VISTA … Celebrating 50 Years of Service

PRE-SERVICE ORIENTATION

Know. Grow. Change.

Fall 2015

JBS INTERNATIONAL

education northwest

Bankstreet College of Education

What kind of support are you looking for?

Check off all that you are thinking about. Use the blank rows to add other needs.

What I'm looking for	Where to find it
☐ I want to keep up on my student loans.	
☐ I'm looking for childcare for my children.	
☐ I'm serving in a cold climate and could use help with my utility bills.	
☐ I'm concerned about keeping my public assistance (SNAP, SSDI, etc).	
☐ I might need help with health care coverage.	
☐ I'd like more skills training to carry out my job (assignment).	
☐ How do I find other VISTAs who are serving near me?	
☐ I'll be changing banks and want to be sure I get paid.	
☐ How does a VISTA live on the living allowance?	
☐ I need an affordable place to live.	
☐ I'm not sure where to go on my first day of service.	
☐	
☐	
☐	
☐	

7 Things About Me

Name:

1. _____

2. _____

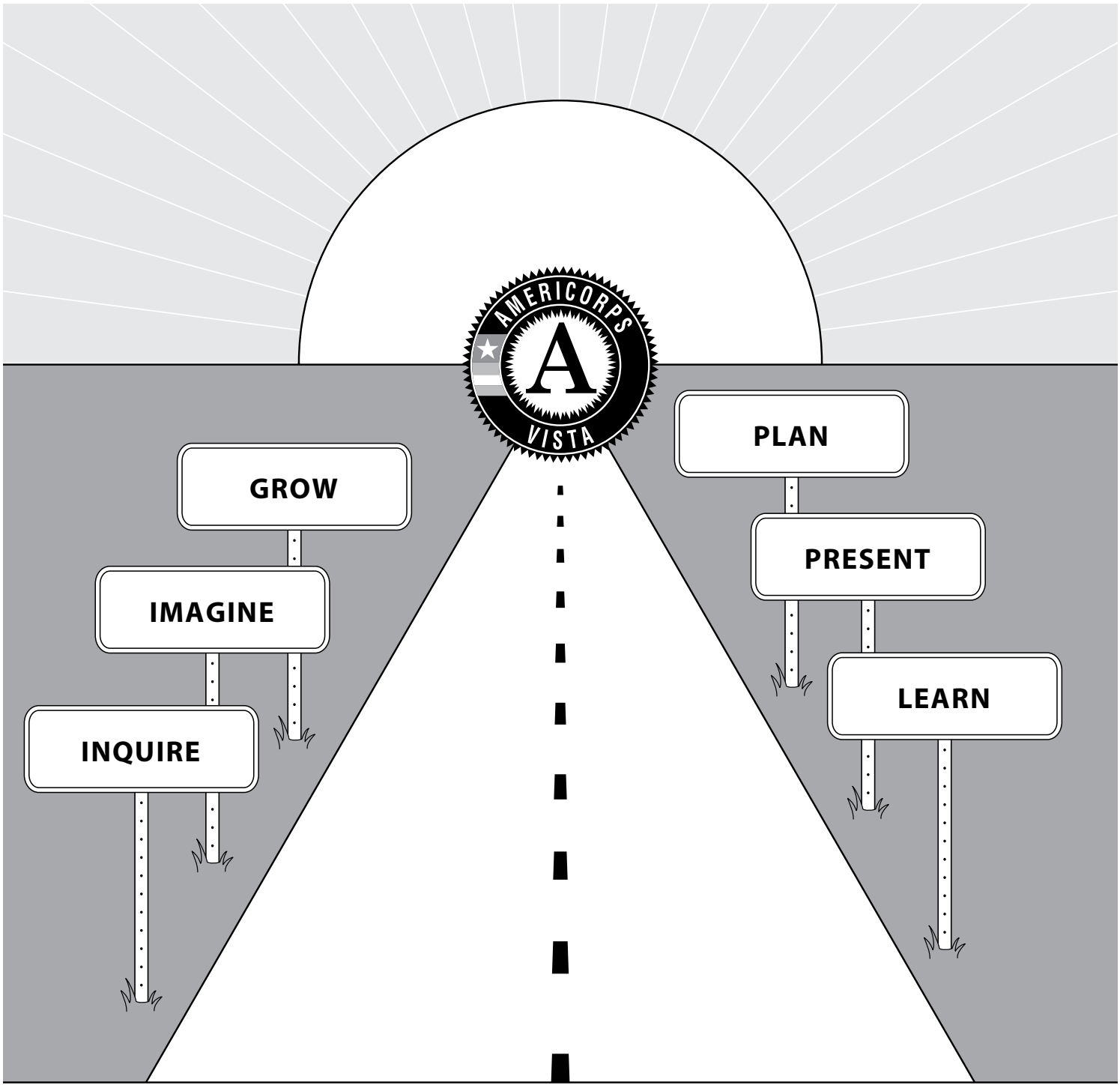
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____



Your VISTA Year of Service

Road Map

Key Questions to Ask My Supervisor

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

VISTA Individual Development Plan

Knowledge & Skills Needed to Accomplish the VAD	Priority *L M H*	Learning Opportunities & Resources	Type *(see below)*	Timeframe *(mo/yr)*

PRIORITY: L = Low M = Medium H = High

TYPE OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: 1 = Online 2 = In-person 3 = Informal 4 = Other

Your Vision for Your VISTA Year

Use this space to draw your napkin sketch.

Minute Message Model

_____ believes _____.
(NAME OF ORGANIZATION) (DEEPLY HELD VALUE)

Every day, we _____ _____ for _____
(VERB) (OBJECT) (CONSTITUENTS)

because _____.
(PROBLEM STATEMENT)

Example

I am Sandra, and I am an AmeriCorps VISTA with Prescott Area Women's Shelter. We believe that housing is a human right. That's why we ensure that our clients have a roof over their head. Nobody should ever have to call the streets their home.

Example

I am Erik, and I am an AmeriCorps VISTA with Harmony Clinic. Harmony Clinic believes that everyone should have access to quality healthcare despite their ability to pay. Every day, we meet the needs of these patients at no cost because healthy people build healthy communities.

Draft your minute message introduction:

VISTA Blended Learning & Development Program

A continuum of training, resources, and peer connections to ensure VISTA members build capacity, alleviate poverty, and thrive throughout their service experience.

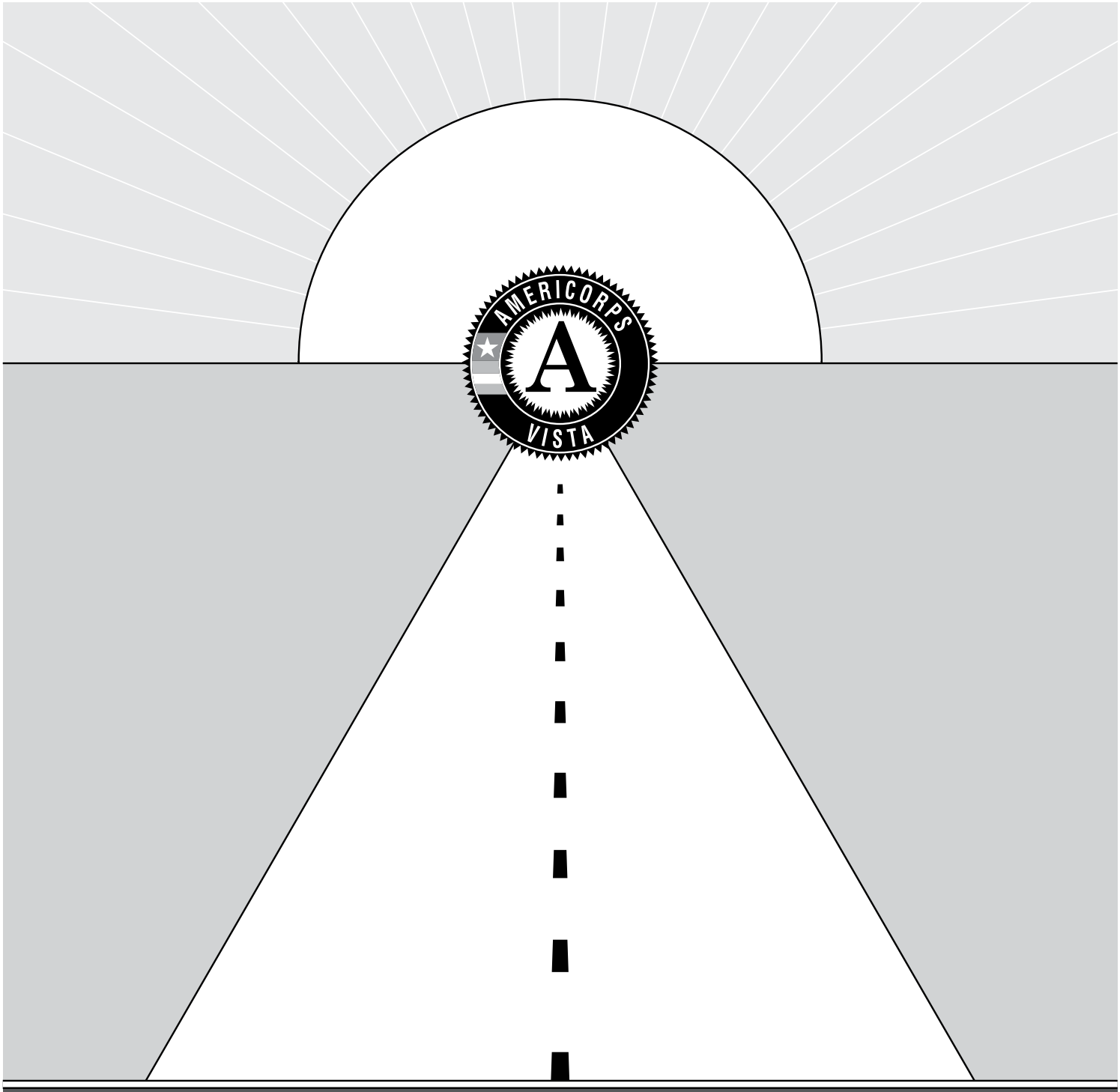
	In-Person Training & Support	VISTA Campus www.vistacampus.gov
PRE-SERVICE	3.5 DAYS **Pre-Service Orientation**	**Pre-Service Online Tutorials**
IN-SERVICE	**On-Site Orientation & Training**	**Accredited Courses** *Resource Development* *Volunteer Mobilization*
		In-Service Resources & Tutorials
	Classes, Workshops & Conferences[1] *Supported by Sponsor*	**Webinars**
		Forums
CLOSE OF SERVICE	**Life After Service Events**[2]	**Transition Resources**

1. While the On-Site Orientation & Training is required, any additional classes, workshops or conferences offered during service depends on the sponsors' capacity to make them available.
2. Life After Service events are offered by State Offices, sponsors and other entities depending on their capacities to make them available.

Getting Started at Your VISTA Site

Step	Resources Needed	People Involved	Target Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

When you are done, go back to your Development Plan. Do you need to add skills to that chart?



facebook.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA

youtube.com/VISTAoutreach

linkedin.com/company/americorps-vista

meetup.com/VISTA-Meetup

twitter.com/VISTAbuzz

instagram.com/nationalservice

#JoinVISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA Oath Form

1. **NAME**

2. **DATE OF BIRTH (mm/dd/yyyy):**

3. **CNCS STATE OFFICE:**

4. **DATE ENTERED ON DUTY:**

5. **OATH OF SERVICE ***

The following oath or affirmation of service is required by the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, and must be administered by an authorized staff member of the Corporation for National and Community Service and signed in their presence or in the presence of a notary public:

I do solemnly swear (*or* affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

AmeriCorps VISTA Member's signature_____ Date ___ / ___ / _____

**NOTE: The words* "So help me God" *in the oath, and the word* "swear" *wherever it appears above, may be stricken when the Member elects to affirm rather than swear to the Oath of Service; only these words may be stricken and only when the Member elects to affirm the Oath of Service.*

6. **FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

Subscribed and sworn to (affirmed) before me on this day, ___ / ___ / _____

Signature_____ Title _____

Dear VISTA Candidate:

On behalf of the AmeriCorps VISTA program, I welcome you to the Corporation for National and Community Service, to AmeriCorps VISTA, and to your Pre-Service Orientation.

I am continually inspired by the fresh spirit of service and idealism common to those who join VISTA. VISTAs are agents of change in low-income communities who bring perhaps the most important resource to organizations and communities: motivated, capable people. I am impressed by the courage and joy VISTAs bring to the lifelong adventure of community development. I want to thank you for the valuable contributions you will make to the renewal of America.

The VISTA Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) introduces you to VISTA, our mission, history, and policies, and to your roles and responsibilities as a VISTA member. Here, you will meet other passionate, talented people who are likewise committed to helping others. At the end of the orientation, you will take the oath of service and join thousands serving as VISTAs.

Best wishes for an amazing year.

Sincerely,

Paul Monteiro
Director, AmeriCorps VISTA

Acknowledgments

The work for this publication is sponsored wholly, or in part, by the Corporation for National and Community Service, under Contract #CNSHQ14F0057. Contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the Corporation for National and Community Service or any agency of the United States government. Permission to reproduce the contents of this workbook in whole or part for use by educational, national service, or other not-for-profit agencies is granted with the inclusion on all pages of the footer contained herein.

The VISTA Pre-Service Orientation is staffed by Education Northwest in partnership with JBS International. The Education Northwest team wishes to acknowledge the contributions of a core team of curriculum developers and others who have helped guide the development and implementation of this work.

We also wish to acknowledge our colleagues at the Corporation for National and Community Service, particularly Patrick Triano and the VISTA training team. Finally, appreciations to Alissa Beddow and Kevin Jahnsen for editing and formatting this document. Our thanks from the team at Education Northwest: Amy Cannata, Endi Clark, Nancy Henry, Jessica Knight, Joanne Lau, Nicky Martin, and Erich Stiefvater.

Table of Contents

1. VISTA History & Legacy

Mission & PSO Goals 1
VISTA Impact Facts 2

2. Your VISTA Development Plan, Part 1

VISTA Skills & Issue Areas 3
PSO Flow 4

3. Poverty in America: Personal Perspectives

Thoughts About Poverty 5

4. Poverty Theories of Change

Poverty Thresholds 6
Supplemental Poverty Measure 7
Selected Poverty Statistics 8
Poverty Theories of Change 9
Capacity Building & Community Empowerment . . 15
Learn More About Poverty 16

5. Getting Started with Your VAD

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) 17

6. Workplace Communication

Communication Styles 18
Communication Styles Case Study 20
Case Study Discussion 21

7. Community Input & Engagement

Community Engagement Continuum 22
Community Input Process 23
Asset-Mapping 24
Appreciative Inquiry 26
Learn More About Community Input & Engagement 27

8. Volunteer Mobilization

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs 28
Volunteer Trend Analysis 34
Sample Recruitment Message 35
Targeted Recruitment Message 36
Learn More About Volunteer Mobilization 37
Volunteer Organizations & Websites 38

9. Resource Development

The Stages of an Ask 39
Learn More About Resource Development 40
Resource Development Organizations & Websites 41
Grant Writing Organizations & Websites 42

10. Your VISTA Development Plan, Part 2

Cycle of Service 43

11. VISTA Resources

Navigating Your Year of Service 44
Summary of AmeriCorps Programs 48
How an Organization Gets a VISTA 49
Summary of Key Terms, Conditions & Benefits of VISTA Service 50
Hatch Act Limitations on VISTA Political Activities 51
Your Civil Rights & Responsibilities 52
VISTA Leaders 54
VISTA Living Allowance Schedule 2016 55
VISTA Living Allowance Rates 56
Successful Volunteer Programs Answer Key 57
Oath of Service & AmeriCorps Pledge 58

Icon Legend

Activities *Resources*

Mission & PSO Goals

Corporation for National & Community Service Mission Statement

The Corporation's mission is to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in service that addresses the nation's educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results and to encourage all Americans to engage in such service. In doing so, the Corporation will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunity for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

VISTA Mission & Legacy

For over 50 years, VISTA has been building capacity in nonprofit organizations to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Today, nearly 6,000 VISTA members serve in hundreds of nonprofit organizations and public agencies throughout the country—working to promote literacy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, and bridge the digital divide.

Overall Goals of VISTA Training

By the end of the Pre-Service Orientation, you should be able to:

- Describe the VISTA program and its mission in broad terms.
- Explain how VISTAs build capacity and empower communities.
- Be inspired to fight poverty as part of your service.
- Describe your service responsibilities and activities as identified in your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) and connect them to building capacity and fighting poverty.
- Identify skills and development needed to successfully carry out your service assignment.
- Describe how strong communication, relationship-building, and problem-solving skills are essential to effective VISTA service.
- Practice community input and engagement techniques.
- Be better able to communicate with others and solve problems at your site.
- Utilize relationship-building and donation-solicitation skills to secure financial and in-kind resources for your project or program.
- Identify the steps to develop a volunteer program.
- Write a compelling volunteer recruitment message.
- Develop a plan for your personal and professional development during your service year.

VISTA Impact Facts

VISTA Skills & Issue Areas

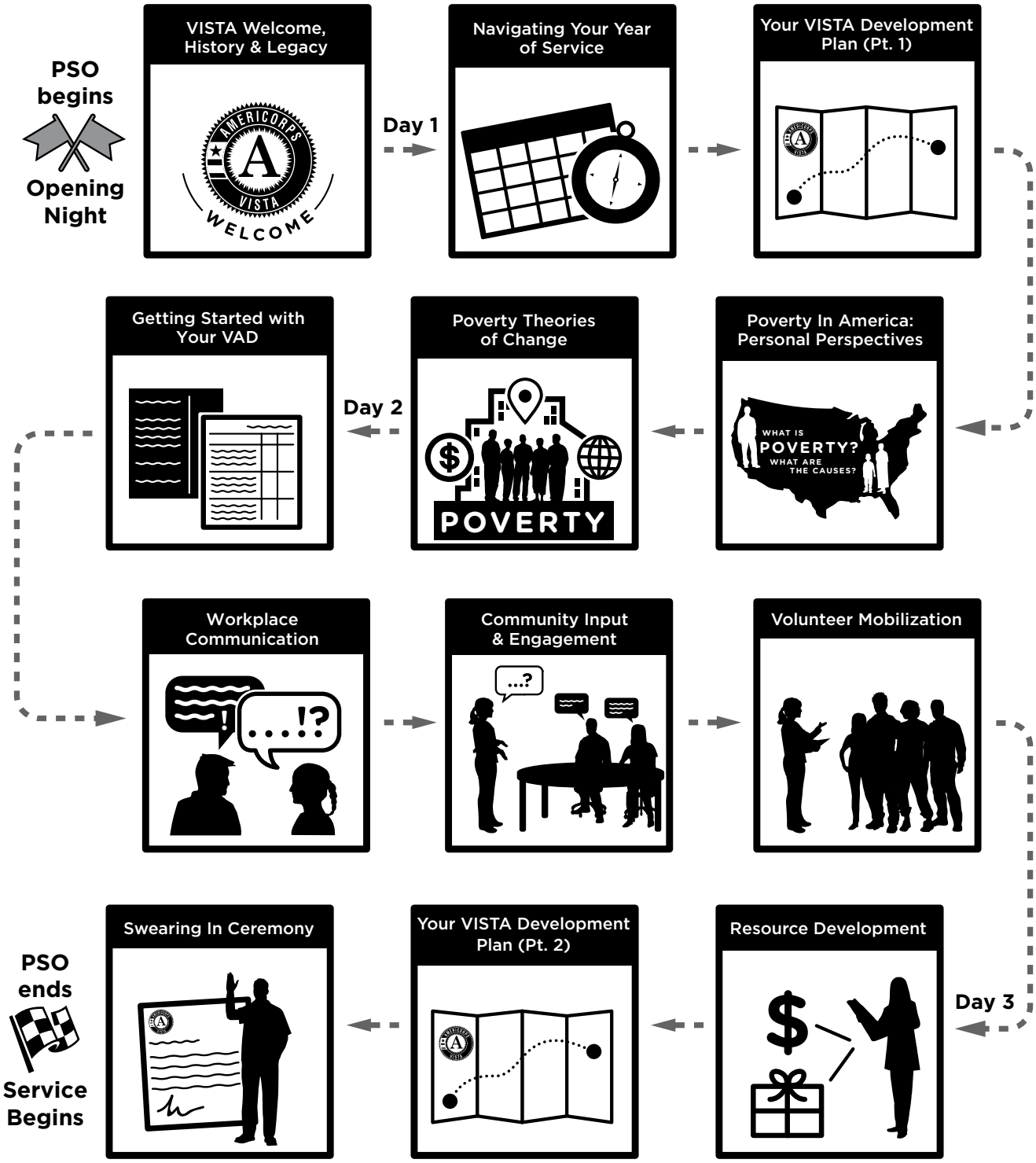
Skills

- Communications
- Program Development
- Technology
- Partnership Building
- Resource Development
- Volunteer Mobilization

Issues

- Access to Health Care
- Community and Economic Development
- Education
- Employment Services
- Financial Literacy
- Housing/Homeless Services
- Hunger/Food Security
- Veterans and Military Families
- Other Anti-Poverty Programs

PSO Flow


PSO begins
Opening Night
VISTA Welcome, History & Legacy
AMERICORPS
VISTA
WELCOME
Day 1
Navigating Your Year of Service
Your VISTA Development Plan (Pt. 1)
Poverty In America: Personal Perspectives
WHAT IS POVERTY? WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?
Poverty Theories of Change
POVERTY
Day 2
Getting Started with Your VAD
Workplace Communication
...!?
Community Input & Engagement
...?
Volunteer Mobilization
Day 3
Resource Development
Your VISTA Development Plan (Pt. 2)
Swearing In Ceremony
PSO ends
Service Begins

Thoughts About Poverty

Poverty Thresholds

Poverty Thresholds for 2014 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years

Total Family Size	Number of Related Children Under 18 Years								
	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
One person									
Under 65 years	12,316								
65+ years	11,354								
Two people									
Householder under 65 years	15,853	16,317							
Householder 65+ years	14,309	16,256							
Three people	18,518	19,055	19,073						
Four people	24,418	24,817	24,008	24,091					
Five people	29,447	29,875	28,960	28,252	27,820				
Six people	33,869	34,004	33,303	32,631	31,633	31,041			
Seven people	38,971	39,214	38,375	37,791	36,701	35,431	34,036		
Eight people	43,586	43,970	43,179	42,485	41,501	40,252	38,953	38,622	
Nine+ people	52,430	52,685	51,984	51,396	50,430	49,101	47,899	47,601	45,768

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Supplemental Poverty Measure

The U.S. Census Bureau has created a new way to set the Poverty Threshold. Instead of just looking at the cost of food, which is what the official measure does, the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) calculates the costs of a broader array of basic needs, including housing, utilities and clothes.

The new thresholds change the number of people in poverty—raising the percentage from 14.9% of the population to 15.3% in 2014, adding about 1.4 million people to the ranks of people living at or below the poverty line at that time.

But the SPM also alters data on how poverty is distributed among different groups. Since the SPM counts the value of things like the National School Lunch Program and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which especially benefit children, it shows their poverty as lower than the official measure. By contrast, because it factors in the expenses of medical care, which, even with Medicare, tend to be much higher for older people, the SPM tells us that the poverty rate for people over 65 is much higher than the official measure says it is.

This has important implications for policymakers—knowing whether poverty among children or poverty among the elderly is the more pressing influences where we should allocate resources, or where we should be focusing our analysis.

Poverty Measure Concepts: Official & Supplemental

	Official Poverty Measure	Supplemental Poverty Measure
Poverty Threshold	Three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1960.	A more sophisticated calculation of current costs of living that takes into account expenditures on food, clothing, housing and utilities.
Threshold Adjustments	Vary by family size, composition, and age of householder.	Adjustments to reflect the needs of different family types and geographic differences in housing costs.

Source: The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2014, U.S. Census Bureau. Available at ***www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-254.pdf***.

Selected Poverty Statistics

Who's Living in Poverty Today?

The poverty rate varies between ethnic groups. 10.1% of Whites; 12.0% of Asians; 23.6% of Latinos; 26.2% of African Americans; and 28.3% of Native Americans lived in poverty in 2014. While Whites had the lowest poverty rate, they have the highest number of people in poverty due to their large population size.

The poverty rate for children under 18 was 21.1 percent in 2014. People aged 65 and older had a much lower rate, only 10 percent.

Regionally, the 2014 poverty rate was 15.2 percent in the West, 16.5 percent in the South, 12.6 percent in the Northeast, and 13 percent in the Midwest.

In 2014, 30.6 percent of households headed by women lived in poverty.

From 2009 to 2012, 34.5 percent of the population had at least one spell of poverty lasting 2 or more months.

The official poverty rate in 2014 was 14.8 percent, with 46.7 million people living in poverty in the U.S. The 2014 poverty rate was 2.3 percent higher than in 2007, the year before the most recent recession.

Income

In 2014, median household income in the U.S. was $53,657, 6.5 percent lower than in 2007, the year before the most recent recession.

In 2014, the real median earnings for men who worked full time year round was $50,383 and it was $39,621 for women. The female to male earnings ratio was 0.79.

Unemployment

In 2014, the median duration of unemployment was 14 weeks.

The unemployment rate has been dropping since 2011. In 2012 it was 8.1 percent; in 2013 it was 7.4 percent; and in 2014 it was 6.2 percent.

Health Insurance

In 2014, 33 million Americans were without health insurance, a decrease of 2.9 percent from 41.8 million in 2013.

The uninsured rate for children under age 19 in poverty in 2014 (8.6 percent) was greater than the rate for all children (6.2 percent).

Sources:

1. *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014, U.S. Census Bureau.* Available at ***www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-252.pdf***.
2. *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2014, U.S. Census Bureau.* Available at ***www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-253.pdf***.
3. *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor.* Available at ***www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat30.htm*** and ***data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet***.
4. *2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17001C, U.S. Census Bureau.* Available at ***factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_B17001C&prodType=table***.

Poverty Theories of Change

1. Individual Circumstances

Cause

People are in poverty due to individual circumstances. Some may have made poor choices, while others may suffer from chronic illness, mental or physical disabilities, or other personal challenges and circumstances over which they have little control.

Theory

Use incentives or penalties to change people's habits and thinking patterns so that they make positive / productive choices. For example, to qualify for or to continue to receive public benefits, an applicant or recipient might be asked to demonstrate he/she is working, actively seeking employment, or pursuing education. Provide needed services to those with illnesses and disabilities, including assistance in removing barriers to work.

Example

The "Keep Kids in School" (KKIS) Initiative of Gardner County

To ensure that all children attend school on a regular basis, Gardner County has launched a new program that requires school districts to identify children who have missed more than ten days in the past school year without a medical excuse. The county then mails a form letter to the parents of these chronically absent students that includes suggestions for improving school attendance. Families in the county who are currently receiving TANF (welfare) benefits are also penalized if their children are absent from school. The county withholds the child's portion of the family welfare payments until it has been documented that the child is attending school regularly (i.e., no unexcused absences for at least 60 calendar days).

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

2. Cultural

Cause

Poverty results from the transmission across generations of a set of beliefs, values, and skills that reinforces behaviors and choices that result in poverty. Individuals are not necessarily to blame because they are embedded in their cultures or subcultures. In some cases, subcultures develop and reinforce unhealthy behaviors after having been actively oppressed or discriminated against.

Theory

Interventions focus on changing a culture, or a person's relationship to that culture. This could be approached in several ways. First, individuals can be physically relocated to expose them to a different culture (for example, relocating residents of low-income housing projects to more affluent communities). Second, special attention and supports may be targeted at young people to change how they make choices (for example, Head Start and other educational programs that provide alternative socialization for children living in poverty). Third, interventions can work within a culture to redefine culturally appropriate strategies to improve a group's well-being (for example, working with gang members to redirect their need for a sense of belonging into more positive affiliations or working with Native American communities to bring back food-cultivation traditions).

Example

The "Do It Right" Program

As individuals are released from prison, the program offers them housing, work, and training to develop new ways of living. Participants reside on-site for a minimum of two years in dormitory-style housing. After two or more years of routine, hard work, and recognition for positive behavior, participants emerge from the program ready to find working- or middle-class employment. In addition to work and training, participants learn healthy interpersonal and coping skills. Participants also adjust to middle class cultural norms. They learn to dress professionally, set a table, and order at a restaurant.

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

3. Geographic

Cause

People in certain geographic areas (e.g., urban neighborhoods and rural counties) are in poverty because these areas do not provide a strong enough economic base to generate adequate resources for well-being and income. Public and private-sector investment tends to flow to areas where there is already substantial investment, bypassing less-attractive or more remote areas, thereby aggravating the decline. This disinvestment can be motivated or made worse by discrimination and political indifference.

Theory

Redevelop or revitalize a distressed geographic area to grow its economic base. This might be done through: community organizing; by improving local industry competitiveness; by establishing enterprise zones and other tax-based incentive programs to encourage economic development and private investment; by making civic improvements that increase amenities and make areas more attractive, in hopes of increasing employment and tax revenue; investing in public infrastructure such as parks, schools, and roads; and redistributing funds from thriving economic areas to distressed ones.

Example

Hawthorne Neighborhood Renaissance Project

Government and community groups came together to create a 10-year revitalization plan for a neighborhood known for its high crime rates, high unemployment, and substandard housing. The revitalization plan outlines several indicators for resident engagement, such as greater participation at Community Board meetings and involvement in parks watches and clean-up efforts. To improve the physical appearance of the neighborhood, they built on existing assets, but knew they would need help from outside developers. They worked with elected officials and raised funds from private donors to offer incentives to commercial and residential developers. The developers are required to hire community members for new construction projects and preserve the historic look of abandoned warehouses and apartment buildings along the neighborhood's main corridor.

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

4. Structural

Cause

Social, political, and economic structures limit access to opportunities and resources for certain groups of people, keeping them in poverty. For example, economic structures, like a low minimum wage, have created a large working poor population. People in low-wage jobs often do not have access to benefits like childcare and health insurance. In addition, funding for education in low-income communities tends to be lower than in areas of wealth, leading to substandard (and unequal access to) education. Forced to live and work in such a survival mode, people in poverty are less likely to be involved in the political process and have fewer opportunities to advocate on their own behalf. This lack of access to opportunities and political power can result from indifference or institutional discrimination and stigma against social and cultural minorities.

Theory

Change systems and structures to give people in poverty access to opportunities, resources, and power. Create and develop more inclusive and open programs and institutions that work with people in poverty. Improve schools and housing while also developing programs that give people in poverty access to benefits like childcare and health insurance. Small business and microloan programs create alternative businesses and build entrepreneurship, which helps people move out of low-wage jobs.

Example

Mercer Valley Credit Union

Over the past few years, a string of muggings and robberies targeted Latino immigrants in Mercer County. In interviews following the attacks, victims claimed that their perpetrators must have been aware that they were carrying cash or hiding it at home because they did not understand how to use, did not feel they had the right documentation to use, or felt they were unwelcome at banks and other financial institutions in the area. Grassroots groups in the community met to discuss how to address the issue and decided to found the Mercer Valley Credit Union. The credit union provides banking services and financial education, including classes in financial literacy and investing, available in both English and Spanish. Clients can also participant in an Individual Development Account (IDA) program and in some cases receive micro-finance loans.

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

5. Cumulative

Cause

A complex combination of individual and community-level forces interact and create a "downward spiral" that moves people into and keeps them living in poverty. For example, a factory may shut down in a community, leading to a lack of employment which causes people to move elsewhere to seek jobs, leaving behind an economic void, which impacts schools and local services as the tax base erodes. At the same time, those who remain in the community cannot find work, resulting in depleted savings and benefits. The spiral also impacts people emotionally and psychologically: as their confidence decreases, they may lose motivation to pursue better jobs and ways of life.

Theory

Generate a positive "upward spiral" by creating a comprehensive system of supports for individuals and the community. Set up comprehensive programs that include a variety of services which strengthen and build on assets in the community. These include: income (economic) assets, education/skills, housing and safe environments, access to health care and other social services, and social capital. Programs work collaboratively while also empowering the community to become engaged in the work and help to shape the services provided.

Example

Strength in Social Support and Self-Sufficiency (S-5)

This program provides financial support, and facilitates social connectedness, personal control, and the "discovery of options" for working poor families in both urban and rural areas through a family's five-year participation in the program. Participants network inside and outside their communities—tapping into the power of "who you know." They also learn to mobilize their resources to identify and create new opportunities for themselves and each other. The program provides cash incentives for family members to set and reach goals such as educating a child, earning a college degree, starting a business, developing a new career, or owning a home. A group of five families called a "cohort" meets monthly with an S-5 facilitator to discuss challenges and to work on solutions together.

Adapted from:

Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development (Working Paper No. 06-05),

Ted K. Bradshaw, Rural Poverty Research Center, 2006. ***www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf***.

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

Theory Name _____

Strengths _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Limitations _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Draw what you think this theory looks like in action:

Capacity Building & Community Empowerment

ca·pa·ci·ty build·ing *a set of activities*

Capacity building is a set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. Capacity building allows the organization and the community to sustain the VISTA's project activities once the project period has ended. Tasks and activities are designed to:

- Create, expand, or strengthen an organization's systems or processes
- Transfer knowledge, products, and relationships to the staff and volunteers of the host site

com·mu·ni·ty em·pow·er·ment *a process*

Community empowerment is the process of engaging the community you serve to help plan, develop, and implement a VISTA project. Projects need to be responsive and relevant to the lives of community residents, and tap into inherent community strengths and resources.

Learn More About Poverty

On the VISTA Campus

The Work: Poverty in America. A robust collection of readings, tools, tutorials, and multimedia materials that will inform and equip you to support and empower people living in poverty in your community.

Go to **vistacampus.gov/poverty-america**. Resources you can find there include *(at right)*:

How Poverty is Measured in the United States. Watch the animation viewed at PSO which describes the history of how poverty is measured in the United States.

Poverty in Your Community: Developing a Community Profile. Inform the types of partnerships you pursue, the funding you apply for, and the programs you develop by exploring online resources to create a profile of poverty in the community you serve.

Poverty in the US: The National Data. Explore 2010 poverty data with Stephen Pimpare and learn how the poverty rate in the U.S. varies by group and place. Find out where to locate current poverty data online.

Conversations with Stephen Pimpare on poverty in America (recorded webinars).

Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development. A downloadable copy of the Ted K. Bradshaw paper used in the Poverty Theories of Change session.

Books

The Great Recession
(2011) by David Grusky, Bruce Western, Christopher Wimer

A People's History of Poverty in America
(2011) by Stephen Pimpare

So You Think I Drive a Cadillac? Welfare Recipients' Perspectives on the System and Its Reform
(2010) by Karen Seccombe

The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination
(2008) by Bradley Schiller

See Poverty, Be the Difference
(2007) by Donna Beegle

Field Guide to the U.S. Economy
(2006) by Johnathon Teller-Elsberg, Nancy Folbre, James Heintz

Understanding Poverty
(2002) by Sheldon H. Danziger and Robert H. Haveman

Articles / Videos

"The U.S. is Losing a Generation to Poverty"
by Monica Potts
(*The Daily Beast*, September 18, 2014)

"The Suburbanization of Poverty: Trends in Metropolitan America, 2000 to 2008"
by Emily Garr, Elizabeth Kneebone
(*Brookings Institution*, January 20, 2010)

"Inside the Meltdown"
(*Frontline*, February 17, 2009)

"Relatively Deprived"
by John Cassidy
(*The New Yorker*, April 3, 2006)

Web Sites

The U.S. Census Bureau reports U.S. income and poverty data and trends from several major household surveys and programs.
www.census.gov/topics/income.html

Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison
www.irp.wisc.edu

Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, Stanford University
web.stanford.edu/group/scspi

National Center for Children in Poverty
www.nccp.org

For Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) in your area, go to **www.idanetwork.org**. Click on "Find an IDA Program Near You" in the right column.

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

TITLE	Mentor Recruitment and Management Systems Designer
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	Waketa Community Services (WCS)
PROJECT NAME	MentorCorps
PROJECT NUMBER	12ABCD345
PROJECT PERIOD	08/20/20XX - 08/19/20YY
SITE NAME	*if applicable*
FOCUS AREA(S)	Education (Primary)
NOTE	If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.

VISTA Assignment Objectives & Member Activities

PROJECT GOAL	*To help ensure that children of incarcerated parents receive the educational, social, and emotional support they need to help them break the cycle of poverty, the MentorCorps VISTA project will build the capacity of WCS by developing a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management system for its mentoring program.*
OBJECTIVE	Assess the current state of WCS' efforts in reaching, selecting, and supporting volunteer mentors, and create or revise policies, procedures, and documents to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentor-recruitment and matching system.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	1. Research the history of volunteer programs at WCS. a. Identify strengths and challenges of the current program. Based on this report, make a plan for improvement.
	2. Develop systems for screening and matching mentors.
OBJECTIVE	Set up outreach systems and build partnerships with community organizations in order to spread the word about the mentor program. Develop targeted marketing materials.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	1. Plan for outreach and recruitment. a. Identify skills, abilities, and experiences sought in volunteer mentors. b. Write volunteer task descriptions that include: qualifications, activities, benefits, time commitment, and other expectations. c. Develop partnerships with community organizations whose members are possible mentors or who can support the organization in other ways. d. Develop partnerships with people or organizations that understand the needs of children of prisoners and can assist with the training and support of mentors.
	2. Market the program to targeted audiences.

Communication Styles

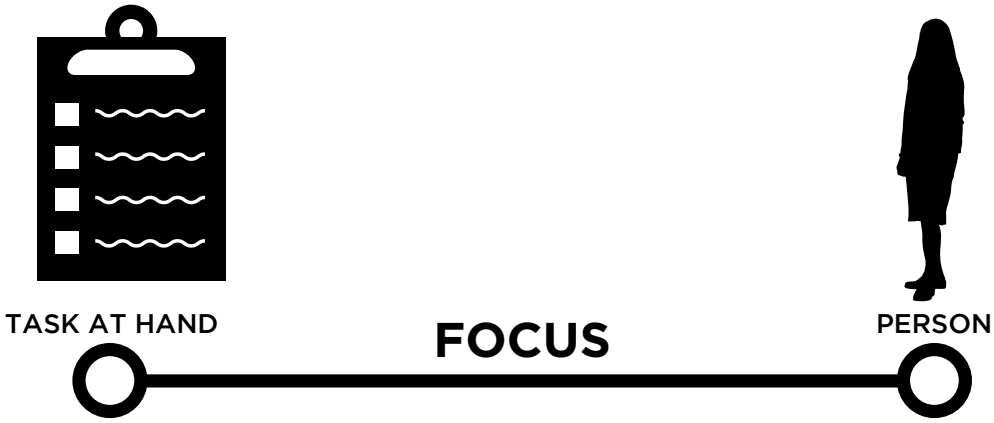
- People say what they mean and mean what they say.
- It's important to be direct and tell it like it is.
- The truth is more important than sparing someone's feelings.

- People are indirect; they imply/ suggest what they mean.
- You need to read between the lines.
- Telling the truth, if it hurts, should be tempered.

- The facts and expediency are more important than being careful about what you say.
- Getting/giving information is the overriding goal of the communication exchange.
- It's okay to say 'no' and confront or criticize people.

- Maintaining harmony is the overriding goal of the communication exchange.
- Confrontation, criticism, and saying no are avoided or handled delicately.
- What one says and what one feels often are not the same.

Communication Styles, cont.



- Do business first and then have small talk.
- Establishing rapport and a good personal relationship are not essential to getting the job done.
- The goal is accomplishing the task.

- Begin with small talk and then move to business.
- A personal relationship is a prerequisite to getting the job done.
- The goal is building the relationship.

Communication Styles Case Study

Section 1

Two VISTAs, Rachelle and Jake, work directly with one supervisor, Sally. Both Rachelle and Jake are recent college graduates and excited to be VISTAs. Sally is new at supervising entry-level staff members and has acknowledged that this will be a learning process for her.

Sally scheduled an On-Site Orientation and Training (OSOT), starting at 8 am, to cover all the needed details. She spends most of her time out of the office with external stakeholders, so this was the one time she had available to orient Rachelle and Jake. Sally started the meeting at 8 am. She spent the first ten minutes talking about her weekend trip with her family. She asked Rachelle and Jake about their weekends. She then asked both of them how they were feeling after their week at PSO. At about 8:45 am, Sally started into the agenda.

Section 2

Sally spent the entire day working with the VISTAs, going over all relevant policies and answering questions about their VADs. At the end of the day, Sally said, "I've got meetings the rest of the week. Just send me an email if something comes up. Let's then plan to check in a month from now. How does that sound?" Rachelle felt overwhelmed. She expected more frequent check-ins, but didn't say anything. Jake just said "Okay" and left the meeting.

Section 3

A couple of months later, Sally held a meeting with Jake, Rachelle, her assistant, Remy, and John, a community volunteer working on fundraising. Sally explained that Jake and Rachelle would be updating the organization's donor database by mailing and collecting donor information forms. Jake thought there might be a faster way to manage the project—an idea that was pretty much the opposite of how Sally said to do it. He spoke up, saying: "I would probably go about that differently. Like, what about if we go directly to the donors to get their updated email addresses, instead of having them fill out the form?" Sally quickly responded, "Well, this is the way we've been doing it for three years and it has worked fine."

Jake responded, "I disagree with you. I think it will take more time in the long run to do it this way."

Section 4

Unfortunately, the database project went awry. Jake filled in the wrong fields in an Excel file that Rachelle sent out to the organization's board of directors. Remy (Sally's assistant) worked with Jake and Rachelle to remedy the situation and within two hours, the data file was corrected and sent out again. Later, Sally sent an e-mail to Jake about what happened. At the end of her message Sally wrote, "Jake, I am deeply disappointed. You made a major mistake with the data."

Case Study Discussion

Discuss the following questions:

Preventions

What could the VISTAs have done to prevent the database issue? What could the supervisor have done to prevent the database issue?

Interventions

What could they have done during the situation?

Follow up

What could they do after the situation?

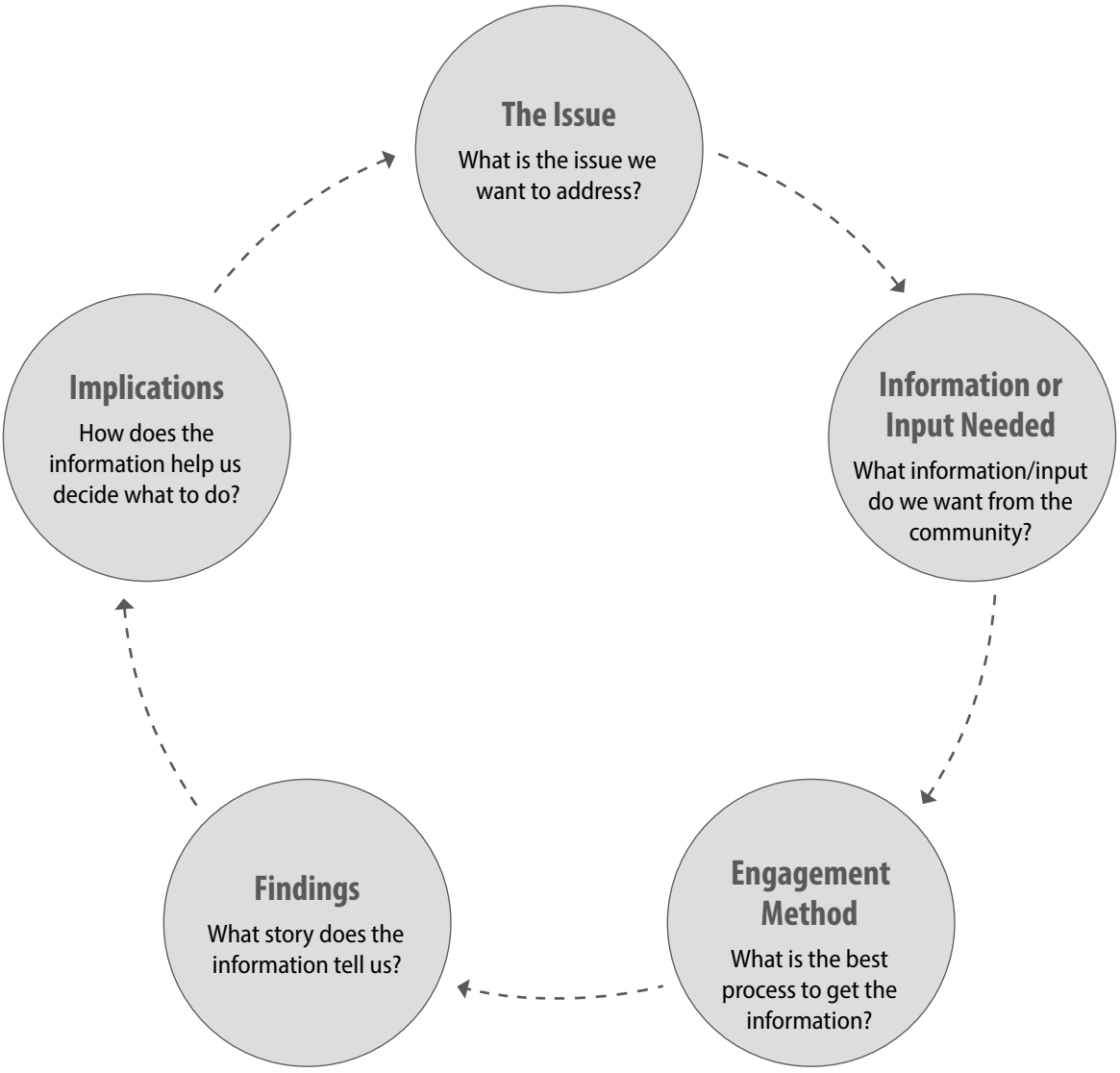
Community Engagement Continuum

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide information to help the public understand	To obtain public feedback	To work with the public through a process	To partner with the public in decision-making	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed	We will seek your input	We will look to you for guidance	We will work together with you	We will implement what you decide
Example Tools	• Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings • Interviews	• Workshops • Deliberate polling	• Citizen advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Increasing Level of Public Impact

Source: Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

Community Input Process



Source: Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

Asset-Mapping

Definition

Historically, many community development workers have employed a "needs-oriented" or "deficit-oriented" approach to building communities. With these approaches, communities can wind up viewing themselves as having overwhelming problems that can only be solved by *outside* experts and *external* resources.

An alternative approach, put forth by John L. McKnight and John Kretzmann from Northwestern University, is to develop partnerships, programs, and policies based on the capacities, skills, and assets of the people and their local communities. This "asset-" or "capacity-based" approach is important for three reasons:

- Significant community development only occurs when local people are actively involved, committing themselves and their resources to the effort.
- The community, rather than outside institutions, is best suited to help solve the problems of its citizens.
- It is futile to wait for significant, long-lasting assistance to arrive from outside the community.

Development and change must begin from within, building on the resources which the community already controls, while working to acquire those additional resources that are not yet available.

Asset-mapping is a key activity in asset-based community development. It is the identification of resources and connections — talents, skills, communications, and capacities — already available in the community and not what is missing or identified as a problem. The purpose of asset-mapping is to maximize access to these resources and leverage the development of additional resources. It brings together individuals, industry, nonprofits, education systems, and faith-based groups and coordinates them around a common goal, vision, or decision-making opportunity.

Community Resources

Community resources usually fall into five categories:

- **Individuals** – Local residents, groups such as youth, seniors, artists, etc. and their communication networks and values.
- **Nonprofits** – Community associations, charitable organizations, and civic groups.
- **Faith-Based Groups/Institutions** – Faith congregations and their affiliated organizations and programs.
- **Publicly Funded Institutions** – Schools, hospitals, parks, public colleges and universities, military installations, libraries, government agencies, etc.
- **Private Organizations** – Small businesses, business associations, and local branches of corporations.

Asset-Mapping, cont.

Goal and Strategies

The goal of asset-mapping is to identify and map both individual and organizational assets located and controlled within the community. Different communities will use or develop different mapping strategies based on:

- *Why* the mapping is necessary or desirable;
- *Who* is organizing the mapping activity;
- *What* is the best way to engage the community in an asset-mapping activity; and
- *How* the asset-mapping findings will be used to maximize existing resources and attract new ones.

Facilitation

Asset-mapping can be facilitated through "community-engaged" methods (face-to-face discussions, focus groups, or breakout groups with community members), or through "social investigation" methods such as interviews, surveys, and community walks. Physical and electronic archives, public records, and geographic information systems may be consulted before or during the asset-mapping process to prepare for it or to add important additional context or supplementary information.

The product of the mapping process will be an analysis or summary in the form of an annotated physical or electronic map, an assets inventory or database, a published document, a website, or any combination thereof. Once this map/inventory is developed, the community can begin to assemble its assets into new relationships, structures, sources of control, and opportunities.

Appreciative Inquiry

Definition

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a model for analysis, decision-making, and change-management. It was developed at Case Western Reserve University, starting with a 1987 article by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva.

AI offers an approach to change that focuses on a relational process of inquiry that is grounded in *appreciation* and *affirmation*. It comes from the idea that people, teams, and organizations change in the direction in which they inquire. Asking "what is working well" orients thinking, conversations, storytelling, and planning in a positive direction that focuses on hopes, goals, and possibilities. Asking "what is not working" tends to orient thinking, conversations, storytelling, and planning in a negative direction that focuses on problems, challenges, and limitations.

Using an AI process does not mean that problems will be denied or that they will not exist. Rather, problems are listened to and acknowledged, but are then reframed in a positive light to move beyond the situations that existed.

In the context of community development, an appreciative inquiry process can be used to guide a community to find out what it wants to be, based on the high moments of where it has been.

Implementation

Appreciative inquiry is often implemented by first identifying a focus: the Affirmative Topic Choice. The process then proceeds through a set of activities that facilitate reflection, conversation, and planning in a cycle known as the "4 Ds":

- **Discover** – Find the best of the past and identify present strengths. In this phase, people talk to one another, usually through structured interviews to discover times when a team, group, or community was at its best.
- **Dream** – Imagine what could be. This phase is often run as a large conference, where a cross-section of an organization, group, or community is encouraged to imagine and co-create the future. They are encouraged to envision the organization, group, or community as if the peak moments identified in the Discover phase were the norm rather than the exception. Working in small groups, they describe their visions and present them to the larger group.
- **Design** – Create the future. This phase is sometimes delegated to a small team or is sometimes left with a large group. In this collaborative design approach, the group creates a possibilities map, which contains the dream, the key relationships that will impact the dream, and key organizational elements needed to deliver the dream. Small groups are then tasked with exploring particular design elements.
- **Deliver** (or **Destiny**) – Make it happen; "what will be." This final phase is one of experimentation, in which small implementation teams are formed to follow up on design elements and continue the appreciative process.

Learn More About Community Input & Engagement

On the VISTA Campus

Activating Asset Mapping. This course provides the fundamentals of creating an asset map for your community. **www.vistacampus.gov/asset-mapping-10-steps**

Mapping Assets to Build Community. Watch this recorded webinar to learn about different types of community assets and how to identify and engage them. **www.vistacampus.gov/resources/webinars-vistas-mapping-assets-build-community**

Strengthening Your Organization, Your Community, and Your Projects. This course provides capacity building tips for identifying assets in your community and strengthening your program's ability to leverage those assets for win-win outcomes. **www.vistacampus.gov/organizational-assets**

Making Decisions Better. Developing community projects involves lots of decision points. Watch this recorded webinar for information on when and how to involve others in the decision-making process. **www.vistacampus.gov/resources/webinars-vistas-making-decisions-better?id=13413**

Books

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets (1993) by John Kretzmann and John McKnight

Engaging the Community in Decision-Making: Case Studies Tracking Participation, Voice, and Influence (2009) by Roz Lasker and John Guidry

The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change, Second Edition (2010) by Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom

Toolkits

Participatory Asset Mapping Toolkit, HealthyCity. **www.healthycity.org/toolbox**

Organizer's Workbook, Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center. **www.instituteccd.org/resources/4763**

Participation Tools for Better Community Planning, California Local Government Commission. ***www.lgc.org/wordpress/docs/freepub/community_design/guides/Participation_Tools_for_Better_Community_Planning.pdf***

Web Sites

Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Case Western Reserve University **appreciativeinquiry.case.edu**

Appreciative Inquiry in Community Development, Imagine Chicago **www.imaginechicago.org/inquiry.html**

Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy **www.abcdinstitute.org**

Community Toolbox, University of Kansas **ctb.ku.edu/en**

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs

General Trends

Time Scarcity

Time scarcity is the number one barrier to effectively recruiting and retaining volunteers. More and more individuals are seeking volunteer opportunities that are project-oriented and short-term in duration. These volunteers are often identified as short-term or episodic volunteers. Many organizations have volunteer opportunities and marketing materials that are still geared only for the long-term volunteer. Organizations need to develop marketing materials and expand opportunities for episodic volunteers.

Work Values

Because of the recession, there is a growing number of skilled unemployed. Some may be in between jobs and want to keep their skills polished and enhance their résumé.

The increased percentage of women in the workforce has decreased the time available from the largest segment of the volunteer population.

The number of individuals working from home is increasing. This often allows more flexibility in their volunteer hours.

More volunteers have "high tech" skills learned at the workplace.

Education

Volunteering rises with education and is less common in high poverty areas.

Career experience is a major motivator of youth volunteers.

Educational institutions are requiring more community service.

The need for internships for work experience is growing.

Training is a major motivation for most volunteers, especially if the training increases their job skills or enhances their résumé.

Expectations

People are more interested than ever in issues and causes.

People are more demanding about the nature of their volunteer work and want meaningful, challenging projects.

People are becoming less tolerant of authoritative management and bureaucracy. And because of the increasing number of highly skilled volunteers, many expect to be treated professionally.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

Generational Trends

VISTAs and agency staff need to be prepared to supervise and support volunteers of all ages—possibly six or more generations. Each generation of volunteers has its own unique patterns of living, thinking and interpreting information, which can be a real challenge for any manager!

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its 2011 *Volunteering in the United States* report, estimated the rate of volunteerism among different American age cohorts as follow:

Age	Rate
15-44	25.9%
45-64	29.4%
65+	24.0%

Traditionalists or Silent Generation

1928–1945

Ninety-five percent (95%) of this group are retired.

Hardworking: Often raised on farms and in rural America, Traditionalists brought a strong work ethic into industrialized society. This generation believes you earn your own way through hard work and they are willing to put in long hours to get ahead.

Loyal: Traditionalists are civic-minded and loyal to their country and employer.

Respect Authority: Traditionalists were taught to respect authority. They are good team players, averse to risk and avoid conflict in the workplace.

Tech-Challenged: Traditionalists may struggle to learn new technology and work processes.

Baby Boomers

1946–1964

When Boomers retire, many often work at least part-time, either by choice or by necessity. Don't call them seniors—they are "experienced."

Work-Centric: Boomers are extremely hardworking and motivated by position, perks and prestige. Boomers may criticize younger generations for a lack of work ethic.

Independent: They grew up in an era of social reform and turmoil and believe they can change the world. They questioned authority, challenged the status quo, are not afraid of confrontation and will not hesitate to challenge established practices.

Goal-Oriented: They welcome exciting, challenging projects, life-long learning and strive to make a difference.

Competitive: Since Boomers equate work and position with self-worth, they are quite competitive in the workplace. They are clever, resourceful and strive to win.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

Generation X

1965–1980

On the whole, they are more ethnically diverse and better educated than the Boomers. Over 60% attended college.

Individualistic: They value freedom and responsibility. Many dislike authority, structured work hours and being micro-managed

Technologically Adept: They are the first generation to grow up with computers and technology.

Flexible: Many Gen Xers lived through tough economic times in the 1980s and saw their workaholic parents lose hard-earned positions. Thus, they are less committed to one employer and more willing to change jobs to get ahead than previous generations.

Value Work/Life Balance: Unlike previous generations, members of Generation X work to live rather than live to work. They appreciate fun in the workplace and Generation X managers often incorporate humor and games into work activities.

Millennials, Generation Y, Echo Boomers

1981–2000

The Millennials are the fastest growing segment of today's workforce.

Tech-Savvy: Millennials are plugged-in 24/7. This generation prefers to communicate through e-mail and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact and prefers webinars and online technology to traditional lecture-based presentations.

Family-Centric: The fast-track has lost much of its appeal for Millennials who are willing to trade high pay for fewer hours, flexible schedules and a better work/life balance.

Achievement-Oriented: Millennials are confident, ambitious and achievement-oriented. They have high expectations of their employers, seek out new challenges and are not afraid to question authority. They want meaningful work and a solid learning curve.

Team-Oriented: Part of a no-person-left-behind generation, they are loyal, committed and want to be included and involved. They may benefit from mentors who can help guide and develop their careers.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

Generation Z, Net Generation, Digital Natives

2001–present

This tech-savvy, multiethnic generation has grown up entirely in the post-Cold War world.

Highly Connected: Members of Generation Z have never known a world without the Internet, cell phones/smartphones, MP3 players, text messaging, and other communication and media technologies.

Diverse: Generation Z's ethnic composition is the most diverse of any generation in America: 54% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, 14% African-American, 4% Asian, and 4% mixed race/other. They welcome and celebrate this diversity.

Lowered Economic Expectations: With the lingering effects of the Great Recession, Generation Z is the first generation expected to earn less than their parents. However, having gone through such difficult economic times, they have developed a sense of social justice, philanthropy, and maturity, and are more likely to pursue careers they think will help society.

Empowered: The combination of the independence gained from powerful, mobile technology and the constant sense of affirmation from their parents has produced a sense of entitlement in Generation Z that can be seen as a double-edged sword. They have the resources and initiative to make positive changes where they see the need, but may not have the experience with failure necessary to know what it takes to persevere.

Sources: About.com; Gen Next; How Stuff Works.com; Netlingo.com; The Pew Research Center's Social and Demographic Trends; Wikipedia.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

General Facts

Volunteering Can Make You Healthier

A growing body of research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer. Older volunteers can gain greater health benefits than younger volunteers. Additionally, older adults who volunteer (ages 65 and older) are significantly less likely to face depression than those who do not volunteer.

Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression.

College Students Like Temporary Volunteer Assignments

College students tend to be in more of a state of flux than most other adults and are more likely to be episodic volunteers, serving fewer than two weeks per year with their main service organization, or occasional volunteers, serving three to eleven weeks per year with their main service organization. In 2010, tutoring, teaching, and mentoring were the most popular activities performed by college student volunteers. In that year, 3.1 million college students volunteered 312 million hours, with 21.3 percent volunteering as tutors/teachers and 23.9 percent volunteering as mentors.

312
million hours volunteered by college students in 2010.

Homeowners Boost Volunteer Rates

Often when someone makes an investment in a home, they also commit to investment in the local community. This investment, however, is more than just financial—it involves a personal commitment to cultivating a community that offers a high quality of life. Thus, it is not surprising that we should find that metropolitan areas that have a higher rate of homeownership also have higher volunteer rates.

Home Investment
=
Community Investment

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

General Facts, cont.

Volunteer Retention Remains a Significant Issue

Only about 64 percent of the volunteers who served in 2009 returned to service again in 2010. The right types of volunteer opportunities and management of volunteers can encourage an individual to continue volunteering. On the other hand, as with paid employment, a poor fit between a volunteer and a nonprofit increases the probability that a volunteer will not be retained. For nonprofits that depend on volunteers, turnover results in the need to incur substantial additional costs associated with recruiting, orienting, and managing new volunteers.

64%
of volunteers who served in 2009 returned the following year.

Rural Volunteering

In rural communities, a small population spread out over vast distances can present obstacles to volunteering. Due to the geographic and social isolation, rural residents rely on neighbors, family members, and friends to meet many critical needs, and are less likely than urban residents to know about and ask for help from social service providers. The need to travel great distances, coupled with limited or nonexistent public transportation options makes mobility difficult, especially for lower-income residents. Likewise, the lack of awareness about available volunteer opportunities is more acute for rural residents because they may not have access to the Internet and/or may not know how and where to access volunteer opportunities online. The result is increased difficulty in finding enough people with the time, inclination, and flexibility to support volunteer-run activities.

Greater distance, limited public transportation, and unreliable access to the internet challenge volunteerism in rural areas.

Source: Volunteering In America, Related Research, www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/research-papers.cfm.

Volunteer Trend Analysis

Select your focus: ○ *General Trends* ○ *Generational Trends* ○ *General Facts*

Trends

Implications for Volunteer Program Outreach, Recruitment & Management

Sample Recruitment Message

Review the sample recruitment message below and reflect on the questions that follow.

Safe Place Resource Advocate

Company: ***Safe Place Women's Shelter***
Employment Type: ***Volunteer***

Description: Safe Place Women's Shelter has been dedicated to ending abuse and providing compassionate treatment for victims of domestic violence in western Massachusetts for over 15 years. Grow your skills and be an advocate for change as you help victims, survivors, and their families find the things they need to start a new life. As a safe-place resource advocate, you will identify, research, and compile a database of sources of local services our clients can access, including transportation, food, shelter, educational opportunities, support groups, and others. If you are at least 21 years old, are willing to learn, and have good writing and research skills, we want to hear from you!

Contact: For further details and a schedule of upcoming orientations, call us at (866) 999-9999, email us at volunteer@safeplacema.org, or visit us online at www.safeplacema.org/volunteer.

Reflection Questions

1. Is the message effective in grabbing and holding your attention? If so, how?

2. How could the message be improved?

Adapted from:

1. McCurley, S., & Lynch, R. (2011). Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community (3rd ed., Appendix 3, p. 356). Plattsburgh, NY: InterPub Group.
2. U.S. Department of Education, Mentoring Resource Center. (2006). Volunteer Motivation and Mentor Recruitment (Mentoring Fact Sheet No. 8). Retrieved from Education Northwest website: educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/factsheet8.pdf

Targeted Recruitment Message

Craft a brief (two to three line) message that grabs the interest of your targeted volunteer group. Use succinct language to create an engaging description of one of the volunteer opportunities at Foodbank USA.

Your targeted group:

Type of position you are recruiting for:

Step 1

Review the questions posed in the first column of the table below. Write any possible key words that spring to mind as you think about each question in the second column. In the third column, start piecing together the key words into a phrase or sentence that answers each question.

Guiding Question	Key Words	Brief Description
Who are you? What is your organization, mission, history, and role in the community?		
What is the need in the community the volunteers will work on?		
What will volunteers do? Use active words that convey challenge and excitement.		
Why should people volunteer? What will they learn? What will they accomplish? What do you offer that's unique? What are some benefits of volunteering?		

Step 2

Write your catchy, concise and compelling message below.

Tips

Be sure to include relevant URLs, including links to the organization's website and social media outlets, and a direct link to the recruitment message.

Don't forget to promote the message via your social media networks!

Learn More About Volunteer Mobilization

On the VISTA Campus

The Work: Working with Volunteers. Readings, tutorials, and downloadable documents you can use to strengthen your organization's volunteer mobilization plans and practices.

Go to **vistacampus.gov**, click "The Work," and then select one of the "Working with Volunteers" subtopics.

VISTA Blend Course: Volunteer Mobilization. This online course was designed specifically for VISTAs working to mobilize volunteers in their communities. Learn current trends in and best practices for recruiting, matching and screening, and training volunteers as you earn undergraduate college credit and network with other VISTAs. Learn more about the course's content, availability, and requirements by going to **vistacampus.gov/vistablend**.

Troubleshooting Volunteer Mobilization. Find the answers to your questions about volunteer mobilization. Select the topic you need information from a list of curated volunteer development resources. Go to **vistacampus.gov/resources/troubleshooting-volunteer-mobilization**.

Books

Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community, 3rd Edition
(2011) by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch

Volunteer Administration: Professional Practice
(2013) by Keith Seel (editor)

Reports

"Volunteering and Civic Life in America" (2014) by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Available online at **volunteeringinamerica.gov**

"Volunteering in the United States" (2011) by the U.S. Department of Labor. Available online at **www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm**

"Volunteers and the Economic Downturn"
(2009) by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Available online at **mavanetwork.org/resources/Documents/VolunteersAndTheEconomicDownturn.pdf**

Policy Templates

Generic program policy and procedure manual you can adapt:

Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities, Revised Edition
(2007) by Linda Ballasy, Mark Fulop, and Michael Garringer

PDF available at **educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy.pdf**; Microsoft Word version with customizable templates available at **educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/181**

Volunteer Organizations & Websites

+ Developing & Managing Volunteer Programs

Free management library—complete and integrated for nonprofits and for-profits.
managementhelp.org

+ DOVIA Directory of North America

A list of membership associations at provincial, state, and local levels for professionals who lead volunteer programs. DOVIA's are often connected to a local Volunteer Center or United Way. **www.energizeinc.com/prof/dovia.html**

+ Energizeinc.com

An international training, consulting, and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Stay current on the latest issues and news in the field of volunteer management.
www.energizeinc.com

+ Idealist.org

Idealist is an interactive site where people and organizations can exchange resources and ideas, locate opportunities and supporters, and take steps toward building a world where all people can lead free and dignified lives. **www.idealist.org**

+ LinkedIn Discussion Groups for Volunteer Managers

LinkedIn, the professional social networking website, hosts several discussion groups for volunteer-management professionals. If you are a LinkedIn member (or if you are willing to sign up to become one), search for the groups Volunteer Coordinators, Volunteer Management Group, and Volunteer Management Best Practices Network.
www.linkedin.com

+ National Service Knowledge Networks

Repository of over 8,000 nodes of training tools, publications, and effective practices to support volunteer programs, nonprofits, and people involved with the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps family of programs.
www.nationalservice.gov/resources

+ Online Discussion Group for Volunteer Managers

groups.yahoo.com/group/cybervpm/

+ Serve.gov

A comprehensive clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities. Americans who are interested in volunteering can use this tool to locate opportunities to serve across the country and around the world. Be sure to register your project!
www.serve.gov

+ Volunteer Match

A leader in the nonprofit world dedicated to helping everyone find a great place to volunteer. Post your volunteer opportunities. **www.volunteermatch.org**

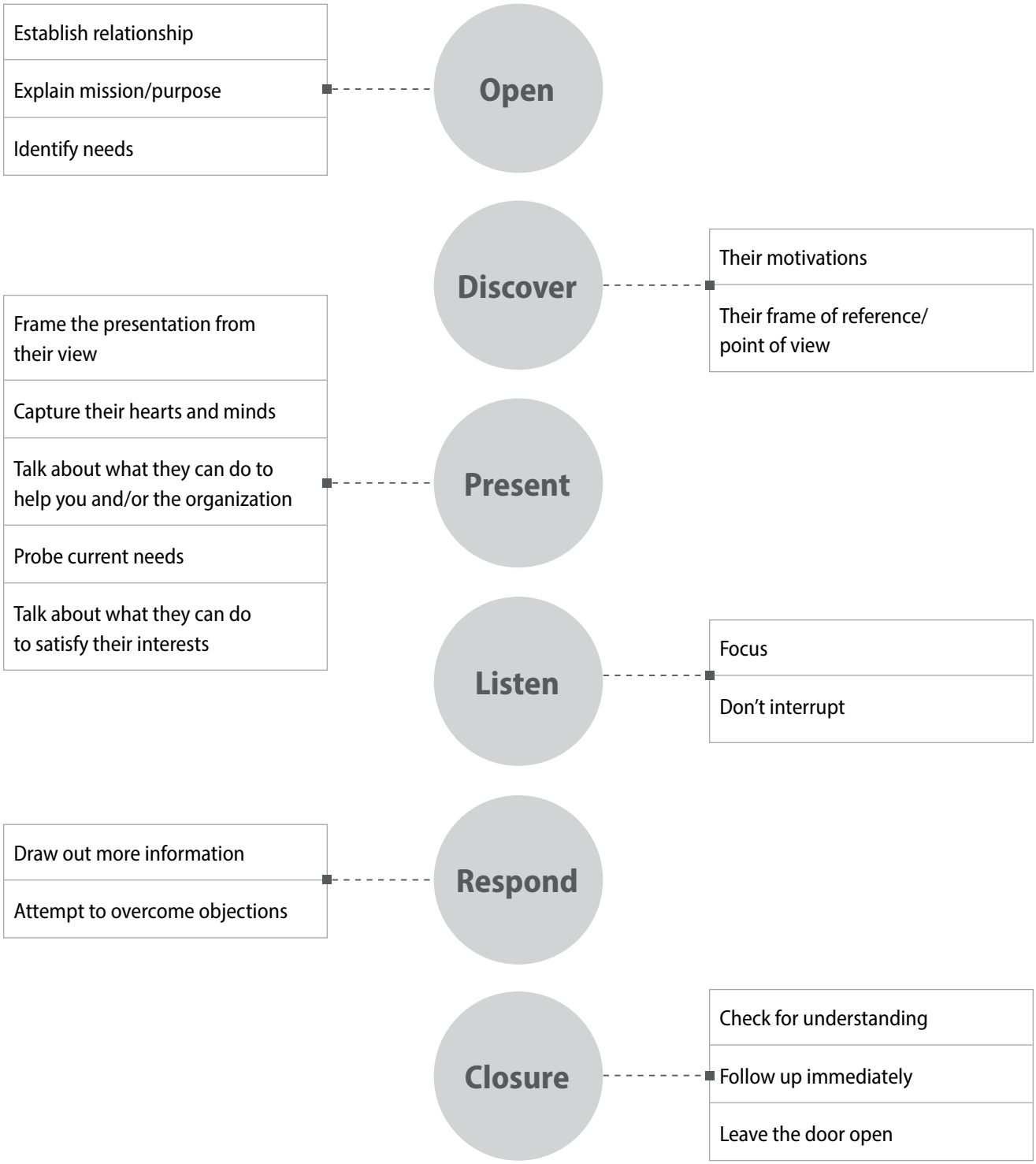
+ Volunteer Spot

Free on-line tool enables anyone to quickly mobilize and coordinate volunteers in their community, congregation, and social network. **www.volunteerspot.com**

+ Volunteering In America

Provides access to volunteering trends, statistics, tools, resources, and information for the nation, U.S. regions, states, and major cities. **www.volunteeringinamerica.gov**

The Stages of an Ask



Learn More About Resource Development

On the VISTA Campus

The Work: Fundraising. Tools, tutorials, and readings that will help you plan and implement resource-development initiatives, including individual giving campaigns, fundraising events, and grant writing.

Go to **vistacampus.gov**, click "The Work," and then explore resources in the "Fundraising" section.

VISTA Blend Course: Resource Development, Fundraising & Grant Writing. This self-paced online course was designed specifically for VISTAs working in resource development. It uses a simulation-based approach to teach you best practices in fundraising, grant writing, and event planning. Earn academic credit and network with other VISTAs as you deepen your knowledge and skills in resource development. Learn more about the course's content, availability, and requirements by going to **vistacampus.gov/vistablend**.

Planning

"Discover Total Resources: A Guide for Nonprofits" by the Mellon Financial Corporation. Provides a descriptive checklist and can be used as an organizational assessment of assets and growth areas related to fundraising and resource development. **learning.rxassist.org/sites/default/files/Non-Profit%20Resource%20Guide.pdf**

"How to Develop a Fund Raising Plan" by the Stonehill Consulting Group, LLC. Includes a visual framework to help organizations determine fundraising strategies and a sample development planning flow chart. **www.serviceleader.org/sites/default/files/file/How%20to%20Develop%20a%20Fundraising%20PLan%20%28Stonehill%20Consulting%29.pdf**

Communications

"*Social Media Guidelines: Ethical, Safe, and Effective Practical Standards"* by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). Provides organizations with guidance on social media and covers the conduct and expectations of the public when participating in an organization's social media or social networking platforms. **www.afpnet.org/About/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4626**

"Communications Toolkit" by Hershey Cause Communications. Provides an overview of researching, planning, and implementing a variety of communication strategies. Sections on media relations, events, storytelling, and the case for support relate directly to fundraising and resource development. **www.hersheycause.com/pdf/cc_toolkit.pdf**

"Online Outreach Tools Guide" by Hershey Cause Communications. Outlines the strengths of specific web tools in relation to communications strategies, as well as categorizes and rates different social media platforms by type. **www.hersheycause.com/pdf/online-outreach-tools-guide.pdf**

"10 Mistakes Nonprofits Make When Creating Communication Materials (or *10 Simple Things You Can Do To Improve Your Marketing Program*)" from Mission Minded. Identifies some of the most common mistakes made by nonprofits and outlines solutions to avoid them. This document is directed toward organizations that want to become more effective in their marketing communications. **www.mission-minded.com/mm/mm-content/uploads/MM_10_Mistakes_10-13.pdf**

Resource Development Organizations & Websites

The following resources provide additional resource-development information and tools:

+ Association of Fundraising Professionals

Helps its members find education opportunities and become certified. **www.afpnet.org**

+ BBB Wise Giving Alliance

Profiles U.S. charities in order to enhance the decisions of givers and monitors the standards of charitable organizations. **www.give.org**

+ Benevon

A consulting firm that coaches and trains nonprofits in sustainable fundraising. The archive provides articles and tip sheets on many aspects of resource mobilization. **www.benevon.com**

+ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Research institute analyzes government policies and programs, particularly those affecting low- and middle-income people. **www.cbpp.org**

+ Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University

An academic center devoted to increasing the understanding of philanthropy in the US. **www.philanthropy.iupui.edu**

+ The Giving Institute

Professional organization of fundraisers that prides itself on having high ethical standards. **www.givinginstitute.org**

+ Giving USA

An initiative of the Giving Institute that publishes statistics on charitable giving across the United States each year to advance the research, education and public understanding of philanthropy. **www.givingusareports.org**

+ GuideStar

A database of nonprofit organizations and charities that includes financial details for each group and a profile of their purpose and programs. **www.guidestar.org**

+ Independent Sector

A coalition of nonprofits, foundations, and corporations that assist in strengthening not-forprofit initiatives, philanthropy, and citizen action. Offers news, programs, and facts. **www.independentsector.org**

+ JustGive.Org

A guide to charitable giving offering details on a variety of nonprofit organizations and providing instructional tips for making donations. **www.justgive.org**

+ Network for Good

An online fundraising platform for charities and non-profit organizations. **www.networkforgood.org**

+ Nonprofit Finance Fund

Provides loans to nonprofits and advocates for fundamental improvements in how money is given and used in the nonprofit sector. Also hosts a site that includes resources such as "A Guide to Navigating Changing Times" and annual nonprofit surveys. **www.nonprofitfinancefund.org**

+ Nonprofit Times

Covers issues of concern to nonprofits and reports on news and developments regarding such organizations. **www.nptimes.com**

Grant Writing Organizations & Websites

The following resources provide information and tools for seeking and applying for grants:

+ National Service Knowledge Network Grant Management Resources

Online courses, effective practices, and links to other sites. **www.nationalserviceresources.gov/financial-and-grants-management#.VCsxSRYXNqw**

+ Foundation Center

Offers information on private philanthropy in the US. This site does have a membership fee.
www.foundationcenter.org

+ Grants.gov

Helps organizations find and apply for federal grants.
www.grants.gov

+ Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training

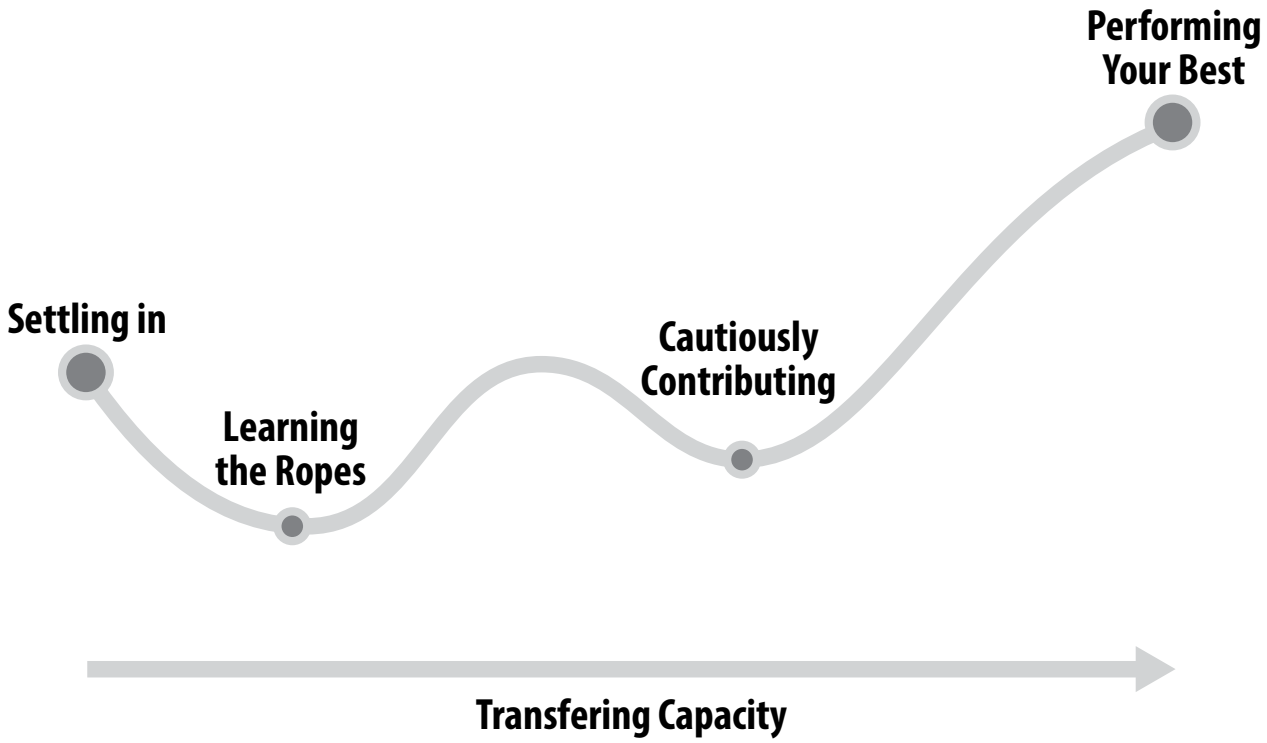
A multiracial organization that promotes the connection between fundraising and social justice.
www.grassrootsfundraising.org

Local Resources

There are also many local resources that you can access in your community:

- Libraries often have a funder database that is updated monthly.
- Seek out your nearest community foundation.
- Community colleges and libraries also have local fundraising resources and may offer free or discounted grant writing courses.
- Most states have a nonprofit association that might provide grant-finding assistance.
- Some states also have local area grant guides, such as the Colorado Grants **www.coloradogrants.org/resources/colorado-resources.php.**

Cycle of Service



Navigating Your Year of Service

Terms & Conditions of Service

Terms

VISTA is a 12-month, full-time commitment.

VISTA is not a 9-to-5 job.

You may serve up to 2 terms of service (with the possibility of additional terms).

Need a Refresher?

Review the Terms & Conditions Course, the Benefits page, and the Member Handbook at **www.vistacampus.gov.**

Conditions

You may not solicit funds for a partisan candidate, nor run for partisan office.

You may not engage in any political activity while on duty or perceived to be on duty. This includes social media.

You may not proselytize while on duty or perceived to be on duty.

You may not serve based on the results of the criminal history check if you:

- *appear on the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR)*
- *have committed any crime against a minor*
- *are currently facing charges or on probation or parole (unless otherwise justified)*
- *failed to accurately disclose your criminal history (unless otherwise justified)*

Navigating Your Year of Service, cont.

Summary of Benefits

Healthcare Coverage

AmeriCorps VISTA offers healthcare benefits to VISTA members based on whether they have health insurance and whether they are required to by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

If you have health insurance…

VISTA members who maintain health insurance during their service term may opt into the **AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare Allowance**. The Allowance covers up to **$6,600** (in 2015) of out-of-pocket costs associated with healthcare, such as:

- your annual deductible or coinsurance
- copayments for office visits
- prescriptions
- other charges for qualified medical expenses

The Allowance cannot be used for insurance premiums, or for charges for anyone but you.

If you don't have health insurance…

Research your options at ***www.healthcare.gov***.

As an AmeriCorps VISTA you can buy insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace within 60 days of your service start date. Contact the Marketplace Call Center at 800-318-2596 to buy insurance during this period.

If you ignore the legal requirement to have health insurance, you will be responsible for your own healthcare costs. You may be subject to removal from the VISTA program and may face a penalty under the ACA.

If you are not required to have health insurance…

VISTA members who are legally exempt from maintaining health insurance coverage during their term of service are eligible to enroll in the **AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefit Plan**.

The plan serves as a healthcare safety net, covering routine doctor visits, emergency care, and most prescription drugs. The plan does not cover dental or vision care, or pre-existing conditions. Dependents are also not covered.

To find out if you are exempt, visit ***www.healthcare.gov/exemptions***.

How to Enroll

Once you have started your VISTA term, you'll need to complete a **Member Enrollment Form** to enroll in the benefit that applies to you. The form can be completed online by first creating a "My IMGVISTA" account at ***americorpsvista.imglobal.com*** and then completing the enrollment form online.

For details, visit ***americorpsvista.imglobal.com***.

Navigating Your Year of Service, cont.

Summary of Benefits, cont.

Living Allowance

The Living Allowance schedule is on page _____ of this workbook.

Your first payment will be on _____ .

Federal income taxes are withheld from your pay. State income taxes are not.

Living Allowance statements can be accessed from ***My.AmeriCorps.gov***.

VISTA living allowance does not qualify you for unemployment after your service.

You can expect your travel reimbursement 8-10 weeks after PSO.

Child Care Benefit

Eligibility:

- *Children under 13 who live with you*
- *Based on household income*
- *Not receiving subsidy from another source*

Max of $400/month.

Your state may also offer a program.

Administered by Gap Solutions, Inc. ***www.americorpschildcare.com*** 855-886-0687.

Income Disregard

Benefits remain the same for government assistance or services in place prior to VISTA enrollment.

VISTA Living Allowance will count towards eligibility for SNAP, unless you are currently receiving SNAP benefits; other public assistance remains the same.

When applying for assistance, print letters defining these terms from ***My.AmeriCorps.gov***.

Non-Competitive Eligibility

Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) is designed to streamline the process for finding work with the federal government after service.

Allows you to be considered for employment without going through the standard recruitment process.

Valid for a minimum of one year following successful completion of your VISTA term.

End-of-Service Benefit

Upon successfully completing your service term, you receive an **Education Award** ($5,775) OR **Cash Stipend** ($1,500).

If you select the Education Award, you can change to the stipend option up until the end of the 10th month of your VISTA service.

If you select the Cash Stipend, you cannot change to the Education Award.

These benefits are subject to federal and state taxes.

For details, visit ***www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward***.

Loan Forbearance/Deferment

If you select the Education Award, you can submit a **Loan Forbearance** request.

- *Temporary postponement of principal payments on federally backed loan*
- *Interest accrues, but National Service Trust pays it at completion of your term, per your request*
- *Submit forbearance at* ***My.AmeriCorps.gov***

If you select the **End-of-Service Stipend**, you can apply for **Loan Deferment**.

- *Temporary postponement of monthly loan payments*
- *Set up directly with lender*

For details, visit ***www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward***.

Navigating Your Year of Service, cont.

Finding Support and Resources

Your State Office

Your State Office is responsible for and assists with:

- *Programmatic issues*
- *Supervision concerns*
- *Emergency situations*
- *Administrative leave*

My.AmeriCorps.gov

Once activated as a VISTA, you can access these features:

Living Allowance Statements. Get your earnings statement online every 2 weeks.

Tax Statements. Available around January 31 for the previous year.

Education Award. Verify your selection has been recorded.

Forbearance Requests. Submit and view status of requests.

Service Letters. Print letters that explain your status as a VISTA member.

Other Online Resources

Corporation for National & Community Service
www.nationalservice.gov

National Service Knowledge Networks
www.nationalservice.gov/resources

HealthCare.gov Local Help
localhelp.healthcare.gov

AmeriCorps Alums
www.americorpsalums.org

VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU)

Contact the VMSU for questions about relocation, living allowance, Education Award, forbearance requests, etc.

To reach the VMSU, contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677.

Submit questions online at ***questions.nationalservice.gov***.

VISTA Campus

*Visit **www.vistacampus.gov** for these three sections:*

Life as a VISTA. Resources on living on the Living Allowance, using the Education Award, and the Member Handbook.

The Work. Resources on poverty, volunteer management, fundraising, PSO materials, etc.

Connect & Learn. Discussion forums, VISTA Map, social media.

When you get home:

- *Update your Campus profile with current location, project type, etc.*
- *Add your pin to the VISTA Map*
- *Create a professional development plan*
- *Participate in monthly webinars*
- *Respond to quarterly survey*

CNCS Office of Inspector General

If you encounter issues with your project, address them with your Supervisor and if necessary your State Office. If the issues are not resolved (or if you want to remain anonymous), contact the CNCS Office of Inspector General.

Phone: 800-452-8210

Email: hotline@cncsoig.gov

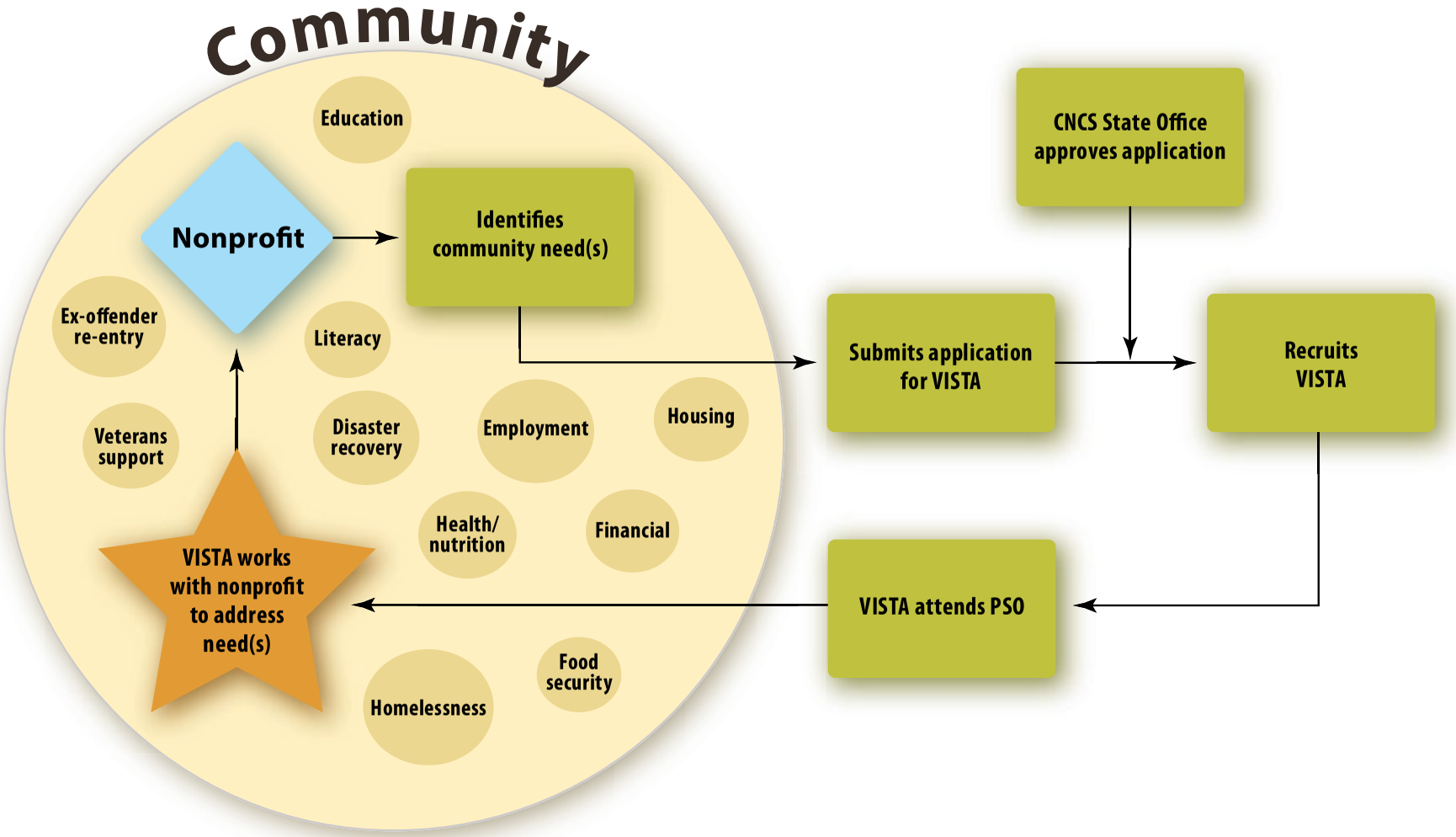
Website: ***www.cncsoig.gov***

Summary of AmeriCorps Programs

	State/National (Over 500 separate programs)	VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)	NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)
Program Focus	Members serve both in teams and individually through national and community-based private and public organizations. Members help solve community problems through service, in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, health, veterans' services, and economic opportunity.	Members serve through local government agencies and nonprofit organizations, addressing issues related to poverty—such as public health, education, the environment, public safety, and employment—by building capacity to create long-term benefits at a community level.	Members live in a campus environment and serve in teams to complete a variety of service projects with local communities to address pressing needs. Members often travel to projects throughout their region.
Eligibility	Applicants must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S. The upper age limit varies among programs.	Applicants must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S. There is no upper age limit.	Members must be 18 to 24 years old while they serve and a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S.
Skill Requirements	All skill levels are needed.	A bachelor's degree or three years of related volunteer/job experience is preferred.	All skill levels are needed.
Terms of Service	Full-time for one year. (Some part-time service opportunities are available.)	Full-time for one year. (No part-time service opportunities available.)	Full-time for 10 months. (No part-time service opportunities available.)
Living Allowance	A modest living allowance is paid every two weeks.	A modest living allowance is paid every two weeks.	A modest living allowance is paid every two weeks.
Room & Board	In most cases, members are responsible for covering their own housing and meals from their living allowance.	Members are responsible for covering their own housing and meals from their living allowance.	Members are provided with housing and meals and live in dormitory-style housing in one of five campuses.
Education Award/ Stipend	Upon completion of service members receive a $5,775 education award, in the form of a voucher.	Upon completion of service members have a choice of a $5,775 education award, in the form of a voucher, or a $1,500 cash stipend.	Upon completion of service members receive a $5,775 education award, in the form of a voucher.

Additional information on these AmeriCorps programs can be found at **www.americorps.gov**.

How an Organization Gets a VISTA



Summary of Key Terms, Conditions & Benefits of VISTA Service

VISTAs must: be **at least 18 years old**; be **US citizens**, **nationals**, or **legal residents**; and successfully complete a **criminal background check** which entails a search of the National Sex Offenders Registry and an FBI criminal history check.

VISTA is a 12-month, **full time commitment**. VISTAs are required to serve an average of 40 hours per week, but may serve in excess of that amount focusing on capacity-building activities. They usually serve within the work hours of their sponsoring organizations, but are expected to be available evenings and weekends to meet the needs of the project and community. A person may **serve up to five terms of service** in any combination of AmeriCorps service programs.

VISTAs receive a **living allowance** (direct deposited every two weeks), **health coverage**, and **10 personal and 10 sick leave days**. Additionally, all VISTAs receive **training and development opportunities** including a Pre-Service Orientation provided by CNCS and an onsite orientation provided by the sponsoring organization.

Based on the circumstances and/or wishes of the individual, a VISTA may receive some additional benefits including a **settling-in allowance** of up to $550 for moving expenses, and **child care allotment** of up to $400 per child, per month. VISTAs can elect to have **life insurance** and are covered by **workers compensation** for service related injuries. Some VISTAs will also benefit from **income exclusion** to continue public assistance they were receiving before joining VISTA. Finally, some VISTAs may be eligible for **tax benefits** such as the Earned Income Credit.

VISTAs can choose to receive either the **Education Award ($5,775)** or an **End-of-Service-Stipend ($1,500)** at the end of their VISTA service. A VISTA can not switch from the stipend to the education award, but can switch from the education award to the stipend before the end of his/her tenth month of service.

If a VISTA selects the **Education Award**, eligible student loans can be put into **forbearance** and have interest accrued during the service year paid by the Trust after the completion of service. The VISTA is responsible for the accrued interest, and must submit the **Interest Accrual Form** to the Trust in order to have the interest paid.

A percentage of Perkins Loan debt can be forgiven if the **End-of-Service Stipend** is selected. **Deferment** may be granted by the lender based on economic hardship. Accrued interest is the responsibility of the VISTA.

When VISTAs satisfactorily complete one full year of service, they earn one year of **non-competitive eligibility (NCE)** status. NCE allows a federal agency to hire an AmeriCorps VISTA alumnus/alumna, who meets the minimum qualifications for a federal job, without going through all the formalities of the competitive process.

VISTAs are allowed **part-time outside employment**; however under no circumstances may a VISTA member be an employee of or contractor for the sponsor or project to which s/he is assigned to serve. Outside employment **must not conflict with project** service or service hours, nor conflict with any applicable law or VISTA program requirements or policies. A VISTA must discuss employment with their supervisor before submitting a job application. The **supervisor must agree** that the outside work will not interfere with the VISTA project. If work does interfere, the VISTA may be asked to either end employment, or end VISTA service.

VISTAs **are allowed to attend class(es)**; however their studies **must not interfere with VISTA responsibilities**. A VISTA must discuss taking class(es) with their supervisor before enrolling. The supervisor needs to agree that studies will not interfere with the VISTA project. If classes do interfere, the VISTA may be asked to either withdraw from the course within one week; or end VISTA service.

Any political advocacy, organizing, promotion, or demonstration while on VISTA duty, or while PERCEIVED to be on duty, is prohibited. This includes registering people to vote or driving people to the voting polls, engaging in any pro- or anti-labor organizing activities, lobbying, or taking any action with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification of the VISTA program with the activity.

VISTA members may **not conduct religious instruction**, engage in proselytizing, or other religious activities **as part of their duties**.

Hatch Act Limitations on VISTA Political Activities

Prohibitions on Political & Lobbying Activities

Updated 6/28/05. Chapter 14: Basic Laws and Federal Regulations in your Member Handbook

No appropriated funds of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) shall be used to finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of an election to federal, state, or local office or a voter registration activity, or pay the salary of a CNCS employee who engages in such activity.

In addition, VISTA programs are prohibited from using funds or personnel in a matter supporting or resulting in the identification of such programs with partisan or nonpartisan election activities, in voter registration activities, and in providing transportation to the polls. Additionally, no VISTA member or employee of a sponsoring organization may take any action with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification or apparent identification of the AmeriCorps VISTA program with such activity (see 42 U.S.C. § 5043 for additional restrictions and prohibitions).

VISTA programs also are prohibited from any activity intended to influence the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition (see 42 U.S.C. § 5043 (c) for additional restrictions and prohibitions).

You may participate in political activities allowed under the Hatch Act. The Domestic Volunteer Service Act at 42 U.S.C. § 5055 applies the restrictions of the Hatch Act, Title V, United States Code, Chapter 73, to VISTA members. The Hatch Act applies to you at all times during your service, including off duty hours. Permissible activities under the Hatch Act apply to VISTA members unless these activities are prohibited by other statutory authority when the members are on authorized leave or are not perceived to be performing as a VISTA member (e.g., while not engaged in performing service, or on service time).

You have the right to register and vote as you choose, express opinions about candidates and issues in a nonpublic context, contribute money to political organizations, and attend political meetings. You also may join and be a member of a political party or club, and sign nominating petitions if you do not identify these activities with VISTA or your sponsoring organization.

CNCS regulations that prohibit electoral and lobbying activities are contained in 45 CFR Part 1226 (see Appendix C). The approach of the regulations is twofold: 1) Restrictions on the assignment of VISTA members to, or restrictions on the receipt of CNCS funds by, certain organizations because of the nature of the organizations or their activities; and 2) Restrictions on member assignments and activities.

The organizational restrictions are based on the premise that the assignment of members or the receipt of CNCS funds by certain organizations (regardless of the proposed assignment or activity of the member) is precluded because of the organization's stated purpose or the nature of its activities.

The restrictions on member assignments and activities contain four basic areas of prohibited activities:

1) Electoral; 2) Voter registration, except that programs assisted under this Act may make voter registration information available to the public on the premises of such programs; 3) Voter transportation to the polls; and 4) Efforts of influence legislation. The prohibitions are directed to the use of CNCS funds, the assignments of members, and any other activities supported by CNCS funds.

The Domestic Volunteer Service Act provides two exceptions to the prohibitions on efforts to influence legislation: 1) At the request of a legislative body, committee, or member of a legislative body, and 2) Regarding an authorization or appropriation measure directly affecting the operation of the project or program.

The regulation, found at 45 CFR Part 1226, describes the conditions under which activities pursuant to these exceptions were once undertaken. The regulation also describes the applicability of the restrictions to sponsoring organization employees and the obligations of sponsoring organizations to ensure observance of the regulation. Appropriation laws have restricted these exceptions and activities permitted in 45 CFR Part 1226. Consequently, **you must contact your CNCS State Office before you engage in any political or lobbying activity.**

Your Civil Rights & Responsibilities

You are protected by VISTA and the Corporation for National and Community Service from being subjected to discrimination or harassment. You also have an obligation as a VISTA to make sure you do not subject anyone else to discrimination or harassment. This extends to everyone you come in contact with, including other VISTAs, clients, and volunteers and employees at your service site.

What Is Discrimination?

Discrimination is treating people differently because of who they are, where they come from, or the groups they belong to. Discrimination in a VISTA service setting is **illegal** when it targets a person or group based on such **non-merit factors** as race, gender, or religion, also known as **protected classes**.

Protected Classes

The Corporation for National and Community Service defines protected classes as the following:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Sex/gender
- Disability (physical or mental)
- Age
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity and expression; or
- Sexual orientation

Illegal Discrimination

- BOTH targets a person or group because of a difference AND singles them out for different treatment
- May be a one-time occurrence or part of an ongoing pattern
- Can happen to anyone

What Is Harassment?

Illegal harassment in a VISTA service setting is **severe and/or pervasive** verbal or non-verbal communication relating to an individual's gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other **non-merit factor** that interferes with a VISTA's performance and/or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive service environment. Harassment can consist of spoken or written words, images, or actions and can happen to anyone. It includes but is not limited to:

- Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors
- Pressure for one's company
- Unwelcome persistent letters, phone calls, emails or other media
- Distribution or display of offensive material
- Offensive looks, gestures, physical encroachment, or threatening behavior

Illegal Harassment

- Includes—but is not limited to—sexual harassment
- Can be spoken words or unspoken actions
- Is more than just annoying or uncomfortable behavior
- Generally happens over a period of time
- Creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive service environment
- Prevents a VISTA from serving effectively
- Can happen to anyone

Your Civil Rights & Responsibilities, cont.

What Should I Do?

If you experience or witness discrimination or harassment, and if you feel safe and comfortable doing so, you can approach and talk to the person you suspect of engaging in harassing or discriminating behavior directly yourself. If that doesn't work, or if you do not feel safe and comfortable doing so, you can also talk to your VISTA supervisor.

If you can not go to your supervisor, or you do and the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact your state office (see the link to the list of state office contacts below). Finally, you can contact the Corporation's Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness or OCRI (see contact information below). If you and/or your VISTA supervisor or state office contact chooses to contact OCRI, note that claims must be made within 45 days of the incident.

Useful Questions/Suggestions

If you think you have experienced or witnessed Discrimination or Harassment, these questions and suggestions may be useful:

- Have I (Can I) talk to the person involved?
- What assumptions might I be making? How can I check out these assumptions?
- Assume positive intent. Communicate to clarify.
- Use statements such as, "It appears to me that…"
- Speak with a supervisor (if you can).
- Ask yourself: Is there something I can learn from this?

Where Can I Go for More Information?

The Corporation for National and Community Service takes discrimination and harassment very seriously and makes the following resources available to you:

Corporation State Office Contacts A list of state offices can be found online at **www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-offices**.

A complete list of the Corporation's Official Policies on Discrimination and Harassment can be found in the online VISTA Member Handbook at **www.vistacampus.gov/lessons/vista-member-handbook**

Contact Information

Office of Civil Rights & Inclusiveness
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 10800
Washington, DC 20525

202-606-7503	**HOTLINE**
202-606-3472	**TDD**
202-606-3465	**FAX**
eo@cns.gov	**EMAIL**

VISTA Leaders

VISTA leaders serve in large VISTA projects or by region where there is a minimum of six VISTAs per leader. The leader's aim is to expand and build the capacity of the VISTAs he/she leads, in coordination with the projects in which he/she serves. VISTA leaders serve as role models and trainers who strengthen the leadership capacity of VISTAs, VISTA projects, and community members. They also provide resources to members.

1. Responsibilities of a VISTA Leader

VISTA leaders focus on increasing the effectiveness of both the VISTAs and the project they serve. Leaders help recruit, screen, and train VISTA members. They search for ways to further develop a VISTA's skill set, providing opportunities for growth and making sure each VISTA is successful and prepared for life after service. Leaders promote information sharing, create a VISTA support net, develop in-service training workshops, and create model programs. Many leaders assist their VISTAs in the writing of grants, fundraising, and conducting broad-based public awareness campaigns. In general, they set an example of leadership for VISTAs; ensure positive relations; facilitate idea sharing; and help in mediating issues between the community, supervisors, and VISTAs.

2. Requesting a VISTA Leader

CNCS State Offices (CSOs) discuss with project sponsors the opportunity to place a VISTA leader on larger VISTA projects or a group of smaller regionally located projects. Coordination and planning should begin as the project is being developed or renewed for another year. Sponsors must officially request a leader by including a Volunteer Leader Assignment Description (VLAD) in their project application to the state office. If the need for a leader develops after the project application has been approved, the VLAD should be submitted to the CSO for approval and the project application should be amended accordingly. The VLAD may also serve as a tool for recruiting.

3. Application Process

In the same manner as someone applies through MyAmeriCorps to be a VISTA, a VISTA must apply to an open leader position in MyAmeriCorps and go through the application and enrollment process. The exception to this requirement is a VISTA who is currently serving at a project and wants to become a VISTA leader at the project once their first year of service is completed. If the CSO, supervisor, and VISTA agree that the VISTA has the capacity to serve as a VISTA leader, then the VISTA may skip the application process and go on to the enrollment process.

4. Selection of a Leader

VISTAs are eligible to serve as leaders if they have completed at least one year of VISTA service and have strong recommendations from their last VISTA project supervisor, a record of outstanding performance, and a demonstrated leadership ability. A VISTA is not entitled to a leader position, but must apply to an open leader position and go through the application and enrollment process.

Each leader position is full-time and subject to the same terms and conditions of service that apply to VISTAs (in regards to outside employment, school, the Hatch Act, etc.). Leaders may not perform the duties of a VISTA in addition to their functions as leaders.

5. Training

VISTA leaders participate in a leaders training scheduled at various times throughout the year. The training provides leaders with an introduction to their new roles and equips them with a set of skills to help recruit and assist VISTAs, and ensure their projects are sustainable.

6. Length of Service

The total amount of years an individual may serve in VISTA is five. A VISTA leader may serve additional years as a VISTA leader if the individual did an outstanding job as a leader and the project sponsor and the state office director or program specialist agree that it would benefit the project to extend his or her service term.

VISTA Living Allowance Schedule 2016

Period	Start Date	End Date	Direct Deposit Date
201521	10/18/2015	10/31/2015	11/6/2015
201522	11/1/2015	11/14/2015	11/20/2015
201523	11/15/2015	11/28/2015	12/4/2015
201524	11/29/2015	12/12/2015	12/18/2015
201525	12/13/2015	12/26/2015	1/1/2016
201526	12/27/2015	1/9/2016	1/15/2016
201601	1/10/2016	1/23/2016	1/29/2016
201602	1/24/2016	2/6/2016	2/12/2016
201603	2/7/2016	2/20/2016	2/26/2016
201604	2/21/2016	3/5/2016	3/11/2016
201605	3/6/2016	3/19/2016	3/25/2016
201606	3/20/2016	4/2/2016	4/8/2016
201607	4/3/2016	4/16/2016	4/22/2016

Period	Start Date	End Date	Direct Deposit Date
201608	4/17/2016	4/30/2015	5/6/2016
201609	5/1/2016	5/14/2016	5/20/2016
201610	5/15/2016	5/28/2016	6/3/2016
201611	5/29/2016	6/11/2016	6/17/2016
201612	6/12/2016	6/25/2016	7/1/2016
201613	6/26/2016	7/9/2016	7/15/2016
201614	7/10/2016	7/23/2016	7/29/2016
201615	7/24/2016	8/6/2016	8/12/2016
201616	8/7/2016	8/20/2016	8/26/2016
201617	8/21/2016	9/3/2016	9/9/2016
201618	9/4/2016	9/17/2016	9/23/2016
201619	9/18/2016	10/1/2016	10/7/2016
201620	10/2/2016	10/15/2016	10/21/2016

Deposit dates may differ if your disbursement is from a grant given to your sponsoring organization.

Living allowances received by U.S. Treasury checks will arrive approximately five days after the direct deposit date. Unless pre-approved by your state office, you must receive your living allowance through direct deposit. To set up direct deposit, go to **my.americorps.gov**. If your direct deposited living allowance payment does not arrive by the date listed, contact the VISTA Member Support Unit at the National Service Hotline, 800-942-2677.

For more information about your VISTA living allowance, visit the Benefits of Service page on the VISTA Campus at www.vistacampus.gov/in-service/benefits-service and click on the Resources tab of the Living Allowance section.

VISTA Living Allowance Rates

The Corporation of National and Community Service determines your living allowance rate based on the cost of living in the county where you serve. This chart is a summary of the rates offered. For specific information on the living allowance rate for the county where you serve, please refer to the "Living Allowance Rates by County" chart at ***www.vistacampus.gov/resources/living-allowance-rates-county-1****.*

Monthly Amount ($)	Months in a Year	Yearly Amount ($)	Days in a Year	Daily Rate ($)	Days in Bi-weekly Allowance	Amount per Pay Period ($)
973	12	11,676	365	31.99	14	447.86
983	12	11,796	365	32.31	14	452.34
1,026	12	12,312	365	33.73	14	472.22
1,069	12	12,828	365	35.14	14	491.96
1,108	12	13,296	365	36.42	14	509.88
1,178	12	14,136	365	38.73	14	542.22
1,222	12	14,664	365	40.17	14	562.38
1,276	12	15,312	365	41.95	14	587.30
1,333	12	15,996	365	43.82	14	613.48
1,393	12	16,716	365	45.80	14	641.20
1,466	12	17,592	365	48.19	14	674.66
1,515	12	18,180	365	49.80	14	697.20
1,650	12	19,800	365	54.25	14	759.50

**Gross is amount prior to deductions for taxes and/or life insurance.*

Direct Deposit

The United States Treasury requires that federal payments be made by direct electronic deposit except when this would cause an unusual "hardship" on the payee due to a physical or mental disability, or a geographic, language, or literacy barrier or would impose a financial hardship. If you experience such hardship, a U.S. Treasury check can be mailed to you or to the project address closest to your assignment.

If you believe that receiving your pay by direct deposit payment would cause you hardship, please put this in writing and submit it to your Corporation for National and Community Service state office and your payments may be made by check.

A direct deposit form can be completed online at **my.americorps.gov**.

Successful Volunteer Programs Answer Key

The Answer Key to the Successful Volunteer Programs Puzzle Activity completed in the Volunteer Development breakout group.

1. Plan

Research resources and current trends in the use of volunteers.

Research your organization's past and current use of volunteers.

Recruit stakeholders to advise and contribute to the volunteer effort.

Building on past and current practice, plan how volunteers will serve the project.

Develop or refine volunteer policies and procedures.

Develop or refine processes for how volunteers will be guided, evaluated, and recognized.

2. Outreach & Recruit

Identify specific volunteer needs. What skills, abilities, and background experiences are you seeking in volunteers?

Develop volunteer task descriptions that spell out qualifications, activities, benefits, time commitment, and other expectations.

Develop a targeted recruitment plan: Where are the people with the qualities you are seeking?

Develop a plan for marketing the program.

Market your volunteer opportunities in places where you'll find your target volunteers.

3. Screen & Match

Ensure appropriate screening methods are in place. Secure background checks if needed.

Intake and review applications.

Interview prospective volunteers. Check references.

Match volunteers with appropriate opportunities.

4. Train & Support

Identify resources and implement plan for volunteer training.

Implement plan to train staff on how to effectively work with volunteers.

Orient volunteers to the organization and their task.

Ensure that volunteers have ongoing guidance and support.

Create ways to recognize volunteer efforts and volunteer-staff partnerships.

5. Monitor & Evaluate

Implement record-keeping and communication systems to assess how things are going.

Ensure that there is a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments, and perceptions from volunteers.

Gather input on volunteer performance and outcomes.

Use information to give volunteers feedback on their performance and to inform needed changes in the program.

Report volunteer outcomes to key stakeholders.

6. Sustain

Research funding and internal/external resources to support volunteer effort.

Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and secure staff or volunteer resources to continue the program.

Revise and document all processes, policies, procedures, communication systems, and evaluation data.

Oath of Service

I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend
the Constitution of the United States
against all enemies, foreign and domestic;

That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;

That I take this obligation freely,
without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion;

And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties
of the office on which I am about to enter.

So help me God.

Note: *The phrase "So help me God" in the oath may be stricken, and the word "swear" where it appears above may be changed to "affirm" rather than swear to the affidavits. These are the only legal changes that can be made to the oath. The oath is for all federal government employees.*

AmeriCorps Pledge

I will get things done for America -
to make our people safer,
smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy,
I will take action.

Faced with conflict,
I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity,
I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment
with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member,
and I will get things done.

Note: *The pledge is only for AmeriCorps members.*

VISTA Webinars

VISTA webinars are offered several times a month. Recordings are available on demand.

Post PSO

Plan Your Professional Development

- Offered two to three weeks after PSO
- Learn how to make a plan for your professional development
- Learn more about the VISTA Campus

Sample Topics

Life as a VISTA

- How to live on the living allowance
- Networking in your community
- How to use your Education Award
- Career planning

The Work

- How to work with volunteers
- Design and run an effective meeting
- Use social media to recruit donors and volunteers
- How to research for grants

vistacampus.gov/webinars

VISTA Blend

The VISTA Blend consists of **10-week online courses** designed to enhance your capacity to serve as a VISTA and to help you build a professional skill set for your future.

As a VISTA Blend student you will:

- Receive individual support and connect with other VISTAs
- Apply course activities and materials to carry out the VAD
- Earn three transferable college credit recommendations

Blend courses are offered three times a year and are available to eligible VISTAs at no cost. Check the Blend page of the VISTA Campus for more information.

Courses

Volunteer Mobilization

- Develop volunteer recruitment strategies
- Create screening and interviewing protocols
- Construct volunteer orientations and trainings

Resource Development

- Develop fundraising tools and strategies
- Learn and practice the grant writing process
- Gain knowledge to create and plan fundraising events

vistacampus.gov/vistablend

facebook.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA

youtube.com/VISTAoutreach

linkedin.com/company/americorps-vista

meetup.com/VISTA-Meetup

twitter.com/VISTAbuzz

instagram.com/nationalservice

#JoinVISTA