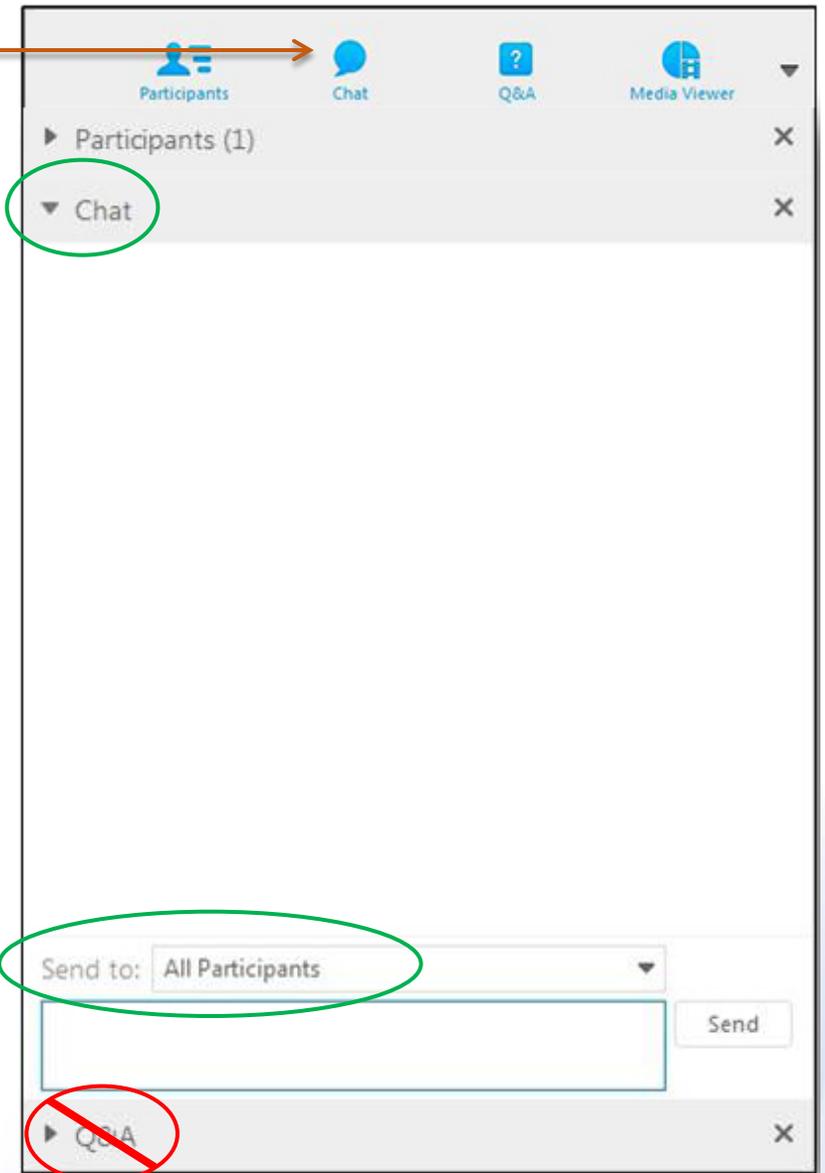
- ✓ Share the [VISTA Program Overview Power Point](#)
- ✓ Show the [VISTA Legacy Video](#)
- ✓ Play the [Capacity Building Game](#)
- ✓ Send an intro email with members background info & resume
- ✓ Invite your VISTA to present a 10 minute overview to all staff about what they will be doing

Strategy 1

Your turn to share

- What are some other ways you can ensure staff at your organization know the role of the VISTA?

Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.



2. Don't forget about organization & community entry

“VISTAs tend to be idealistic and driven, but that doesn't mean they're ready to work and hit the ground running. They may need help learning office culture, figuring out professionalism [norms] that you [may] take for granted.”



2. Don't forget about organization & community entry

Strategies

- Introduce members to key staff and community members
- Include member in staff meetings and functions
- Help them feel like they belong
- Give them time to settle-in if relocating

Activities

- ✓ Orient VISTAs to your workplace culture
- ✓ Use the Community Investigation Activity in the [On-site Orientation & Training \(OSOT\) Checklist](#)
- ✓ Show them around the neighborhood

Organization & Community Norms

Norms are informal understandings that govern individuals' behavior in society.

Examples of norms

- Time
- Communication Style
 - Direct vs. Indirect
 - Saving Face: Important vs. Really Important
 - Focus: Task v. Person



3. Provide regular feedback and direction



“...ideally daily when first starting out, especially if it's a new project and it's not clear what the members are going to do. Too many members are thrown into the deep end and sites forget about them i.e. the project isn't going anywhere, but that's no different that it was before VISTA, so no one cares, except for the VISTA member(s) drowning in the deep end or just bored out of their minds.”

3. Provide regular feedback and direction

Strategies

1. Schedule check-in meetings (weekly is best)
2. Partner with VISTAs to think through challenges and opportunities
3. Problem solve and coach

Activities

- ✓ Summarize the opportunity or challenge and agree on next steps together
- ✓ Use their VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) to guide performance feedback

Strategy 3

Your turn to share

How do you/or plan to provide regular feedback and direction?

1. To share a written idea, use the Chat feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please send to “All Participants”
2. To share an idea verbally, press *1 on your phone

(Option 2 requires a connection via phone)

Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.



4. Find out what members need to succeed



“I came in thinking I needed to learn everything ASAP which was so stressful and probably counter-productive. Let them know it's totally ok to be a little overwhelmed at first and that you're there to help them out.”

4. Find out what members need to succeed

Activities

- Discuss their Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Gain awareness of their prior volunteer/work experience & professional knowledge
- Talk about short and long term goals

Tools

- ✓ [Individual Development Plan](#)
- ✓ [Planning Your Professional Development Webinar](#)
- ✓ [Transition Planning Talking Points](#)

Strategy 4

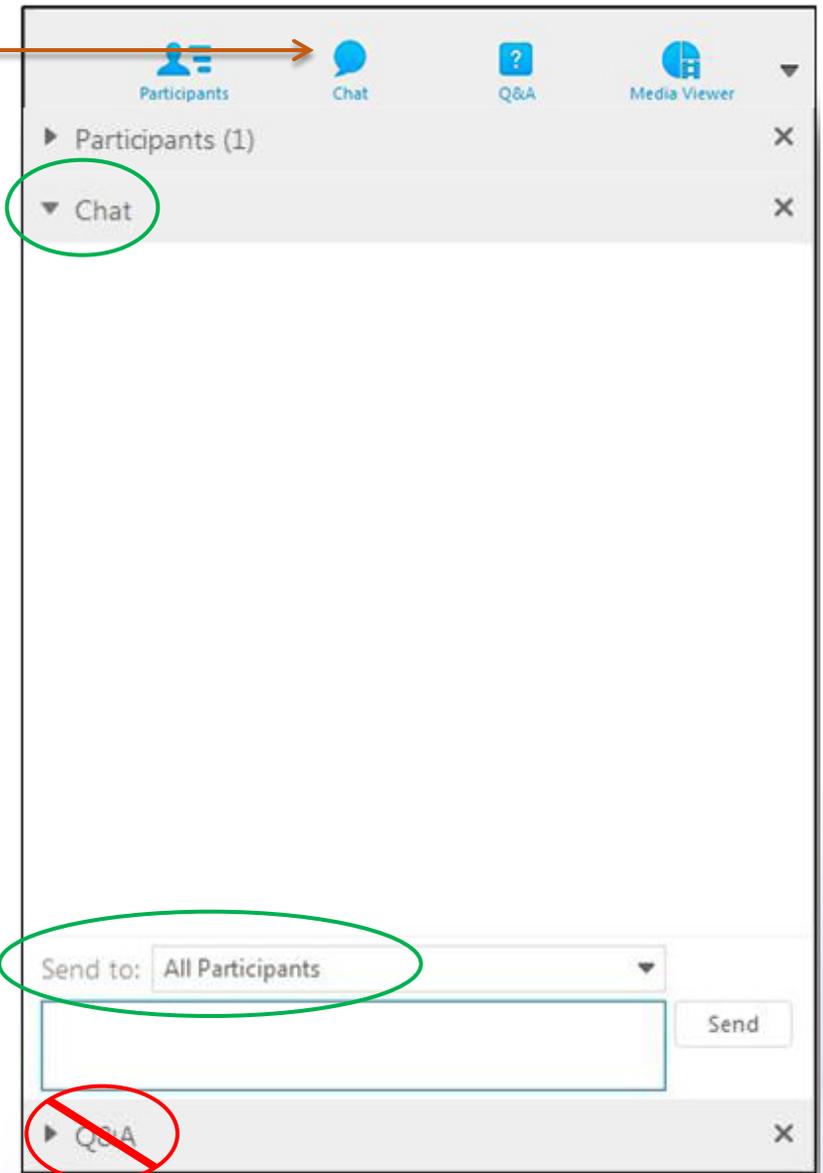
Your turn to share

What strategies or tools have you recommended/plan to recommend to your members to help them succeed in their position?

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(Option 2 requires a connection via phone)

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5. Help make life easier

“Offers to house sit, be taken out for a cup of coffee, etc., go a long way”



Strategy 5: Ideas & Examples

Contribution	Examples
Food	Grocery store gift card, free access/meal plan to sponsor's cafeteria
Housing	Help them find affordable safe housing, subsidized rent
Transportation	Public transit pass, parking permit/passes
Fingerprinting costs	Reimburse VISTA members for fingerprinting costs incurred beyond the \$25 subsidy CNCS provides
Access to sponsor managed facilities	Gym, exercise or art classes
Small gifts	For special occasions like birthdays, holidays, or for recognition

Strategy 5: Fine Print

- Be fair and equitable in **support to all** VISTAs serving with you
- You **may not give cash or checks** (unless for reimbursable expenses) directly to the member.
- VISTAs must be **reimbursed at a mileage** rate for service-related transportation.

VISTA members should be making a commitment to live at and among the economic level of the people served - the support you offer should not undermine this.

Strategy 5

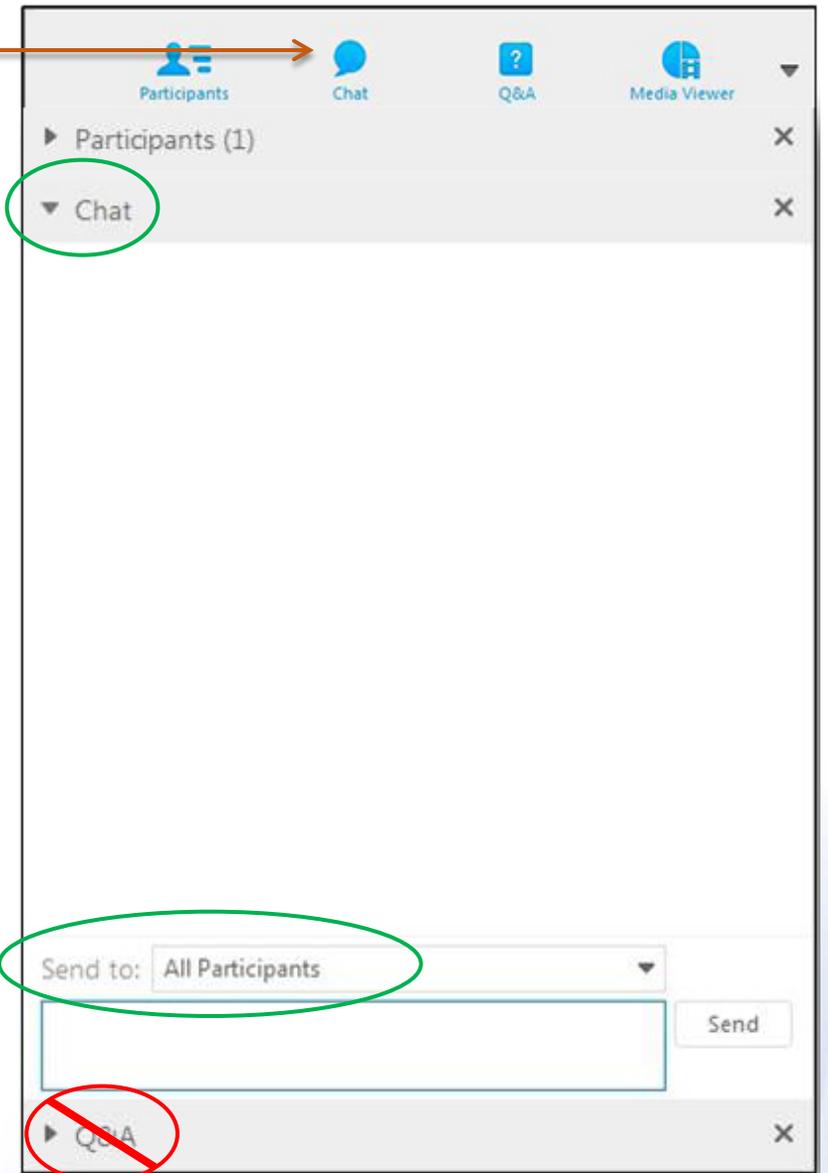
Your turn to share

What type of gestures or contributions do you/or plan to provide to make life easier for VISTAs?

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6. Give them ownership of their projects

“I'm very easy to supervise: Give me the resources I need to do the job and step back out of the way. ;)”

“Actually, just point me in the direction of the resources.”



6. Give them ownership of their projects

Strategies

- Let them know it's okay to take the lead
- Equip them with the resources they need to succeed
- Empower members to bring their ideas to the table
- Agree on check-in points

Activities

- ✓ Discuss the type of decisions they can make and when approval is needed from you
- ✓ Clarify key objectives and milestones (also see VAD)
- ✓ Ask them to create a project plan/draft/outline and present it vs. telling them what to do

Strategy 6

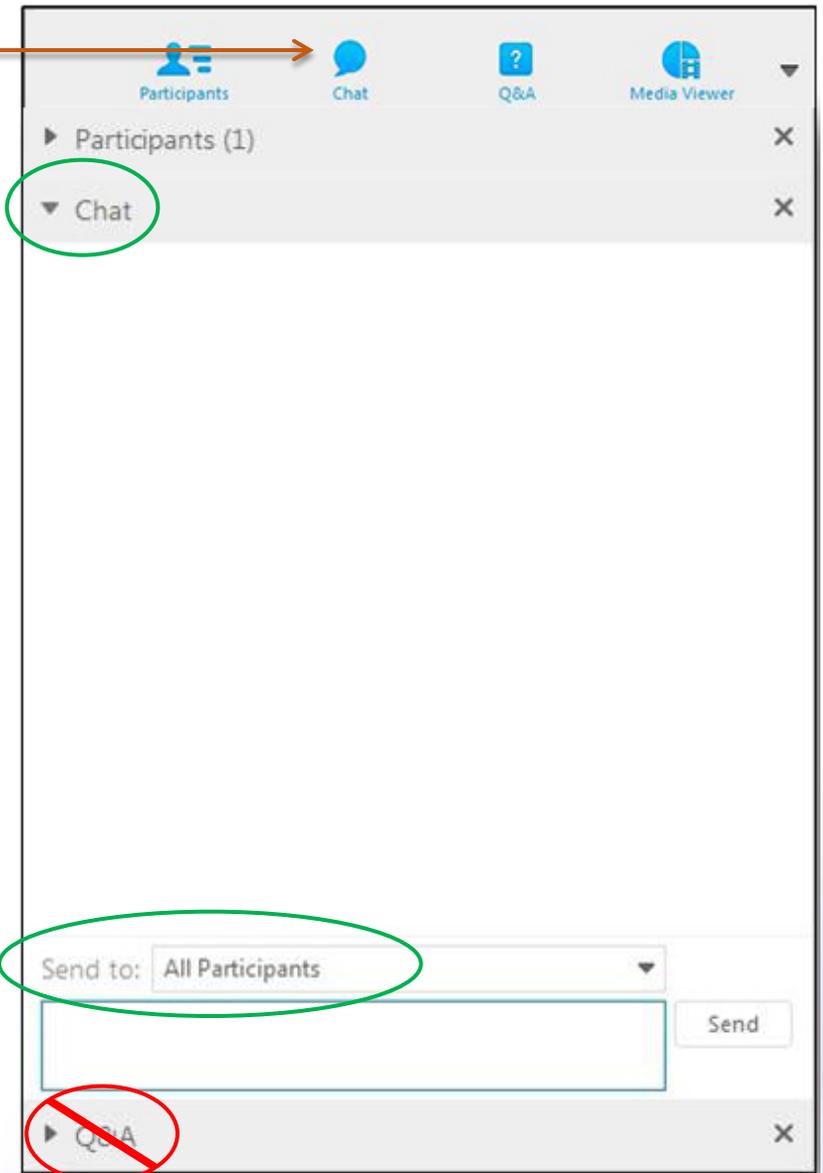
Your turn to share

What are some ways you have “given ownership” of a project to your VISTA member?

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7. Provide all the professional development help that you can



“Whether it's reviewing a resume, urging them to join the area young professionals network, or whatever, it can be a huge help.”

7. Provide professional development

Strategies

- Utilize community and online offerings
- Encourage VAD specific training opportunities
- Think beyond the project year
- Make time for them to attend member webinars

Activities

- Conduct sessions from the [Leadership Training Modules](#) resource
- Share info about VISTA Blend college courses
- Invite them to shadow colleagues
- Practice interviewing and review resumes

Strategy 7

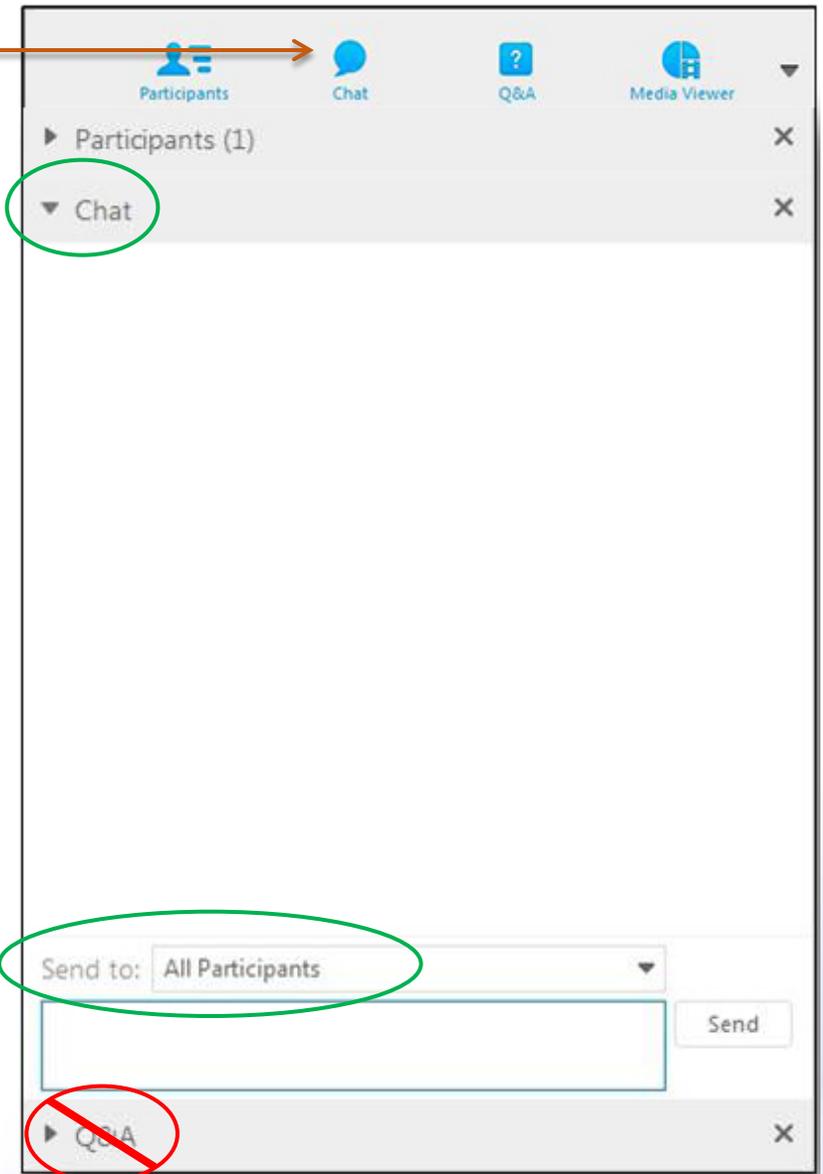
Your turn to share

What type of formal and informal professional development do you/or plan to provide to VISTAs?

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8. Provide recognition and thank them

“As a VISTA member, you often get taken for granted and people forget that you're doing this on a small stipend”



8. Provide recognition and thank them

Strategies

- Thank them personally
- Recognize them publicly
- Appreciate and acknowledge their commitment to VISTA and the sacrifices they are making

Activities

- Host a member recognition event or luncheon
- Endorse them on Linked-In
- Share a “shout out” within the organization
- Arrange for free tickets to an event (sports, music, zoo, theatre, etc.)

Strategies Recap

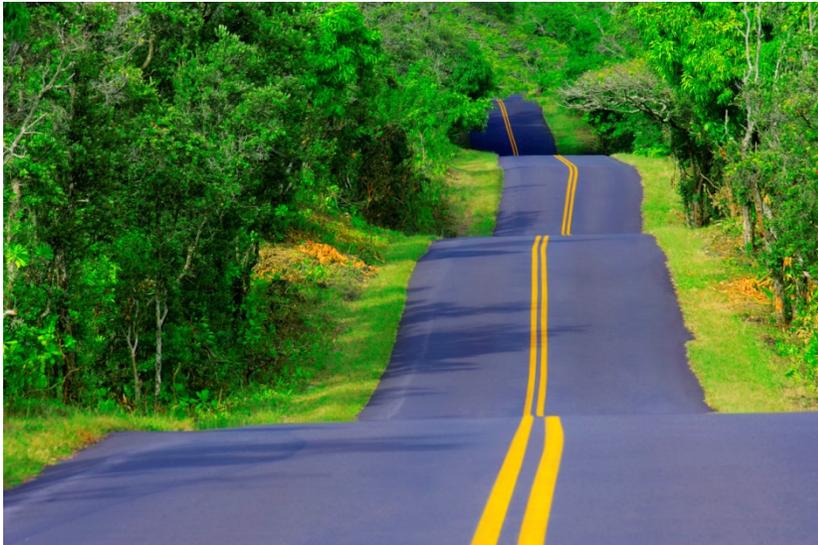


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2. Don't forget about organization and community entry
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4. Find out what member's need to succeed
5. Help make life easier
6. Give them ownership of their projects
7. Provide all the professional development help that you can
8. Provide recognition and thank them

Next Steps

Final Chat

- List one thing you will do based on what you learned in this webinar



Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.

The screenshot shows a webinar control panel with the following elements:

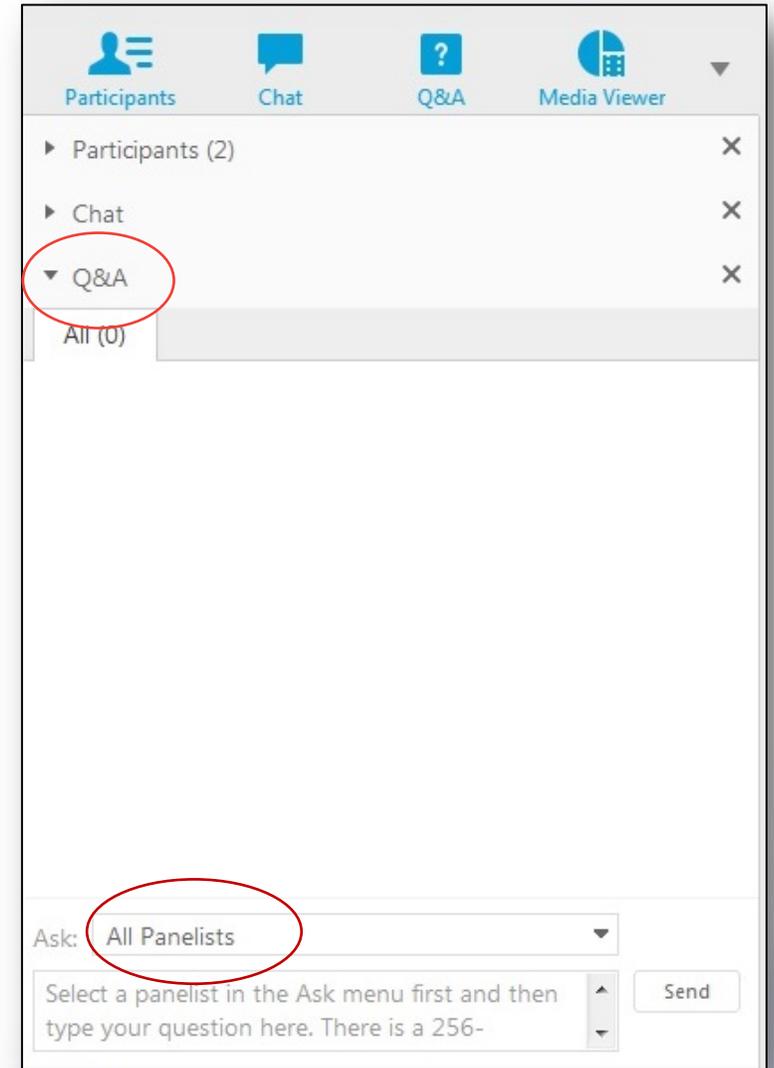
- Buttons for Participants, Chat, Q&A, and Media Viewer at the top.
- A dropdown menu showing "Participants (1)" and "Chat". The "Chat" option is circled in green.
- A "Send to:" dropdown menu set to "All Participants", also circled in green.
- A text input field and a "Send" button below the dropdown.
- A "Q&A" button at the bottom left, circled in red with a diagonal line through it.

Evaluation

- Please take a few moments to share your feedback through the quick poll on the right side of the screen.
- How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?
- Thank you very much for your time and participation!

Questions ?

- To ask a question verbally, call in using the number on this slide and press *1
- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask “All Panelists”



Thank You for Your Participation!

If you have further questions or for more information, contact us:
VISTAwebinars@cns.gov

Next supervisor webinar:
**Managing VISTAs: Fundamental
Supervisory Skills**
November 15th
2:00pm Eastern

Upcoming VISTA member webinar:
Writing Winning Grant Proposals
October 26th
2:00pm Eastern

*Visit the Webinars page on the VISTA Campus
for a schedule of upcoming webinars and recordings of past webinars*