

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 begins with online, self-directed courses followed by a facilitated three-week curriculum that blends online coursework, webinars and in-person training – a mode of training we call the PSO Blend.

Your PSO Blend begins on **Tuesday, September 12, 2017**. 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 a computer with reliable internet connection (cell phone or tablet is not adequate)
- 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](#)

If these are not completed by the Pre-Work **deadline of September 6**, you will not be able to begin VISTA service as scheduled.

You will be working in three online platforms: vistacampus.gov, my.americorps.gov, and the [PSO Blend online classroom](#) plus WebEx*.

You will receive more information about the online classroom in the first week of training.

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 **Thursday, October 12, 2017**.

* Please complete a [test meeting](#) before the first webinar 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.)

DATES & DEADLINES

All times Eastern Time Zone **

“Pre-Work” Deadline:

Wednesday, September 6

Start Date & Webinar 1:

Launching Your VISTA Service

Tuesday, September 12

3:00-4:30pm ET **

Webinar 2:

Navigating Your Year of Service

Thursday, September 14

3:00-4:30pm ET **

Comprehension Check Quiz, Minute Intro, VAD, & How Poverty is Measured due:

Sunday, September 17

Virtual Meet-Up 1

Wednesday, September 20

3:00-4:00 pm ET **

Community Profile & 13 Lessons About Poverty due:

Sunday, September 24

Virtual Meet-Up 2

Wednesday, September 27

3:00-4:00 pm ET **

OSOT & Looking Forward due:

Friday, September 29

Fingerprints due:

Thursday, October 12

Attendance and completion of coursework are mandatory. Failure to comply will result in deselection or removal from service.

** If you are not sure about the exact time of the webinars and Meet-Ups in your time zone, click [here](#) to check.

Overview of VISTA PSO Blend

PRE-WORK – Please complete the self-directed coursework on the [VISTA Campus](https://www.vistacampus.gov) and the onboarding forms in my.americorps.gov. During your first week of service, you will take a brief comprehension check quiz covering the information you learned in your pre-service coursework.

LAUNCHING YOUR VISTA SERVICE – In this webinar, we introduce you to the VISTA program and cover the core components of your year of service. You attend this webinar at your service location and are sworn-in for service at the end of the session.

NAVIGATING YOUR YEAR OF SERVICE – In this webinar, we discuss your VISTA benefits in depth, and go over legal constraints and supports to your service.

FIELDWORK – Following the webinars, you take several important steps with your site supervisor and fellow VISTA members. You'll review your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), begin on-site orientation activities, complete all the assignments and participate in online forums with VISTA members and facilitators during this time.

ON-SITE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING (OSOT) – Your VISTA sponsor will walk you through the specifics of your VISTA service. OSOT introduces you 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.

VIRTUAL MEET-UPS – You will participate in two Virtual Meet-Ups, which are live sessions in the online classroom with a facilitator and a small group of VISTAs. The Meet-Ups cover important concepts and offer time for discussion and feedback on the fieldwork.

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.

All PSO Blend sessions and assignments are required. If you do not successfully complete all portions of the training, you will be removed from VISTA service.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

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

Relocating: first read the VISTA Travel Fact Sheet (<https://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/vista-travel-fact-sheet>). If you have additional questions, call the VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) via the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or e-mail VMSU@cns.gov.

Pre-Service Orientation: reply to the message that leads you to this document or send an email to VISTATrainingSupport@cns.gov.

Special Considerations: If you would like us to consider any unique, personal circumstances or accommodations—for example physical or emotional support, gender identity, or learning challenges—send an email to VISTATrainingSupport@cns.gov.

VISTA Campus: email VISTACampus@educationnorthwest.org

Fingerprinting: email VISTAfingerprint@cns.gov

VISTA PSO Blend Calendar



September/October 2017						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Pre-Work					
			Campus Coursework & Onboarding Forms due			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	9/11 Day of Service	PSO Begins	Understanding Your VISTA Assignment			
		Webinar 1: <i>Launching Your VISTA Service</i> 3pm ET **		Webinar 2: <i>Navigating Your Year of Service</i> 3pm ET **		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Comprehension Check Quiz, Minute Intro, VAD, & How Poverty is Measured due	Poverty & Community Engagement					
			Virtual Meet-Up 1 3pm ET **			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Community Profile & 13 Lessons About Poverty due	Poverty & Community Engagement				PSO Ends	
			Virtual Meet-Up 2 3pm ET **		OSOT & Looking Forward due	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					First Pay Date	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
				Fingerprints due at VISTA HQ		

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