VISTA … A Legacy of Service

PRE-SERVICE ORIENTATION

Fall 2012

VISTA
Volunteers In Service To America

education northwest

Bankstreet College of Education

VISTA Campus:
Your Guide to All
Things VISTA!
vistacampus.gov
Get informed. Get trained. Get connected.
VISTAs
Supervisors

7 Things About Me

My Name: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

VISTA

Pre-Service Orientation Notebook

Key Questions to Ask My Supervisor

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- _____
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My PSO Notes

"AmeriCorps taught me that change is a gradual process, but can be accomplished. It took a lot of work, but we made real progress."

—AC VISTA Karen Lenthal

My PSO Notes

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 _____

Pre-Service Orientation Workbook

Fall 2012

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Mission and Legacy

Corporation for National and 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 and Legacy

VISTA builds capacity in non-profit organizations and communities to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

For over 45 years, VISTA has been helping bring communities and individuals out of poverty. Today, nearly 6,000 VISTA members serve in hundreds of non-profit organizations and public agencies throughout the country — working to promote literacy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, or 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 capacity-building relates to VISTA service.
- Relate your assignment to capacity-building and fighting poverty.
- Recognize skills and activities required to successfully build capacity in an organization.
- Describe your service responsibilities and activities, based on your assignment description.
- Formulate key questions to ask your supervisor about your assignment.
- Expand your understanding of poverty in the United States.
- Become inspired to fight poverty as part of your service.
- Increase your awareness of the various dimensions of culture and how they may impact service.
- Identify and honor key cultural aspects of your sponsoring organization/community.

VISTA Impact Facts

Since 1965, over 190,000 people have served as VISTA volunteers working with local organizations to strengthen communities and help people escape poverty.

In 2011, VISTAs helped raise more than $162 million in funds and in-kind contributions for anti-poverty efforts.

In 2011, 7,304 VISTAs served with 1,132 anti-poverty programs.

In 2011, VISTAs mobilized 1 million community volunteers. This is an average of 136 volunteers per VISTA.

Additionally, in FY 2011:

- 456,033 disadvantaged youth were mentored;
- 3,562,862 disadvantaged youth served in communities.
- 35,156 economically disadvantaged veterans or military family members were served.

Eighty percent of former VISTA members continue to volunteer in their communities after their term of service ends.

Capacity Building Definition

Tasks and activities to create, expand or strengthen systems or processes in order to increase an organization's ability to function effectively and meet its mission.

These tasks and activities include the transfer of knowledge, relationships and products.

Poverty: A Lack of Resources

Resources can be defined as:

- **Financial—**having the money to purchase goods and services; however, financial resources are more than just cash. Assets such as credit, property and equity are also sources of financial resources.

- **Emotional—**Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This is an internal resource and shows itself through stamina, perseverance and choices.

- **Mental—**having the capacity to process information, evaluate a situation, and use prior experience to make decisions in daily living.

- **Social Capital—**having friends, family, backup resources and knowledge bases available to access in times of need. These are external resources.

- **Role Models—**having frequent access to appropriate adults who are nurturing and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior (mentors).

Models of Poverty

Absolute poverty is "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to social services" (United Nations, Copenhagen Declaration, 1995).

Relative poverty refers to deprivation that is relative to the standard of living enjoyed by other members of society. Even if basic needs are met, a segment of the population may still be considered "poor" if they possess fewer resources, opportunities or goods than other citizens.

Types of Poverty

Situational poverty refers to people living in poverty for a short time as the result of circumstance (unemployment, chronic illness,disability, divorce, or death of a family member).

Generational poverty refers to people in poverty for two or more generations.

The Realities of Meeting Basic Needs

(Dr. Donna Beegle, *See Poverty…Be the Difference! Discovering the Missing Pieces for Working with People in Poverty*, 2005)

Consider the following questions and reflect on your list of physiological and safety needs. Imagine the amount of time people in poverty spend meeting these basic needs. Think about the resiliency and resourcefulness of people in poverty.

- Where can you cash a check without any identification? How much will it cost?
- Where can you get a loan on your car title? How much will it cost?
- From which dumpsters can you get returnable cans and bottles without being caught?
- How can you get tons of newspaper and cardboard? Where do you sell these items? How much will you earn?
- Explain what to do if you are being evicted and have no money to move.
- Tell what you would do to survive without garbage service, utilities or a telephone.
- Explain how to survive winter nights without heat.
- Where would you go for help if your utilities were being shut off?
- How do you show "proof" that you live in a neighborhood that you really don't in order to get better services?
- Explain how to go for days without food.
- Which stores will let you get food and pay for it later?
- Explain how to keep food cold without a refrigerator.
- Explain how to cook without a stove.

Poverty Thresholds for 2011 (By Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years)

Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual)									
Under 65 years	$11,702								
65 years and over	10,788								
Two people									
Householder under 65 years	15,063	$15,504							
Householder 65 years and over	13,596	15,446							
Three people	17,595	18,106	$18,123						
Four people	23,201	23,581	22,811	$22,891					
Five people	27,979	28,386	27,517	26,844	$26,434				
Six people	32,181	32,309	31,643	31,005	30,056	$29,494			
Seven people	37,029	37,260	36,463	35,907	34,872	33,665	$32,340		
Eight people	41,414	41,779	41,027	40,368	39,433	38,247	37,011	$36,697	
Nine people or more	49,818	50,059	49,393	48,835	47,917	46,654	45,512	45,229	$43,487

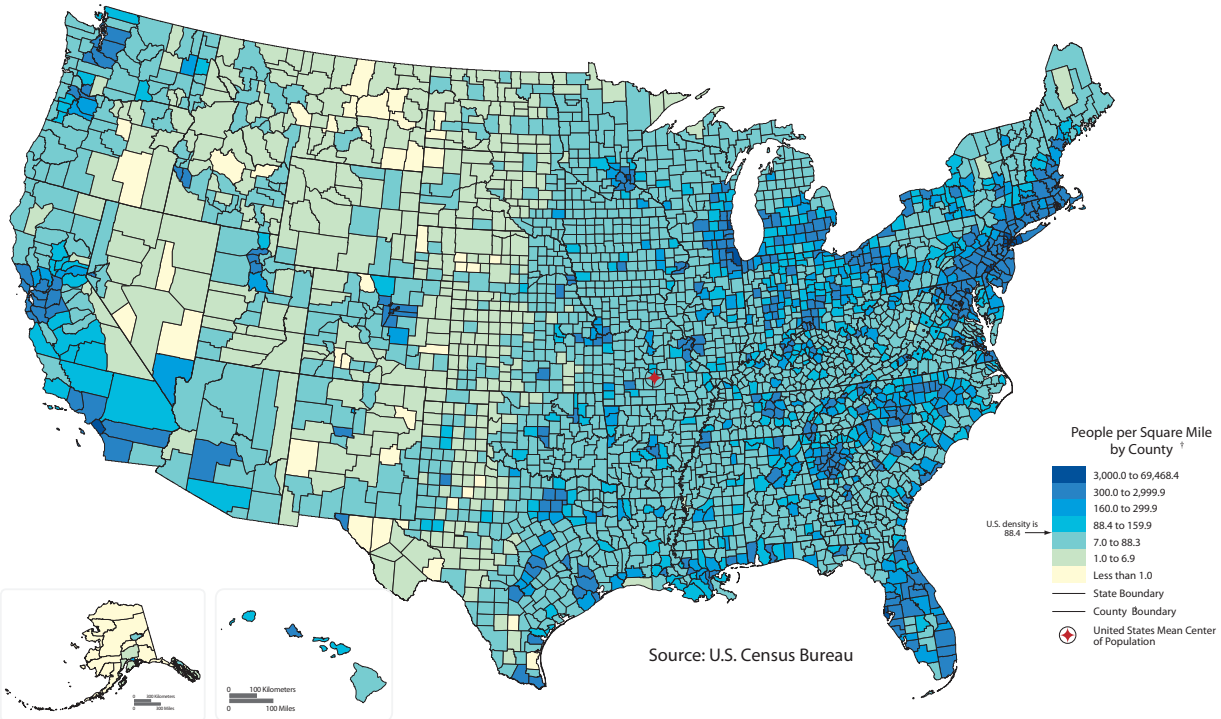
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2012 Poverty Guidelines (Dept. of Health and Human Services)

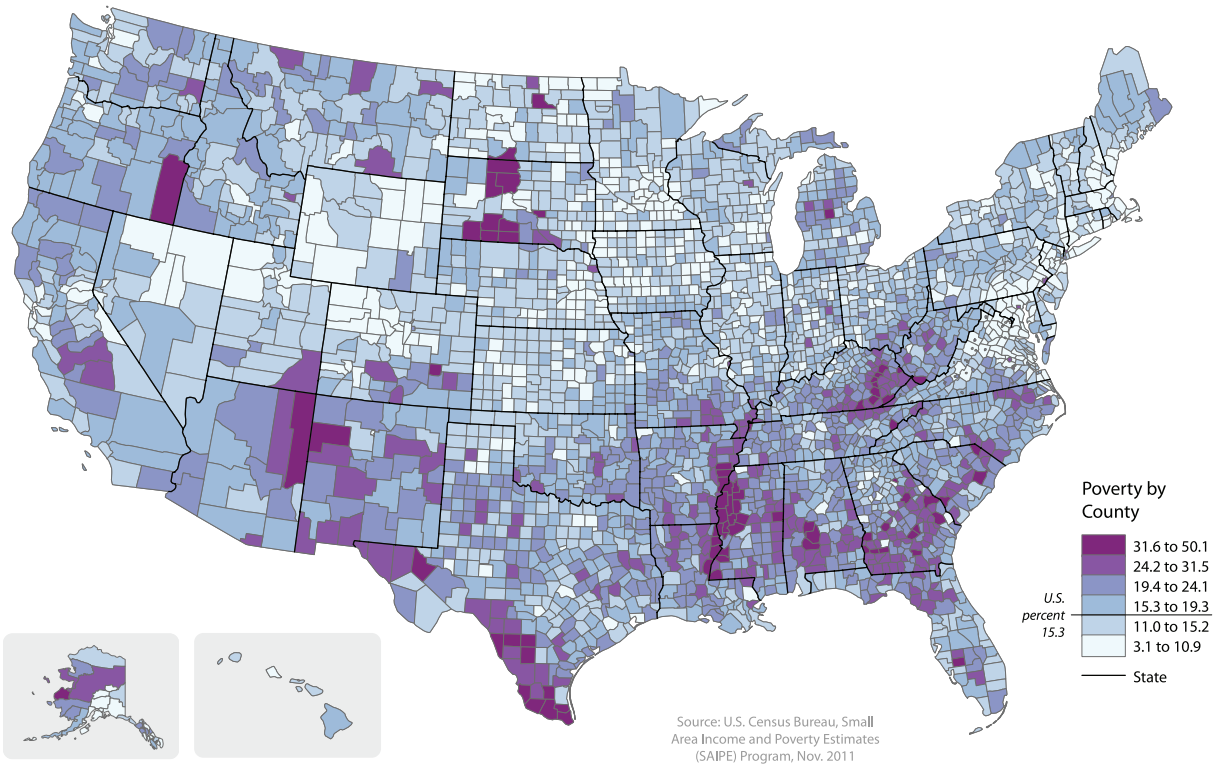
Persons in Family or Household	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	$11,170	$13,970	$12,860
2	15,130	18,920	17,410
3	19,090	23,870	21,960
4	23,050	28,820	26,510
5	27,010	33,770	31,060
6	30,970	38,720	35,610
7	34,930	43,670	40,160
8	38,890	48,620	44,710
For each additional person add	3,960	4,950	4,550

Source: *Federal Register: January 26, 2012*
Available: http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml

US Population Density (2010 Census)



Percentage of Total Population in Poverty (2010)



Poverty Statistics Overview

Age
Children comprise the greatest numbers and percentages of people in poverty.

Race & Hispanic origin
The highest numbers of people in poverty are white; however, people of color have the highest percentages of their population in poverty.

Household type
Out of the large number of married households, a small percentage of them live in poverty. Out of the small number of female-headed households, a large percentage of them live in poverty.

Employment status
The total number of people in poverty who worked full time or part time is higher than those who did not work at all.

Educational attainment
The more advanced one's education is, the less likely it is that he/she will experience high rates of poverty.

Selected Poverty Statistics

The poverty rate climbed to 15.1 percent in 2010 – the highest level since 1993. In 2011, it remained at 15 percent, with 46.2 million people living in poverty in the U.S. An estimated 59 percent of Americans will experience a year or more of poverty between the ages of 20 and 75.

Who's Living in Poverty Today?

- African Americans experienced the highest poverty rate in 2011 at 27.6 percent. The rate for Hispanics was 25.3 percent.
- The poverty rate for children under 18 was 21.9 percent in 2011, for children under 6, it was 24.5 percent. People aged 65 and older had a much lower rate, only 8.7 percent.
- Suburban communities have had a large increase in poverty in the last decade. Nearly 12 percent lived in poverty in 2010, up from 8 percent in 2001. In 2011 that number decreased slightly to 11.3 percent.
- In 2011, 31.2 percent of households headed by women lived in poverty.

Unemployment

- In 2011, the median duration of unemployment was 21.4 weeks.
- In 2011, an individual who had been unemployed for less than 5 weeks had a 31 percent chance of becoming employed in a subsequent month, whereas an individual who had been jobless for a half year or longer had only a 10 percent chance.
- About 44 percent of the jobless searched for work for a half year or longer before giving up in 2011.

Declining Incomes

- Real median household income in the United States in 2011 was $50,054, a 1.5 percent decline in real terms from the 2010 median.
- Between 2010 and 2011, the median earnings of men declined from $49,463 to $48,202, and those of women declined from $38,052 to $37,118.

Health Insurance

- In 2011, 48.6 million Americans were without health insurance, often making them one illness or accident away from poverty.
- The uninsured rate for children in poverty in 2011 (13.8 percent) was greater than the rate for all children (9.4 percent).

Sources*:*

- *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011, U.S. Census Bureau.* Available at www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-243.pdf
- *Job search of the unemployed by duration of unemployment.* Available at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/03/art3full.pdf
- *Rethinking the Scope and Impact of Poverty in the United States.* Available at http://www.law.uconn.edu/system/files/private/rank.pdf

Learn More About Poverty

On the VISTA Campus:

VISTA Blend Course - Poverty in the United States

An exclusive opportunity available only for VISTAs! Explore poverty in the United States and in your community. Earn undergraduate college credit, network with other VISTAs, and deepen your understanding of poverty issues through this online course. Learn more about the course's content, availability, and requirements by going to the VISTAs section of vistacampus.gov and clicking the VISTA Blend banner that will appear at the top of the page (you can also run a search on the Campus for "VISTA Blend").

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 the VISTAs section of vistacampus.gov, click "The Work," and then click the "Poverty in America" icon. Resources you can find there include:

- Conversations with Stephen Pimpare on poverty in America (recorded webinars)
- Poverty data
- Tools and resouces to learn more about financial asset development

Books:

- *Understanding Poverty* (2002) by Sheldon H. Danziger and Robert H. Haveman
- *The Working Poor: Invisible in America* (2005) by David K. Shipler
- *The State of Working America* 2004/2005 (2005) by Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein, Sylvia Allegretto (Economic Policy Institute)
- *Field Guide to the US Economy* (2006) by Johnathon Teller-Elsberg, Nancy Folbre, James Heintz (Center for Popular Economics)
- *Without a Net: Middle Class and Homeless (With Kids) in America (2006) by* Michelle Kennedy
- *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (2001) by James Agee, Walker Evans
- *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) by John Steinbeck

Learn More About Poverty (cont.)

Articles:

- "Relatively Deprived" by John Cassidy (*The New Yorker*, April 3, 2006)
- "Overcoming the Silence of Generational Poverty" by Dr. Donna M. Beegle (*Talking Points*, Oct/Nov 2003)
- "Getting to Why' to solve for 'How': Kids in Poverty Now on Radar." An extended interview with national expert Dr. Donna Beegle on breaking through the barriers of generational poverty. From *Northwest Education*, Fall 2004, at http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/1036

Reports:

- "Getting Out — and Staying Out — of Poverty: The Complex Causes of and Responses to Poverty in the Northwest" (Dec. 2004) by David Harrison and Bob Watrus for the Northwest Area Foundation

Web Sites:

- The US Census Bureau (www.census.gov)
- Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison (www.irp.wisc.edu)
- National Center for Children in Poverty (www.nccp.org)
- Dr. Donna Beegle's Communication Across Barriers site (www.combarriers.com)
- To look up the latest on your community, go to http://www.census.gov/acs/www/. Enter the city, county or zip under "Data by Geography". When demographic data appear, click "show more" next to the Social or Economic Characteristics for more information.
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) in your area, go to www.idanetwork.org. Click on "IDA Directory" in the left column.

VISTA Project Plan – Example

Column A **AmeriCorps VISTA Project Plan**	*Column B* **Date(s)**	*Column C*
Community Need: Describe the community need to be addressed in relation to the problem(s) identified in your project narrative (Need). • *Studies have found that more than 500 children and youth in Waketa County have at least one incarcerated parent.* • *About two-thirds of these children and youth (61%) live in households with incomes below the Federal poverty line and are more inclined to suffer drug use, diminished high school graduation rates and unemployment.* • *Waketa Community Services (WCS) currently provides mentoring services to children and youth of incarcerated parents; however, WCS has had difficulty finding enough volunteers to meet the demand for mentors.*		
Goal Statement: Describe the impact your project will have in addressing the community need identified above. This goal statement should cover the three-year project period. *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 WCS VISTA project will build the capacity of the organization by developing a sustainable Volunteer Recruitment and Management system for the mentoring program.*		
Performance Milestone *At least three Volunteer Recruitment and Management system components will be created and/or revised.* ***Indicator:*** *System components created and/or revised. These may include but are not limited to: volunteer recruitment database, screening procedures, mentor training curricula, and volunteer support resources.* ***Target:*** *Three system components will be created and/or revised.*	May 20XX	

VISTA Project Plan – Example (cont.)

Column A **AmeriCorps VISTA Project Plan**	*Column B* **Date(s)**	*Column C*
How Measured: *Volunteer Recruitment and Management System Checklist.* ***Description of Data Collection:*** *The VISTA supervisor will use the Volunteer Recruitment and Management System Checklist approximately twice per month to track the status of each system component VISTA members are working on.*		
Performance Milestone *New/revised recruitment systems are operational: 45 Volunteers are recruited.* ***Indicator:*** *Volunteers recruited using new volunteer recruitment systems.* ***Target:*** *45 volunteers will be recruited.* ***How Measured:*** *Volunteer Recruitment Log* ***Description of Data Collection:*** *Volunteer Recruitment Log, completed after each recruitment event by VISTA member.*	Sept 20XX	
Performance Milestone *New/revised Volunteer Recruitment and Management systems are effective: 75% (30 of 40) volunteers recruited, trained and managed using the new/revised Volunteer Recruitment and Management system will serve as mentors for at least 9 months.* ***Indicator:*** *Volunteers recruited and managed using the new/revised Volunteer Recruitment and Management system serve as mentors for at least 9 months.* ***Target:*** *75% of volunteers will serve as mentors for at least 9 months.* ***How Measured:*** *Mentoring Logs.* ***Description of Data Collection:*** *Mentoring Logs, completed weekly by mentors.*	Sept 20XX	

Glossary of Terms for the Project Plan

The Community Need is the problem or issue in the community that your project will address.

The Goal Statement describes the impact that the AmeriCorps VISTA project will have on the community need during the term of the project, which is typically three years

A Performance milestone is an anticipated result that the agency hopes the VISTA will achieve over the course of one year. Each performance milestone is followed by:

- **Planned Period of Accomplishment**
  The anticipated date performance milestones will be completed for that program year.

- **Indicator/Evidence of progress**
  The information that will be collected to determine if performance milestones have been achieved.

- **Target**
  The level or amount of change expected to achieve as measured by the indicator.

- **How measured**
  The method that will be used to collect data.

- **Description of data collection or measurement process**
  A description of the data collection process including who will collect the data, from whom, using which instrument, when and how often.

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) SAMPLE

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) **Primary:** Education **Secondary:**
Note: *If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.*

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: 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 of the Assignment (*8/20/20XX – 2/01/20YY)*
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 of the Assignment (*1/01/20YY – 8/19/20YY)*
Set up outreach systems and build partnerships with community organizations in order to spread the word out 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.

Capacity Building Sessions

On the final day of the PSO, you have the opportunity to choose one of three sessions to attend. As you read through the descriptions below, think about the goals and activities listed in your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) or your Project Plan. Which of these sessions will help you to build the skills necessary to fulfill your service activities?

Volunteer Generation and Development

How do you create a successful volunteer program? In this session, you will identify the steps to developing a sustainable volunteer program and engage in a small group experiential activity to learn more about each step.

You might want to choose this session if during your VISTA service you have to: recruit, train and support volunteers.

Resource Development

How do organizations raise the money needed to fund their valuable programs? In this session, you will learn the basics of resource development, how to give a "minute message," and practice asking for in-kind donations.

You might want to choose this session if during your VISTA service you have to: organize an event, seek in-kind donations, or build partnerships in the community.

Partnerships and Building Relationships

What does it take to build sustainable partnerships? How do you find common ground in the community? This is a hands-on session in which you will experience the opportunities and challenges of the partnership building process.

You might want to choose this session if during your VISTA service you have to: build partnerships or networks, identify stakeholders in the community or apply for funds with other local organizations.

Workplace Values and Norms

Power Distance

Low Power Distance ⟷ High Power Distance

- It's okay to disagree with or question the boss.
- There is more interaction between the boss and workers.
- The boss is more democratic.
- Taking initiative is okay.
- The boss sees himself/herself as one of the group.
- Power is decentralized.

- The worker does not question or disagree with the boss.
- There is less interaction between the boss and workers.
- Power is centralized and generally not shared.
- The boss does not reward initiative.
- The boss is more autocratic.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Low Uncertainty Avoidance ⟷ High Uncertainty Avoidance

- There is less emphasis on conformity.
- It's okay to bypass the chain of command if necessary.
- Conflict can't always be avoided.
- Taking risks is acceptable. Interactions are more informal.
- Differences are interesting.

- There is more emphasis on conforming.
- It's never good to bypass the chain of command.
- Conflict must be avoided.
- Taking risks is not attractive. Interactions are more formal.
- Differences are uncomfortable.

Source of Status

Achieved Status ⟷ Ascribed Status

- You earn status through achievement, by what you've accomplished in life.
- You get ahead based on your merit.
- Status must be earned; it isn't automatic, and it can be lost.

- Your status comes with your family name, wealth, and/or the groups you are affiliated with.
- Achievements are important, but you can have status without them.

Workplace Values and Norms (cont.)

Concept of Work

Work as Part of Identity ⟷ Work as Functional Necessity

- Work has value in and of itself.
- Your job is an important part of your identity.
- You live to work.
- Getting things done is inherently satisfying.

- Work is the means to pay bills and meet financial obligations.
- Work may be satisfying, but doesn't have to be.
- Life is too short to revolve around one's work.
- Work is what you do, not who you are.

Personal & Professional

Personal/Professional Separated ⟷ Personal/Professional Intertwined

- Personal matters should not be brought to work. Personal/family obligations should be scheduled around work.
- Personal and professional lives should be kept separate.
- People don't understand if you have a family emergency.

- It is impossible to separate personal matters from work.
- You may have to interrupt work to take care of personal business.
- Personal and professional lives inevitably overlap. People understand if you have a family emergency.

Motivation

Professional Opportunity ⟷ Comfortable Work Environment

- Professional opportunity and success are important motivators.
- People want to learn, get ahead, move up in their professions and have greater power, authority and responsibility.
- Job security is not as important as making more money and advancing in one's career.

- People want to have a pleasant work setting and good relationships with co-workers.
- Job security is important, as well as a workplace that takes care of its employees.
- Having more time off for family is very motivating.
- More power and responsibility are not by themselves attractive, even if they mean more money.

Workplace Values and Norms (cont.)

The Key to Productivity

Results ⟷ Harmony

- Focusing on the task ensures success.
- People won't always get along, but you have to move forward anyway.
- Harmony is nice but results are what count.
- Getting results is ultimately more important than how you get them.

- Working well with other people is the key to harmony.
- Harmony in the workplace will ensure eventual success.
- Results bought at the expense of harmony are too costly.
- How you get results is just as important as the results themselves.

The Ideal Worker

Technical Skills ⟷ People Skills

- What matters most in a worker is his/her technical qualifications: education, work experience and specific skills.
- "People" skills are important, but they don't contribute as much to the bottom line.
- Competence is the key to advancement.

- What matters most in a worker is his/her ability to work well with others and not rock the boat.
- Experience and technical skills are important, but they don't contribute as much to the bottom line.
- Age and seniority are important for getting promoted.

Monochronic Time vs. Polychronic Time

Monochronic Time ⟷ Polychronic Time

- Sticking to the schedule is more important than completing the transaction.
- A meeting should proceed without digression and people should stick to the agenda.
- Deadlines should be respected.
- Having to wait for a scheduled appointment is an insult.

- Flexibility is more important than sticking to the schedule.
- Distractions and digressions are inevitable, and therefore, an agenda is just a piece of paper.
- Deadlines should be viewed and followed as approximations.
- Having to wait for a scheduled appointment is normal.

Communication Styles Case Study

Marcus is a VISTA member from Boston who is serving in a rural ranching community in the West, with a population of fewer than 1,000 people. Part of his assignment is to engage community members and local organizations to help create a family literacy program at an elementary school. Although he is new to the community and the organization where he is serving, he is confident he will be able to successfully complete the activities in his Member Assignment because he has a Master's degree and five years of work experience. Early in his service year, a member of his organization named Sharon is assigned to be his mentor. He is told that he can ask her for any advice or guidance. However, when it comes time to plan a series of evening "design meetings" to gather support and input from the community, he rushes headlong into organizing the meetings, without consulting Sharon.

He sets an agenda and sends it with invitations to ten community members who he thinks would be instrumental in starting the program. To gain commitment he follows up the e-mail with phone calls. Marcus reaches eight of the 10 invitees by phone, all of whom say, "Sure, I can come to the meeting." Encouraged, Marcus decides to live by the mantra, "If you offer food, they will come." He buys chips, sodas, and cookies for the event.

On the night of the meeting, only three people show up. Marcus waits 15 minutes before beginning. "I thought we were going to have more representation here," he apologizes while scanning the room. "I expected at least seven. I'm not sure what happened to the others. Does anyone else know?" Marcus looks to the two men and one woman seated. The woman shrugs. One of the men shifts in his seat, but no one says a word. Marcus decides he needs to move on with the meeting. He tapes up his charts and begins walking through his agenda. The three attendees offer very few comments, even when he asks each in turn for their opinions. "Looks like you've got a pretty good plan," is all one man says the entire evening. However, all three remain the full hour and a half, shake his hand, and thank him politely on their way out. As Marcus cleans up, he attributes the low participation to the poor turnout.

Before the second meeting, Marcus e-mails the meeting notes to the 10 original invites. In his e-mail he says, "I hope you can make this very important second meeting. We really need your input and involvement. Help ensure that our family literacy programs reflect the needs of this community." Again, he follows up with phone calls and gets eight confirmations of attendance; however, the only person to show up for the second meeting is Sharon, his mentor. After waiting 30 minutes, Marcus balls up his charts and tosses them in the trash. As they walk out together, Sharon suggests they have a debrief meeting the next day over lunch. During his bike ride home, Marcus begins to wonder if he is cut out for VISTA.

- How would you assess what happend in the scenario? Discuss at your table.

Styles of Communication

Degree of Directness

Direct ⟷ Indirect

- People say what they mean and mean what they say.
- You don't need to read between the lines.
- It's important to be direct and tell it like it is.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- The truth is more important than sparing someone's feelings.

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

1. In regard to "Degree of Directness," I tend to be more _____.

2. How does this communication style relate to the case study?

_____

3. What could Marcus have done to communicate more effectively?

_____

The Role of Context

Low Context ⟷ High Context

- Low context, heterogeneous and individualistic cultures: little is already known.
- The message must be explicit and spelled out.
- Words are the primary means of communication.
- Nonverbal cues are not the key to understanding.

- High context, homogenous and collectivist cultures: much is already known.
- The spoken word is not the primary means of communicating.
- Much is implied but little needs to be said.
- Nonverbal cues and the context are key.
- What is not said may be the message.

1. In regard to "Low or High Context," I tend to prefer communicating in _____context cultures.

2. How does this communication style relate to the case study?

_____

3. What could Marcus have done to communicate more effectively?

_____

Adapted from *Culture Matters*

Styles of Communication (cont.)

The Importance of Face

Face is Less Important ⟷ Face Is Key

- Face has moderate importance.
- 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.
- Criticism is straightforward.
- It's okay to say no, to confront people.

- Face is paramount.
- Saving face/not losing face takes precedence over the "truth".
- Maintaining harmony is the overriding goal of the communication exchange.
- Confrontation is avoided.
- Saying no is difficult.
- Criticism is handled very delicately.
- What one says and what one feels often are not the same.

1. In regard to "The Importance of Face," I think saving face is _____.

2. How does this communication style relate to the case study?

_____

3. What could Marcus have done to communicate more effectively?

_____

The Task or the Person

The Task ⟷ The Person

- The task is separated from the person.
- 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.

- The task and the person can't be separated.
- 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.

1. In regard to "The Task or the Person," I think communication focus should be on the _____.

2. How does this communication style relate to the case study?

_____

3. What could Marcus have done to communicate more effectively?

_____

Adapted from *Culture Matters*

VISTA Site: Cultural Observation Tool

Observe Nonverbal Communication

- How do people dress?
- How do they greet each other in the morning?
- What is the protocol for going in and out of someone's office?
- Do people maintain eye contact when they talk?
- How far apart do people stand?

Observe Mono/Polychronic Behaviors (Behaviors Related to Time)

- Do people come to work on time? Who does and who doesn't?
- What happens when someone who is talking to someone else gets a telephone call?
- What does a third person do when approaching two others who are in conversation?
- Do meetings start on time?
- How long do people with appointments have to wait?

Observe Power Distance Behaviors

- How do subordinates treat their superiors?
- How do superiors treat subordinates?
- Do you see evidence of bosses delegating authority or holding on to it?

VISTA Site: Cultural Observation Tool (cont.)

- Do you see evidence of subordinates taking initiative or just waiting for instruction?
- Whom do people eat lunch with? Do they eat only with their peers?

Communication Styles

- How is conflict handled?
- How is disagreement expressed?
- How is bad news or a negative concern communicated?
- How important does saving face seem to be?
- Are people generally direct or indirect in their conversation?
- Does this appear to be a high or low context workplace?

Other Workplace Norms

- When people interact, do they get to the task right away or talk more generally?
- Do people work closely together or more independently?
- Are women treated differently from men? If so, in what way?
- What kind of behaviors in workers seem to be rewarded? What are people praised for?
- What does the prevailing attitude seem to be about rules and procedures and the need to follow them?

Strategies and Suggestions for Effective Community Entry

Strategies and suggestions for identifying and using a cultural guide/coach:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Strategies and suggestions for learning the organization's and community's culture:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Strategies and Suggestions for Effective Community Entry (cont.)

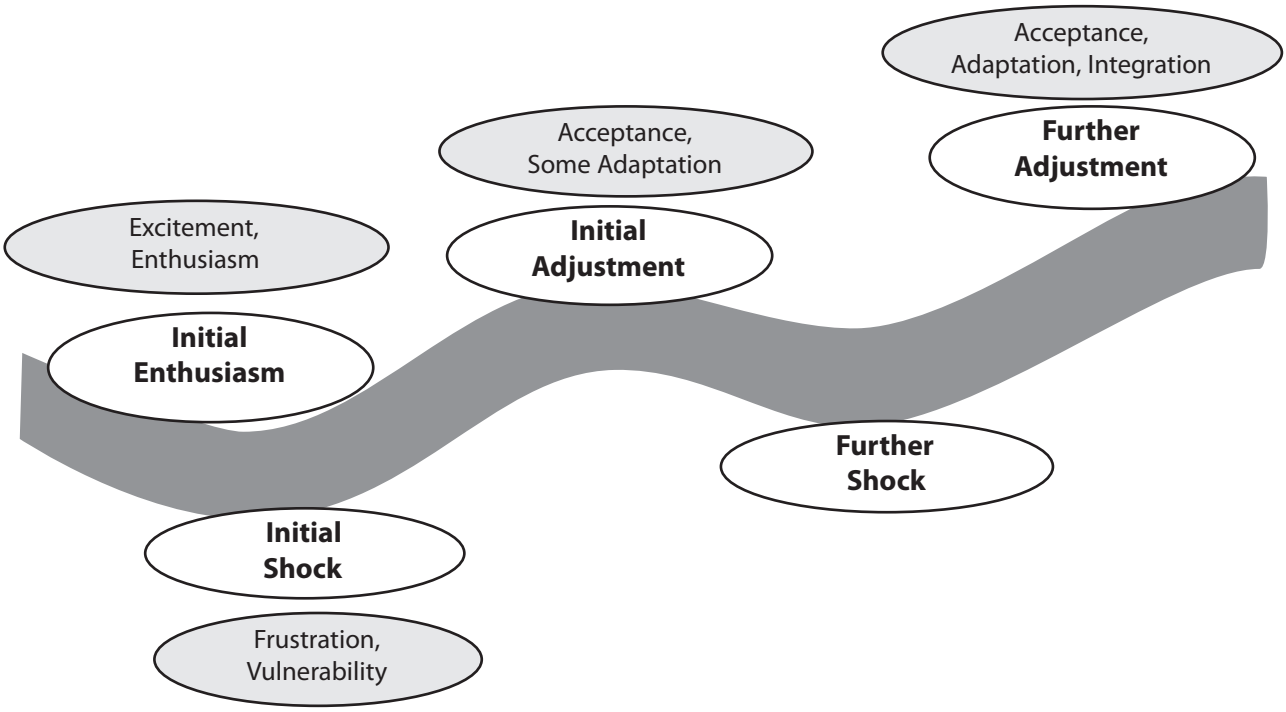
Strategies and suggestions for effective organizational and community entry:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Community Entry "Do's"

- Listen more than speaking. Move slower than fast to understand and be understood and accepted.
- Seek out answers to questions in respectful ways.
- Seek out a trusted and knowledgeable ally to be your cultural mentor.
- Ask for help from reliable community resources to understand:
  - Major groups, sectors, and networks
  - Organizational and community structure
  - Formal and informal leadership - who are viewed as "spokes people" and the "elder voices" or keepers of wisdom and knowledge
  - Important values, practices, rituals, people, places, resources, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors
  - How respect is defined and practiced
  - How is service and helping others understood and lived out, what are the traditions of service
  - What are the "non-negotiables"
  - The history of the community – economic, diversity, social, political, major conflicts and struggles, major successes, significant cross-cultural, cross-group collaborations
  - Current significant cross-cultural, cross-group collaborations
  - What is the rhythm of a day, week, season, year in the organization or community
- Commit to suspending one's assumptions. It is important to resist making quick judgments and overgeneralizations. Keep focus on the fact that one's lense is one's lense.
- Understand that relationship building is key to almost everything related to one's service project. Share oneself in ways that earn and garner trust, respect, and confidence.
- Address cultural differences in ways that are not diminishing to anyone or group.
- View one's time in a community more as a privilege and special opportunity than as a right.

A Diagram of Cultural Adjustment



Your Rights and 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**, which the Corporation for National and Community Service defines 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

Your Rights and Responsibilities (cont.)

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

What Should I do if I Experience or Witness Discrimination or Harassment?

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 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?

- 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 the VISTA Campus at vistacampus.gov.

Your Rights and Responsibilities (cont.)

- **Contact Information for OCRI** – Contact OCRI via mail, phone, fax or email at:
  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)

- **Complete List of the Corporation's Official Policies on Discrimination and Harassment** – These can be found in the online VISTA Member Handbook at http://vistacampus.gov/mod/book/view.php?id=2093.

Civil Rights Statements Worksheet

At your table, read one of the following situations and discuss:

- What would you do if you were in this situation or knew someone who was?
- What steps would you take to resolve the issue?
- How would you dialogue with those involved?

1. Upon "discovering" a VISTA's age, a supervisor changes the VAD of a well-qualified, 45-year-old VISTA so that he'll be working with the senior-citizen-focused programs instead of the youth-focused ones.

2. Not long after you brought your same-sex partner to the office holiday party, you find yourself abruptly moved to a different project group and re-assigned the VAD of a departing VISTA whose work always struck you as less interesting.

3. A caseworker on your team often makes snarky comments about the clients your agency serves and refers to them using derogatory terms or stereotypes about their ethnicity or religion.

4. You notice that members of different racial groups seem to get disciplined differently for the same offenses, with some receiving written reprimands while others are just given verbal warnings.

5. A religious coworker has made it his special project to "save" you, inviting you to come with him to his congregation's services, leaving religious pamphlets in your cubicle, and peppering you with questions about your own faith.

6. Ever since your team went out for drinks to celebrate your winning grant proposal, a coworker you are not remotely interested in keeps asking you out on dates.

The following questions could help you with your discussion:

- Can you talk to the person involved?
- What assumptions might you be making? How can you check those assumptions?
- Ask yourself: Is there something I can learn from this?

Principles for initiating a discussion about civil rights:

- Assume positive intent. Communicate to clarify.
- Use statements such as, "It appears to me that…"
- Speak with your supervisor (if you can)

The Minute Message Model

(Name of Organization) **believes** (Deeply held value). **Every day, we** (Verb) (Object) **for** (Constituents), **because** (Problem Statement).

Example:

Community Initiatives believes that people starting projects that serve the public good shouldn't also have to become experts on taxes, accounting and human resources. Every day we provide a legal framework and quality professional support to nonprofit initiatives to allow them to flourish. Because when leaders can focus on their vision, instead of being distracted by back office administrative tasks, they have the greatest chance of improving our community.

Source: Mission-Minded: Marketing and Communications for Nonprofits and Other Do-Gooders (www.Mission-minded.com)

Draft Your Minute Message Introduction:

The Stages of an ASK

Open
- Establish relationship
- Explain mission/purpose
- Identify needs

Discover
- Their motivations
- Their frame of reference/point of view

Present "the ASK"
- Frame the presentation from their view
- Capture their hearts and minds
- Talk about what they can do to…
    - Help you and/or the organization
    - Probe current needs
    - Satisfy their interests

Listen
- Focus
- Don't interrupt

Respond
- Draw out more information
- Attempt to overcome objections

Closure
- Check for understanding
- Follow up immediately
- Leave the door open

Learn More About Resource Development

On the VISTA Campus

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 the VISTAs section of vistacampus.org and clicking the VISTA Blend banner that will appear at the top of the page (you can also run a search on the Campus for "VISTA Blend").

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 the VISTAs section of vistacampus.org, click "The Work," and then click the "Fundraising" icon.

Resource Development Organizations and Websites

The following resources will assist you with ongoing fundraising efforts, trends, and circumstances relative to philanthropy and resource development.

American Association of Fundraising Counsel (www.aafrc.org). Professional organization of fundraisers that prides itself on having high ethical standards.

America Taking Action (www.americatakingaction.com). Find childcare in any state categorized by type such as family providers, day-care centers, and camps.

Association of Fundraising Professionals (www.afpnet.org). Helps its members find education opportunities and become certified.

BBB Wise Giving Alliance (www.give.org). Profiles US charities in order to enhance the decisions of givers and monitors the standards of charitable organizations.

Benevon (www.benevon.com) A consulting firm that coaches and trains non-profits in sustainable fundraising. The archive provides articles and tip sheets on many aspects of resource mobilization.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (www.cbpp.org). Research institute analyzes government policies and programs, particularly those affecting low- and middle-income people.

Resource Development Organizations and Websites (cont.)

GuideStar (www.guidestar.org). A database of non-profit organizations and charities that includes financial details for each group, and a profile of their purpose and programs.

Independent Sector (www.independentsector.org). A coalition of non-profits, foundations, and corporations that assist in strengthening not-for-profit initiatives, philanthropy, and citizen action. Has news, programs, and facts.

JustGive.Org (www.justgive.org). Guide to charitable giving offers details on a variety of non-profit organizations and provides instructional tips for making donations.

Network for Good (www.networkforgood.org). Searchable organization of non-profit foundations and charities provides an opportunity for people to make a donation, become a volunteer, or speak out about a topic.

Non-Profit Times (www.nptimes.com). Covers issues of concern to non-profits and reports on news and developments regarding such organizations.

Volunteer Match (www.volunteermatch.org). Provides information to help individuals nationwide find volunteer opportunities posted by local non-profit and public sector organizations.

Volunteer Solutions (www.volunteersolutions.org). A Volunteer Matching Application that helps connect individuals to volunteer opportunities in their communities.

Grant Writing Resources

The Resource Center – Grant Management
Courses, effective practices and links to other sites. http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/program-financial-and-grant-management/grant-management

Foundation Center
The most authoritative source of information on private philanthropy in the US. This site does have a membership fee. http://foundationcenter.org/

Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University
An academic center devoted to increasing the understanding of philanthropy in the US. http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/

Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training
A multiracial organization that promotes the connection between fundraising and social justice. http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/

Local Resources
There are also many local resources that you can access in your community.

- State libraries often have a full 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. For example, Colorado has the Colorado Grants – http://coloradogrants.org/resources/colorado-resources.php.

Overview of the Sustainable Volunteerism Activities

Plan
This group's assignment was to discuss current volunteer trends. They were to report out on five or more trends and determine: 1) Which trends & issues will have an impact on their organizations? 2) In what ways might these trends/issues have an impact? 3) How can our sponsoring organizations creatively respond to this trend? The handout they referred to is included in the binder.

Outreach
This group's assignment was to create a targeted marketing flyer either for a non-profit of their choice or for a mentoring program.

Recruit
This group's assignment was to develop volunteer task descriptions for volunteers at a community center that is developing a health care program for the homeless. They could choose to draft descriptions for one of three different positions: 1) Conduct the street outreach using techniques that effectively communicate available services to potential beneficiaries; 2) Conduct fundraising activities for the health care program; 3) Secure expert trainers to provide training to volunteers on effective ways to interact with homeless populations. For the assignment descriptions they had to spell out: qualifications, activities, benefits, time commitments, and other experiences.

Train and Support
This group's assignment was to plan a volunteer orientation session. The presentation needed to include an overview of the plan, the content of the orientation, and how it will be delivered. The group needed to explain the choices they made.

Sustain
This group had three choices: 1) They could create a symbol or picture of the components of capacity building in a volunteer program 2) Create a 3-D structure of what capacity building looks like in a sustainable volunteer program 3) Create a table of contents of the artifacts that would be included in a sustainability binder created by a third year VISTA. They could choose to do one activity together or split into more than one group.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs

Time scarcity

Time scarcity is the number one barrier to effectively recruiting and retaining volunteers. People are working longer hours at paid jobs or working two jobs to make ends meet, overscheduling activities for their children and themselves, caring for older parents or raising grandchildren, or spending hours on e-mail and Web sites. As a result, 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*.

Today, the average volunteer will give 52 hours a year. In a 2005 report, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics says that 10% of Americans do most of the volunteer work and those who give more than 100 hours a year account for over 80% of the volunteer hours!

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 that offer:

- Flexible hours and schedules.
- Well-defined jobs with task descriptions that are broken into several smaller ones so that the work can be shared.
- Opportunities for individuals to volunteer with their children as a family activity, rather than having to make the choice of spending even less time parenting.
- Streamlined requirements that reduce the volunteer's time spent in orientation and training by utilizing technology including e-mail discussion lists, chat rooms, video conferencing, conference calls, and more.
- Assurances that their time will not be wasted by extraneous requirements and meetings.
- A chance to learn something new while volunteering.
- An opportunity to have fun. Time-deprived folks need a recreational outlet. It is possible to do hard work and still have fun!

Changing expectations

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!

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs (cont.)

Here is some information that may assist you in managing such a diverse workforce.

Traditionalists or Silent Generation - 1928-1945

Traditionalists (also known as the Silent Generation) are in their 60s, 70s and 80s. About 95% are retired from the workforce. Many organizations depend heavily on this generation to fill their volunteer positions.

- **Hardworking:** Often raised on farms and in rural America, Traditionalists brought a strong work ethic into industrialized society. They grew up during the Great Depression and World War II and consider work a privilege. 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. Unlike younger generations, many worked for the same employer their entire life and were less likely to change jobs to advance their careers.

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

- **Tech-Challenged:** They are slow to change their work habits. As a whole, they are less technologically adept than younger generations. Traditionalists may struggle to learn new technology and work processes.

- **Traditional:** They value traditional morals, safety and security as well as conformity, commitment and consistency. They prefer traditional lecture formats to online, web-based education. They favor conventional business models and a top-down chain of command.

Baby Boomers - 1946-1964

Boomers are in their mid-40s to early 60's. By 2030, nearly a quarter of the population will be over 60. This generation has been deeply impacted by the current recession. When Boomers retire, many often work at least part-time, either by choice or by necessity. Don't call them seniors --they are "experienced," "50+!"

- **Work-Centric:** Boomers are extremely hardworking and motivated by position, perks and prestige. Since they sacrificed a great deal to get where they are in their career, this workaholic generation believes that younger generations should pay their dues and conform to a culture of overwork. Boomers may criticize younger generations for a lack of work ethic and commitment to the workplace.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs (cont.)

- **Independent:** Boomers are confident, independent and self-reliant. 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 are achievement-oriented, dedicated and career-focused. Boomers 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. Boomers believe in hierarchal structure and may have a hard time adjusting to workplace flexibility trends. They believe in "face time" at the office and may fault younger generations for working remotely.

Generation X - 1965-1980

This generation is significantly smaller than previous and succeeding generations. Gen Xer's are largely in their 30's and early 40's. On the whole, they are more ethnically diverse and better educated than the Boomers. Over 60% attended college.

- **Individualistic:** Gen X came of age in an era of two-income families, rising divorce rates and a faltering economy. Women were joining the workforce in large numbers, producing an age of "latch-key" kids. As a result, Generation X is independent, resourceful and self-sufficient. They value freedom and responsibility. Many dislike authority, structured work hours and being micro-managed.

- **Technologically Adept:** The Gen X mentality reflects a shift from a manufacturing economy to a service economy. 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. They adapt well to change and are tolerant of alternative lifestyles.

- **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.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs (cont.)

Millennials, Generation Y, Echo Boomers - 1981-present

With numbers estimated as high as 70 million, The Millennials are the fastest growing segment of today's workforce.

- **Tech-Savvy:** They grew up with technology and rely on it to perform their jobs better. Armed with all kinds of computer and cell phone gadgets, 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:** As children, Millennials participated in team sports, play groups and other group activities. They value teamwork and seek the input, guidance and affirmation of others. 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.

Source: About.com

Recession trends:

Historically, recessions have prompted an increase in volunteerism, but only to the point that the unemployment rate reaches a "threshold." When unemployment reaches a threshold of 9-10%, people move from saying, *'This is the time to rise up and help my community,'* to, *'Times are really tough and I need to focus on making sure my family has what it needs to get through this hard time.'*

A 2009 report on American civic activity, found:

- 72% say they have cut back time for volunteering
- 66% say Americans were more concerned with looking out for themselves
- 55% said they gave food-money to needy people
- 43% gave food-money to a relative
- 11% allowed non-family member to stay in home or on property

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs (cont.)

Rate of volunteerism by age:

- 43% 15-44
- 35% 45-64
- 42% 65+

Volunteers by income

- 29% <50k more likely to give food, money, shelter
- 51% +50k

Source: Chronicle on Philanthropy, Caroline Preston, August 2009, reporting on a study, America's Civic Health Index, by the National Conference on Citizenship.

Work value trends:

- 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 resume.
- 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.

Educational trends:

- 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 resume.

Volunteer expectation issues:

- 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.)

General facts:

Volunteering can make you healthier
Over the past two decades there has been a growing body of research that indicates volunteering provides individual health benefits in addition to social benefits. This 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. Several studies that keep track of adults over a longer period of time have found that those individuals who volunteer at the beginning of a study tend to have lower mortality rates at the end of the study, even when taking into account such factors as physical health, age, socioeconomic status and gender. Research on the relationship between volunteering and depression found that older adults who volunteer (ages 65 and older) are significantly less likely to face depression than those who do not volunteer.

College students like temporary volunteer assignments.
College students tend to be in more of a state of flux than most other adults. This has an impact on their volunteering habits. Compared to the general adult population, college students 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.

Mentoring is very popular among college students.
In 2005, tutoring, teaching, and mentoring were the most popular activities performed by college student volunteers. Over a quarter of college student volunteers tutored or taught (26.6%), and 23.8 percent mentored. In comparison, among members of the general adult population, 21.3 percent tutored or taught, and 17.6 percent mentored youth. In fact, tutoring, teaching and mentoring are the most common volunteer activities for college students, when they are analyzed as a group. For both males and females, tutoring and teaching, followed by mentoring, were the most popular activities. The trend was similar for whites and other races. For black/African Americans, however, mentoring was the most popular volunteer activity, followed by tutoring or teaching.

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. Because homeowners tend to remain in a community for a longer period of time than renters, this commitment can also develop into deeper attachments to others in the community. Volunteering is an expression of this commitment and a way of making a positive contribution. Thus, it is not surprising that we should find that metropolitan areas that have a higher rate of homeownership also have higher volunteer rates.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs (cont.)

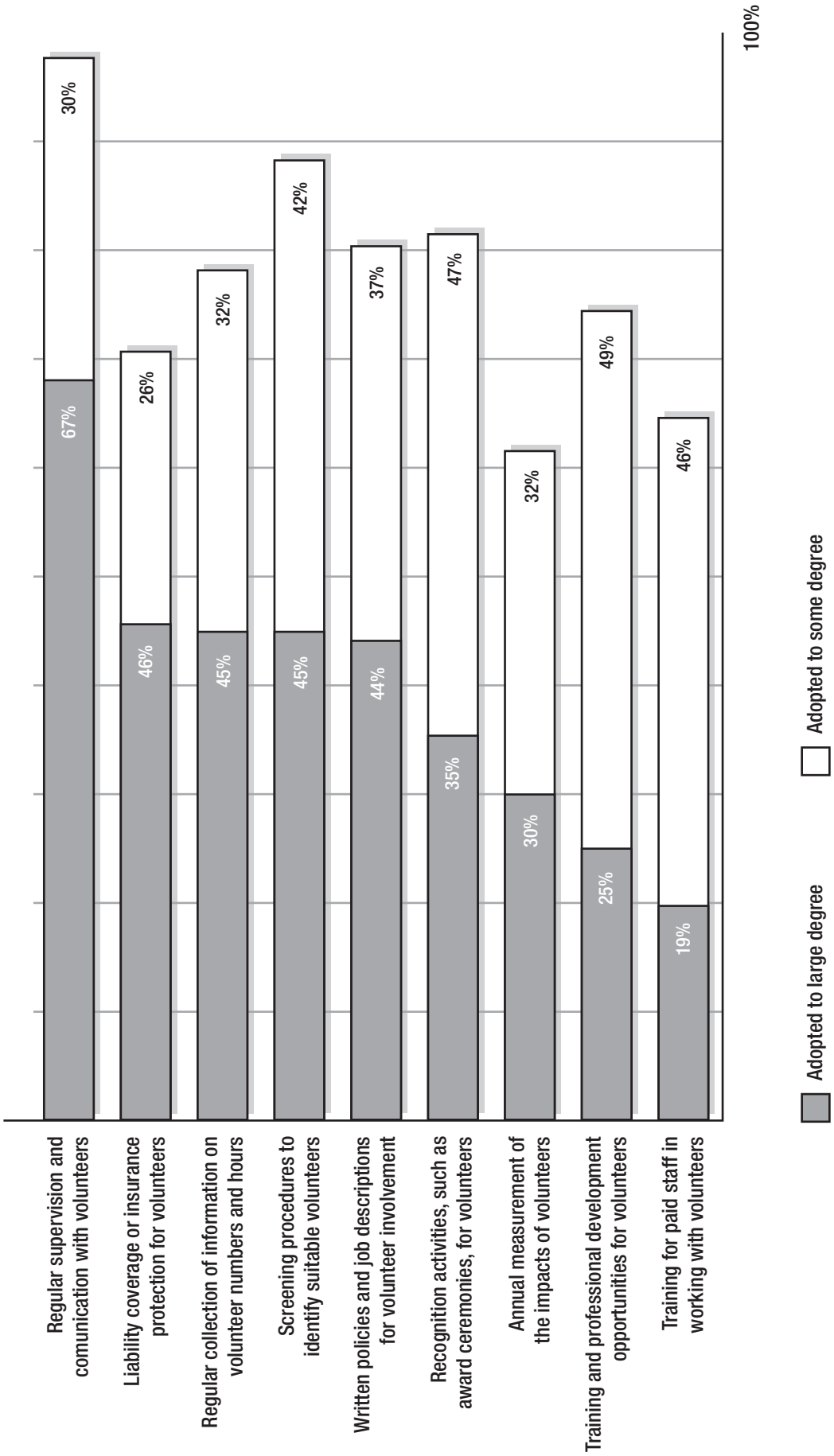
Shorter commutes leave time for service.
The study, Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings, shows that cities with shorter average commutes are more likely to have higher volunteering rates. It may be due, in part, to the fact that those who spend a considerable amount of time commuting to and from work have less time for other activities. Long commutes may also indicate that individuals spend more time isolated in their car and disconnected from both the communities in which they live and work.

Volunteers caught the travel bug.
In 2007, approximately 3.7 million volunteers provided service at least 120 miles outside of their home community. While most American adult volunteers serve within their own community, or close to home, many others travel a considerable distance to volunteer in other parts of the country. In 2007, about 6% of all volunteers age 16 and over (3.7 million) reported doing at least some long-distance volunteering, traveling at least 120 miles to volunteer with an organization located within the U.S., but outside their communities. The Gulf States (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Texas) were still frequent destinations for long-distance volunteers in 2007. As one might expect, a lot of long-distance volunteers serve in the largest states, which tend to contain the largest cities and other tourist attractions.

Volunteer retention remains a significant issue.
In 2007, more than one of every three volunteers (21.7 million) stopped volunteering. 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.

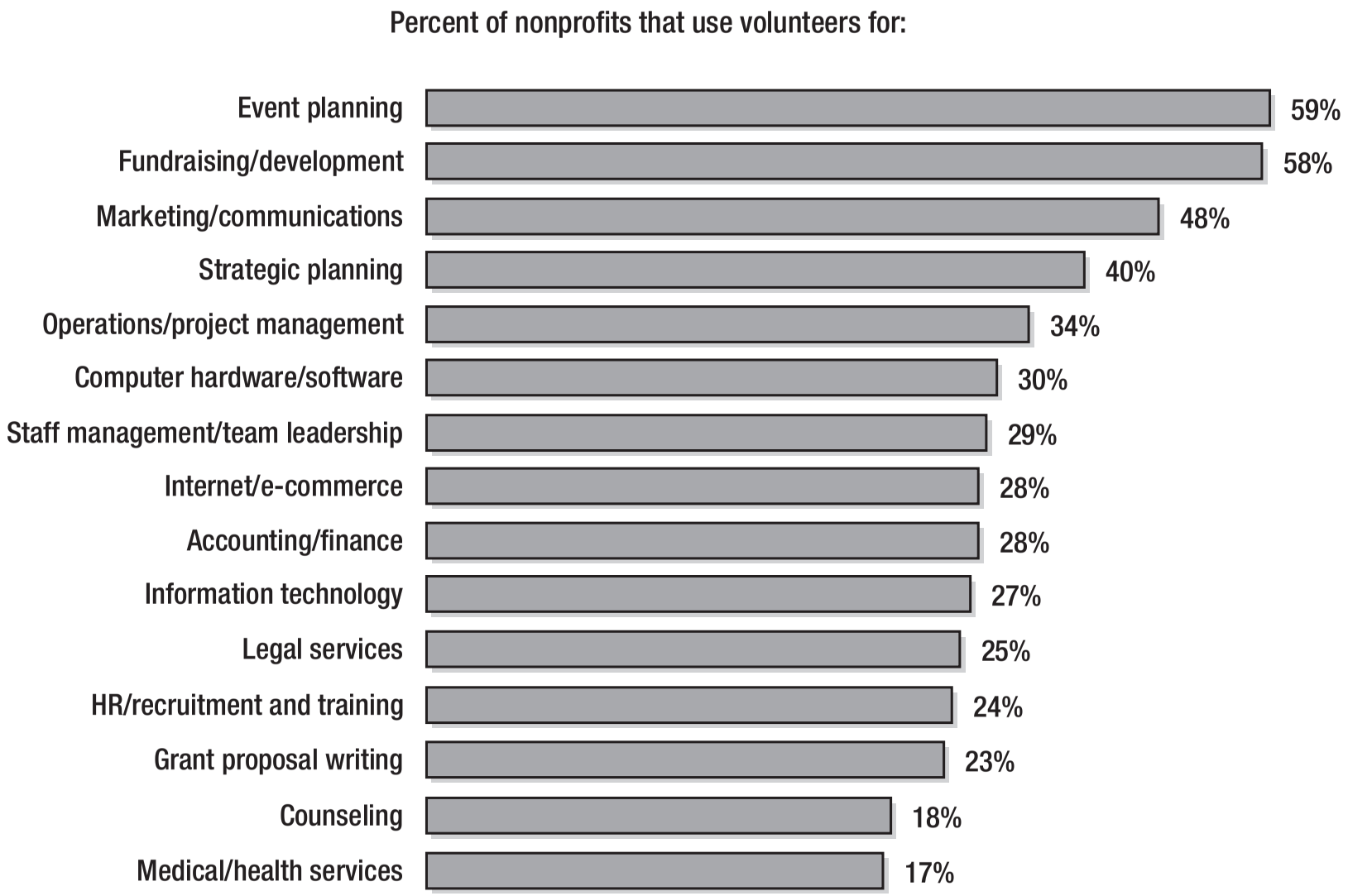
Source: Volunteering In America, Related Research
www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/research-papers.cfm

Implementation Rates of Effective Volunteer Management Practices



Volunteer Generation and Development

Nonprofits Use Volunteers for Many Skilled Activities



Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

Sample Task Description

Agency:	Old McDonald's Farm
Job Title:	Park Animal Caretaker
Supervisor, phone, e-mail:	Lisa Grove, 431-288-0945, lgrove@omcdfarm.org
Length of Commitment:	At least 3 months, 2-3 hours per week
Dates Needed:	Immediately. Volunteers choose a day of the week to come in (i.e., Mondays) and will come in weekly for a minimum of three months.
Location of Volunteer Work:	Farm Park-647 S. King Rd., Jonesville
Age Requirement:	18+ (younger with an adult chaperone)
Duties:	Caring for the farm's small animals (chickens, ducks, geese, rabbits, sheep, a peacock, and miniature pig). This includes feeding, watering and cleaning the animals' habitats.
Desired Qualifications:	• Volunteers should be able to perform duties of moderate physical difficulty. (Will need to be able to lift 30 lbs.) • Those with allergies to dust, animals, or hay may encounter problems as an animal caretaker. • No experience necessary.
What is meaningful about this position?	As an animal caretaker, volunteers can gain experience working with animals in a farm setting. This provides a unique opportunity that may not otherwise be available in suburban Jonesville.
Training provided:	Step-by-step training will be provided as well as a detailed manual of procedures.
Number of Volunteers Needed:	At least one to two for each day of the week.
Comments:	This position offers families an opportunity to volunteer together while supporting the Farm's mission to educate the community about life on an early 1900's farm.

Learn More About Volunteer Generation

On the VISTA Campus:

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 the VISTAs section of vistacampus.org and clicking the VISTA Blend banner that will appear at the top of the page (you can also run a search on the Campus for "VISTA Blend").

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 the VISTAs section of vistacampus.org, click "The Work," and then click the "Working with Volunteers" icon.

Books:

- *Volunteer management: Mobilizing all the resources of the community, 3rd ed.* (2011) by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch
- *Volunteer administration: Professional practice* (2010) by Keith Seel (editor)

Reports:

- *"Volunteering in the United States"* (2011) by the U.S. Department of Labor. Available online at http://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 http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/VolunteersAndTheEconomicDownturn.pdf

Volunteer Program Policy Templates:

- *Generic mentoring program policy and procedure manual: Effective strategies for providing quality youth mentoring in schools and communities, Revised edition* (2007) by Linda Ballasy, Mark Fulop, and Michael Garringer. A PDF of the document is available online at http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/174; a Microsoft Word version with customizable templates can be accessed at http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/181

Volunteer Management Websites

Developing and Managing Volunteer Programs
Free management library— complete and integrated for nonprofits and for-profits
http://www.managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm
#anchor1270354

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. http://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. http://www.idealist.org

On-line Discussion Group for Volunteer Managers
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cybervpm/

Resource Center
Repository of over 8,000 nodes of training tools, publications, and effective practices to support volunteer programs, nonprofits, and people involved with the AmeriCorps family of programs.
http://nationalserviceresources.org/topics/service-activities

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

Action Plan: Meeting Gaston's Community Needs

What values guide your organization?	What does your organization believe are the greatest needs to be addressed in the Gaston community?
What resources does your organization have that can help support the need? What resources does your organization need that you could potentially get from partners to help support the need?	Do you need partners to address the need? What organizations or types of organizations should you partner with?

How will you measure success? What does success look like for your organization?

Reaching Out

Reaching Out: Partnership Selection (One)

1. The group/organization we would like to partner with:

2. What's in it for us?

3. What's in it for them?

4. Group/organization(s) interested in partnering with us:

Reaching Out: Partnership Selection (Two)

1. The group/organization we would like to partner with:

2. What's in it for us?

3. What's in it for them?

4. Group/organization(s) interested in partnering with us:

Response to the "State Fund for Youth" funding opportunity:

1. Are you interested in applying for (or partnering with others to apply for) these funds?

2. If yes, describe the outcomes of your program and how they will be measured.

3. Ideally, which group/organization(s) would you partner with in this grant proposal?

Reaching Out

Reaching Out: Partnership Selection (One)

1. The group/organization we would like to partner with:

2. What's in it for us?

3. What's in it for them?

4. Group/organization(s) interested in partnering with us:

Reaching Out: Partnership Selection (Two)

1. The group/organization we would like to partner with:

2. What's in it for us?

3. What's in it for them?

4. Group/organization(s) interested in partnering with us:

Response to the "State Fund for Youth" funding opportunity:

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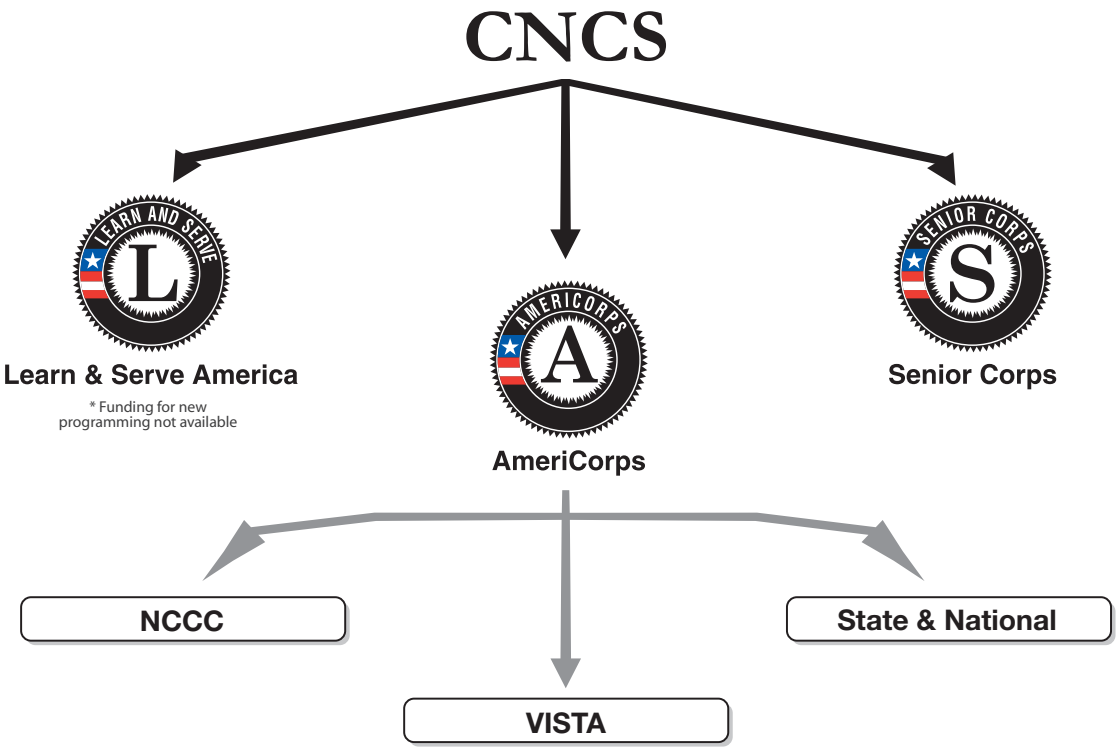
CNCS Programs



The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established in September 1993 as an independent arm of the federal government. CNCS merged ACTION, the Commission on National and Community Service, and the Office of National Service. It was given the task of streamlining existing federal national-service programs, developing ways to make the most effective use of volunteers, and providing national service. CNCS accomplishes these goals through its various program structures, which include the provision of both full- and part-time service, the award of grants to establish or expand volunteer programs, and technical assistance to begin or operate programs.

Each major program within CNCS has its individual legislative mandate and identity, which operates under the overall authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-82). The mission of CNCS is to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service that will address the nation's educational, environmental, public safety, homeland security and other critical needs. In addition, CNCS is working to build bridges from one program to another, and to link programs in ways that will provide stronger overall support of community efforts. CNCS also provides technical assistance to other volunteer and community service efforts in the state. An overall objective of CNCS is to promote an ethic of service.

AmeriCorps

Purpose: Results driven, intensive service program that meets real community needs.

1. State and National, Tribes and Territories, and Education Award-Only Programs

- Programs include national direct/national non-profits, Tribes and Territories, and programs granted through state commissions
- Members provide direct service to meet real community needs
- Members serve full time for up to one year; some serve part time

CNCS Programs (cont.)

2. VISTA

- Founded in 1965, this is the oldest of the national service programs
- Members leverage human, financial, and material resources to increase the capacity of low-income communities across the country to address their own problems
- Members serve full time, live in the communities they serve, and create sustainable programs
- Includes national demonstration projects involving eliminating poverty

3. National Civilian Community Corps and Tribal CCC.

- This is a full-time, team-based residential program for men and women, ages 18–24
- Service projects, which typically last from six to eight weeks, address critical needs in education, public safety, the environment, and other unmet needs
- Members live on one of five campuses, located in Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Perry Point, Maryland; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Vinton, Iowa

Learn and Serve America

Purpose: Supported service-learning programs. Service learning is a teaching method that increases student academic achievement while meeting real community service needs. Funding for new programming is no longer available.

National Senior Service Corps

Purpose: Senior Corps currently links more than 500,000 Americans to service opportunities.

1. Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

- For volunteers age 55 years or older who want to make a difference in their communities
- Offers maximum flexibility and choice to its volunteers as it matches the personal interests and skills of older Americans with opportunities to serve their communities up to 40 hours per week
- Senior volunteers receive supplemental insurance while serving, as well as a pre-service orientation and in-service training

2. Senior Companion Program

- Volunteers age 55 years or older who help adults with special needs remain independent and in their own homes
- Volunteers serve frail older adults, adults with disabilities, those with terminal illnesses, and offer respite for caregivers
- Senior volunteers must serve between 15 and 40 hours per week
- Income-eligible volunteers receive a modest, tax-free stipend

3. Foster Grandparent Program

- Volunteers age 55 years or older who meet certain income eligibility guidelines
- Volunteers thrive on direct interaction with children and make a difference in the lives of children
- Volunteers must serve between 15 and 40 hours per week
- Income-eligible volunteers receive a modest, tax-free stipend

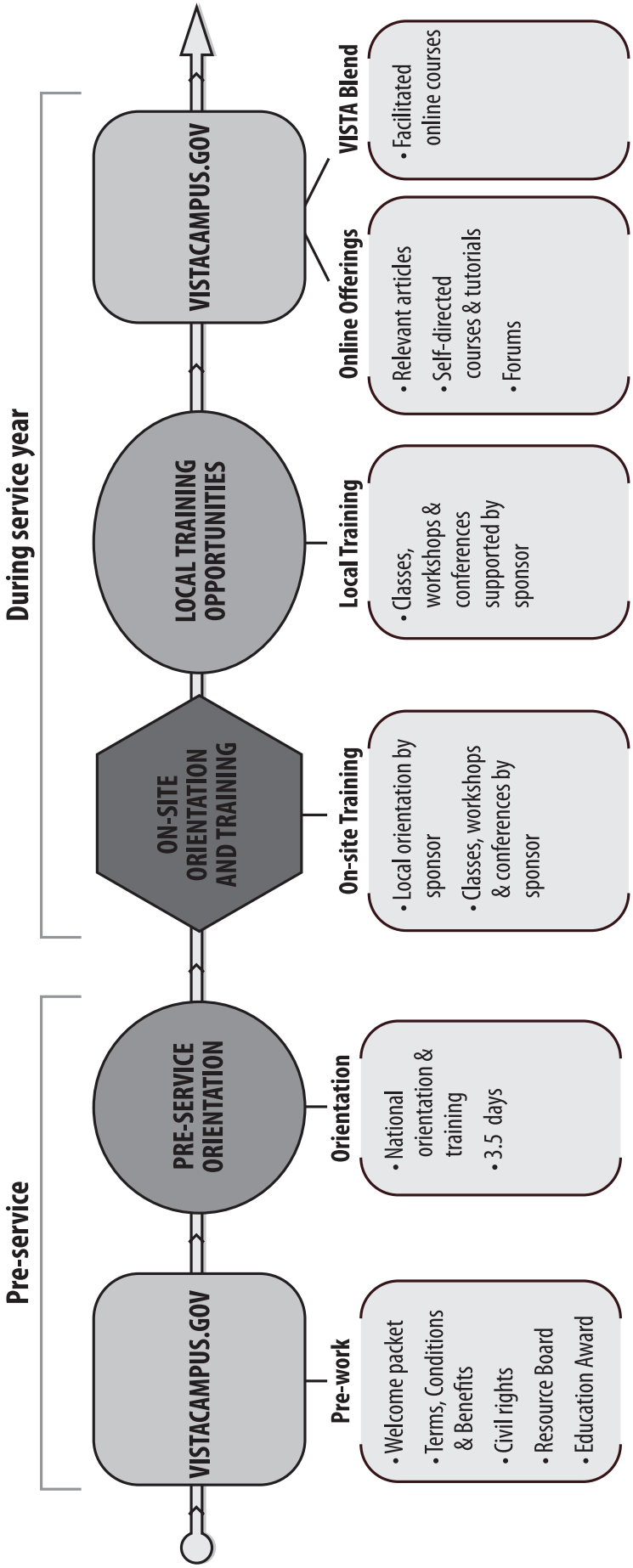
Summary of AmeriCorps Programs

	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 non-profit 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.
Term 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 biweekly.	A modest living allowance is paid biweekly.	A modest living allowance is paid biweekly.
Room and 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 $5,550 education award, in the form of a voucher.	Upon completion of service members have a choice of a $5,550 education award, in the form of a voucher, or a $1,500 cash stipend.	Upon completion of service members receive a $5,550 education award, in the form of a voucher.

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

VISTA Resources

VISTA Training Continuum



Summary of Key Terms, Conditions, and 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 work an average of 40 hours per week, but may work 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 ($5,550)** 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 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.

VISTA members **cannot be employed** in any other paid position while serving as a VISTA member.

VISTAs **are allowed to attend class(es)**; however their studies **must not interfere with VISTA responsibilities**. A VISTA must discuss taking class(es) with his/her 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 and 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.**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 2013

Period	Start Date	End Date	Direct Deposit Date	Period	Start Date	End Date	Direct Deposit Date
201223	10/21/12	11/3/12	11/9/12	201312	5/19/13	6/1/13	6/7/13
201224	11/4/12	11/17/12	11/23/12	201313	6/2/13	6/15/13	6/21/13
201225	11/18/12	12/1/12	12/7/12	201314	6/16/13	6/29/13	7/5/13
201226	12/2/12	12/15/12	12/21/12	201315	6/30/13	7/13/13	7/19/13
201301	12/16/12	12/29/12	1/4/13	201316	7/14/13	7/27/13	8/2/13
201302	12/30/12	1/12/13	1/18/13	201317	7/28/13	8/10/13	8/16/13
201303	1/13/13	1/26/13	2/1/13	201318	8/11/13	8/24/13	8/30/13
201304	1/27/13	2/9/13	2/15/13	201319	8/25/13	9/7/13	9/13/13
201305	2/10/13	2/23/13	3/1/13	201320	9/8/13	9/21/13	9/27/13
201306	2/24/13	3/9/13	3/15/13	201321	9/22/13	10/5/13	10/11/13
201307	3/10/13	3/23/13	3/29/13	201322	10/6/13	10/19/13	10/25/13
201308	3/24/13	4/6/13	4/12/13	201323	10/20/13	11/2/13	11/8/13
201309	4/7/13	4/20/13	4/26/13	201324	11/3/13	11/16/13	11/22/13
201310	4/21/13	5/4/13	5/10/13	201325	11/17/13	11/30/13	12/6/13
201311	5/5/13	5/18/13	5/24/13	201326	12/1/13	12/14/13	12/20/13

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.

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

To get more detailed information about your VISTA living allowance, visit the VISTA Campus to download a new resource called "Living Allowance Calendar and Statement Information."

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 (https://my.americorps.gov).

VISTA Living Allowance Rates

Let's Do the Math!

VISTA Members

Monthly amount ($)	Months in a year	Yearly amount ($)	Days in a year	Daily rate ($)	Days in bi-weekly allowance	Amount per pay period ($)
928	12	11,136	365	30.51	14	428.31
946	12	11,352	365	31.10	14	436.62
983	12	11,796	365	32.32	14	453.69
1,026	12	12,312	365	33.73	14	473.54
1,069	12	12,828	365	35.15	14	493.38
1,108	12	13,296	365	36.43	14	511.38
1,178	12	14,136	365	38.73	14	543.69
1,222	12	14,664	365	40.18	14	564.00
1,276	12	15,312	365	41.95	14	588.92
1,333	12	15,996	365	43.82	14	615.23
1,393	12	16,716	365	45.80	14	642.92
1,466	12	17,592	365	48.20	14	676.62
1,515	12	18,180	365	49.81	14	699.23
1,606	12	19,272	365	52.80	14	741.23

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

VISTA Leaders

Monthly amount ($)	Months in a year	Yearly amount ($)	Days in a year	Daily rate ($)	Days in bi-weekly allowance	Amount per pay period ($)
1,128	12	13,536	365	37.08	14	520.62
1,146	12	13,752	365	37.68	14	528.92
1,183	12	14,196	365	38.89	14	546.00
1,226	12	14,712	365	40.31	14	565.85
1,269	12	15,228	365	41.72	14	585.69
1,308	12	15,696	365	43.00	14	603.69
1,378	12	16,536	365	45.30	14	636.00
1,422	12	17,064	365	46.75	14	656.31
1,476	12	17,712	365	48.53	14	681.23
1,533	12	18,396	365	50.40	14	707.54
1,593	12	19,116	365	52.37	14	735.23
1,666	12	19,992	365	54.77	14	768.92
1,715	12	20,580	365	56.38	14	791.54
1,806	12	21,672	365	59.38	14	833.54

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

VISTA Web Resources

VISTA Home:
www.americorps.gov/about/programs/vista.asp

My AmeriCorps portal
https://my.americorps.gov

VISTA Campus
http://vistacampus.gov

VISTA Forums
http://vistacampus.org/course/view.php?id=20

VISTA Viewfinder
http://vistacampus.org/course/view.php?id=18

V is for !
http://vistacampus.org/course/view.php?id=25

VISTA Member Handbook
http://vistacampus.org/mod/book/view.php?id=2093

VISTA Alumni Web site:
www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/alumni/index.asp

AmeriCorps Alums:
www.lifetimeofservice.org

Corporation for National and Community Service Web site:
www.nationalservice.gov

Service and Inclusion:
www.serviceandinclusion.org

National Service Resource Center:
www.nationalserviceresources.org

Poverty Net:
www.worldbank.org/poverty

What's Next (Life After Service)
http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/whatsnext

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
http://nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward

EnCorps Resources
Member Training Topics
http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/mt_topics.php

Planning a Career Beyond the Service Year
http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/laa_planning.php

Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/AmeriCorpsVISTAAlumni

Twitter
Twitter.com/vistabuzz

Electronic Mailing List Resources

ACList
Those without Web access can subscribe to the AmeriCorps e-mail list by sending an e-mail message to join-aclist@lists.etr.org. The AmeriCorps e-mail list is a forum for AmeriCorps programs, state commissions, training and technical assistance providers, staff of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and anyone else interested in AmeriCorps. Discussion focuses on training, technical assistance, and programmatic issues.

VISTAnet
To join by e-mail, send a message to listserv@listserv.icors.org with this text in the body: subscribe vistanet your FirstName your LastName. VISTAnet is an on-going discussion group for VISTAs, former VISTAs, AmeriCorps folks and anyone interested in national service and social issues.

Disability List
This e-mail list has been created to facilitate communication among national service programs involving persons with disabilities including State Commission disability coordinators. Join by visiting http://lists.etr.org/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=disabilitylist. Send an email to: join-disabilitylist@lists.etr.org

Other E-mail Lists
Check out the National Service Resource center e-mail list page to join other e-mail lists focused on different issue areas.
www.nationalserviceresources.org/e-mail-discussion-lists

Successful Volunteer Programs Answer Key

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

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.

Outreach and 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.

Screen and 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.

Train and 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.

Monitor and 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.

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.