

Common Retention Challenges for VISTAs

Areas	For Individual	For Organization and Community
Vision/Mission, Role Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no understanding and commitment to vision/mission • Service and role description unclear • Unclear how activities link to mission and vision • Little satisfaction with direction of service project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little effort to clarify and sustain commitment to mission and vision • Lack of broad base of support for mission and vision • Misrepresents vision and mission • Little effort to communicate progress towards vision
People/ Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homesickness and trouble finding new support system • Fall in love and must follow partner • Crisis time for loved one • Involvement in a major conflict • Little accountability and respect for sponsor or community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismatch in supervisory relationship • Incompatibility with team or supervisor • Organization and community struggle to accept and/or embrace VISTA • Lack of effort to welcome, respect, and include VISTA in local networks
Materials, Resources, and Machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipend subsistence too challenging, overwhelming financial hardship • Inadequate housing, no affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to deliver on resources to get job done (work space, computers, vehicles, advisory committee, etc.) • Major budget changes affect whole effort
Health and Well Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident • Serious illness, poor health • Close death • Pregnancy • Burn-out, work or weather too challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bankruptcy, corruption • Gross disorganization • Power struggles and chaos
Policies, Procedures, and Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clash with policies • Trouble with law • Harassment, discrimination • Inability to align personal priorities with that of service project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear communication or fair enforcement of policies • Out-dated, impractical, or discriminatory policies and practices
Program, Activities, Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not about capacity building • Lacks interest, skills and experience to carry out assignment successfully • Unrealistic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service assignment is different than what was described • Major amounts of time are on direct services and not capacity building • Poorly planned and conceived activities
Work and Community Ethic and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear about organization's community ethic/culture • Prejudice and culturally insensitive • Incompatibility with work ethic of sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudice and lack of cultural sensitivity to VISTA • Bad fit with organizational culture and local work ethic