

# Guide to Entering VISTA Service



Thank you for making a commitment to economic and social equity. Over the next year you will help mobilize resources and build the capacity of important programs in the community where you will be serving.

VISTA Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) provides you with foundational knowledge and resources to get you off to a good start in VISTA service. You will be participating in an orientation that combines online tutorials and webinars with in-person training and action learning at your VISTA site – a process called PSO Blend. PSO Blend begins with self-directed courses along with a facilitated four-week curriculum that blends online and in-person training.

Your PSO Blend begins on **Monday, October 31, 2016**. You need to be on-site at your VISTA project that day to begin your orientation and service.

To participate in the PSO Blend, you need to have the following:

- Access to the internet
- Access to telephone or a headset/microphone for your computer
- English language proficiency
- Basic computer skills

**Please contact your supervisor at your sponsoring organization as soon as possible if you need assistance with any of the requirements above.**

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN SERVICE (Pre-Work)

You must complete three key steps before starting VISTA service:

1. Take required [self-directed courses on the VISTA Campus](#)
2. Complete [onboarding forms on My AmeriCorps](#)
3. [Register](#) for your PSO Blend webinars

You will be working in three online platforms: **my.americorps.gov**, **vistacampus.gov**, and the **PSO Blend online classroom (vistablend.educationnorthwest.org)**. You will receive information about the online classroom once you start VISTA service. In addition, you will participate in two webinars using **WebEx**.\*

### Criminal History Background Check

You will receive a fingerprint kit from your sponsoring organization on your first day of service. You must submit two completed fingerprint cards to VISTA Headquarters for receipt by **Wednesday, November 30, 2016**.

*\* Please take a moment before the first webinar to access the [test meeting](#) to ensure your computer is set up correctly. (If the test meeting would not load on your computer, contact WebEx support through the toll free number listed on the test meeting page.)*

## KEY DATES

All times Eastern Time Zone

### “Pre-Work” Deadline:

Thursday, October 27

### Start Date & Webinar 1:

#### “Launching Your VISTA Service”

Monday, October 31

3:00-4:30pm ET

### Webinar 2: “Navigating Your Year of Service”

Wednesday, November 2

3:00-4:30pm ET

### Minute Intro, VAD, & How Poverty is Measured Due:

Sunday, November 6

### Virtual Meet-Up 1

Wednesday, November 9

3:00-4:00 pm ET

### OSOT Inventory Due:

Sunday, November 13

### 13 Lessons About Poverty & Community Profile Due:

Sunday, November 20

### Virtual Meet-Up 2

Tuesday, November 22

3:00-4:00 pm ET

### Fingerprints Due:

Wednesday, November 30

## Overview of VISTA PSO Blend

Your orientation to VISTA is a four-week interactive experience that includes self-directed online tutorials, facilitated webinars, fieldwork, onsite training and orientation to your organization and community. You are expected to fully participate in all components of the training. AmeriCorps VISTA HQ coordinates with facilitators, CNCS State Offices (CSOs), and VISTA supervisors to implement the training. See Key Dates on p. 1.

**PRE-WORK** – Please complete the self-directed coursework on the VISTA Campus and take the Comprehension Check Quiz, as well as complete the onboarding forms in [my.americorps.gov](http://my.americorps.gov).

**LAUNCHING YOUR VISTA SERVICE** – This webinar is your formal welcome to the VISTA program and will cover the core components of your year of service. You will attend this webinar at your service location and will be sworn-in for service at the end of the session.

**NAVIGATING YOUR YEAR OF SERVICE** – This webinar will discuss your VISTA benefits and will go over key terms and conditions of your service.

**FIELDWORK** – Following Webinars 1 and 2, you will take several important steps with your site supervisor and fellow VISTA members. You will review your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), begin on-site orientation activities, complete three assignments and participate in online forums with VISTA members and facilitators during this time.

**ON-SITE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING (OSOT)** – This training is designed and delivered by your VISTA sponsor and orients you to the specifics of your VISTA service. It provides an introduction to your sponsoring organization, the community you'll be serving, sponsor policies and procedures, and much more. It'll likely span a couple of weeks and involve both formal and informal learning opportunities.

**UNDERSTANDING POVERTY: REFLECTIONS AND EXPLORATION** – The final step in your orientation is comprised of online assignments and fieldwork to engage your creative thinking and reflections on the root causes of poverty and their connection to you and your project. These assignments will involve facilitator input and feedback.

### HAVE QUESTIONS?

For questions about:

**Your VISTA service site:** contact your supervisor at the VISTA project or your Corporation State Office (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/stateoffices>).

**Relocating:** call the VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) via the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677.

**Pre-Service Orientation:** reply to the email that leads you to this document to contact the Training Coordinator for your orientation.

**VISTA Campus:** email [VISTACampus@educationnorthwest.org](mailto:VISTACampus@educationnorthwest.org)

**Fingerprinting:** email [VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov)

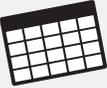


# VISTA PSO Blend Calendar



October/November 2016						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Pre-Work					
				Campus Coursework & Onboarding Forms due		
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
	Onsite Orientation & Training					
	VISTA Service & PSO Begins					
	3pm ET Webinar 1 		3pm ET Webinar 2			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Onsite Orientation & Training					
Minute Intro, VAD, & How Poverty is Measured due			Virtual Meet-Up 1			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Poverty & Community Engagement					
OSOT Checklist Due						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Poverty & Community Engagement					
13 Lessons About Poverty & Community Profile Due		Virtual Meet-Up 2			PSO Ends	
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
			Fingerprints due at VISTA HQ			

# PSO Blend At-a-Glance

Pre-Service Period	 Onboarding Forms
	 VISTA Campus Coursework
Day 1	 Launching Your VISTA Service Live Webinar (Mon)
	 Receive fingerprinting kit
Week 1	 Navigating Your Year of Service Live Webinar (Wed)
	 <b>Fieldwork</b> ■ - - - - -   Minute Intro VISTA Assignment Description How Poverty is Measured in the US
Week 2	 Virtual Meet-Up
	 <b>Fieldwork</b> ■ - - - - -   On-Site Orientation & Training
Week 3	 <b>Fieldwork</b> ■ - - - - -   13 Lessons About Poverty Creating a Community Profile
Week 4	 Virtual Meet-Up & Course Completion

Fieldwork includes online reading, videos, field assignments, peer reflection, and discussion forums.