

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, November 14, 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
- Access to a video camera (cell phone is fine) to record a video

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, December 14, 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, November 10

Start Date & Webinar 1:

“Launching Your VISTA Service”

Monday, November 14

3:00-4:30pm ET

Webinar 2: “Navigating Your Year of Service”

Wednesday, November 16

3:00-4:30pm ET

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

Sunday, November 20

OSOT Inventory Due:

Sunday, November 27

Virtual Meet-Up 1

Tuesday, November 29

3:00-4:00 pm ET

13 Lessons About Poverty & Community Profile Due:

Sunday, December 4

Virtual Meet-Up 2

Thursday, December 8

3:00-4:00 pm ET

Fingerprints Due:

Wednesday, December 14

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.

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

Fingerprinting: email VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov

VISTA PSO Blend Calendar



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