

## Chapter 8

# When Issues Arise

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The earlier chapters of the *Supervisor's Manual* give information on the role of a project supervisor, recruitment and selection of candidates, preparing for a VISTA's arrival, and working with a VISTA throughout project implementation. This chapter describes actions to take when issues arise.

Discussing an issue with your contact in the Corporation State Office is quite important and should be commonplace. The VISTA policies and procedures are, for the most part, general. Applying the general policies and procedures to specific situations necessarily requires thought and analysis. It is good practice to obtain the Corporation State Office's views and advice.

## Who to Contact at the Corporation

The typical order of contacts when questions arise is:

1. Your contact at the [Corporation State Office](#)
2. [State Program Director](#)
3. Area Manager

## Common Issues

This chart lists some common issues that may arise and gives suggested actions. For more details about some of these issues, refer to the [VISTA Member Handbook](#).

### Leave

Issue	Suggested Action
A VISTA requests personal leave in first 3 months or last month	Approve; however, encourage the VISTA to limit leave to emergencies and family matters in the first 3 months and last month
A VISTA requests personal leave in excess of 10 workdays	Do not approve
A VISTA requests medical leave for nonmedical reasons	Do not approve
A VISTA requests medical leave in excess of 10 workdays	Do not approve; VISTA can use personal leave; if the request exceeds the remaining personal and medical leave, contact the Corporation State Office (CSO) for possible termination of the VISTA
A VISTA requests leave for birth or adoption	Approve use of personal leave and medical leave, plus 10 workdays in cases where extended recuperation is required
A VISTA is away from the project without approved leave	Check on the VISTA's safety; contact the Corporation State Office immediately; CSO may possibly terminate the VISTA
A VISTA requests emergency leave because an immediate family member of the VISTA is critically ill or has died	Approve; a VISTA is allowed up to 5 workdays of leave under these circumstances; the emergency leave does not count against personal or medical leave
A VISTA wants to leave VISTA service for an extended period and return to VISTA service within a year	Contact the CSO; the CSO may allow the VISTA to leave the project and be reinstated either in your project or another project within a year
A VISTA is called for jury duty	Approve; a VISTA's jury service does not count as personal leave
A VISTA wishes to participate in special days of service, e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, National Volunteer Week, AmeriCorps Week	Allow, as reasonable, in relation to project duties; this leave does not count against personal leave
A VISTA is required to report for military service	Approve short-term military service (week-end or annual training); this does not count as personal leave
A VISTA wishes to vote during regular service hours	Approve when this leave is common practice at the organization/agency; encourage use of time outside regular service hours
A VISTA wishes leave for personal religious observance	Allow; set up a schedule for the VISTA to make up the time used

## Extension of Service

Issue	Suggested Action
A VISTA requests an extension of his/her term of service	Contact the CSO; you may request that the CSO approve the extension if the time is needed to complete the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)
A VISTA chooses to reenroll for another year	The CSO discusses this with the VISTA; sponsor may approve the VISTA for another year at the project
A VISTA extends term of service and then wants to complete a full, one-year term	The VISTA contacts the CSO; the extension cannot be rolled into a full, one-year term; the VISTA must begin a second one-year term following the end of the extension
A Summer Associate wants to become a VISTA	The Summer Associate contacts the CSO; the summer service cannot be rolled into a full, one-year term; the Summer Associate must begin a one-year term as a VISTA

## Emergency Situations

Issue	Suggested Action
Project site closes due to a natural disaster	No action required; the VISTA has instructions; if possible contact the CSO to report the natural disaster
A VISTA is in an accident	If the VISTA is unable, contact the CSO
A VISTA is hospitalized	If the VISTA is unable, contact the CSO
A VISTA is arrested	If the VISTA is unable or unwilling, contact the CSO
A VISTA's belongings are lost due to fire or theft	If the VISTA is unable, contact the CSO
A VISTA does not receive a living allowance	The VISTA contacts CSO
A VISTA needs to travel for a personal emergency	The VISTA contacts CSO

## Interpersonal Situations

Issue	Suggested Action
A VISTA is not carrying out his/her VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)	Document actions/inactions and contact the CSO to discuss
A VISTA asks for a change in his/her VAD	Discuss with the VISTA; if change appears to be warranted, contact the CSO for discussion and approval/disapproval
A VISTA asks for reasonable accommodation	Assess the need and appropriate response for reasonable accommodation; as appropriate, contact the CSO for guidance
A VISTA submits a grievance in	The sponsor is required to respond in writing within 10

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Suggested Action</b>
writing	days
A VISTA takes actions that appear to discriminate against others on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service	Take reasonable steps to address the immediate situation; document the actions and contact the CSO to discuss
A VISTA takes actions that appear to sexually harass others	Take reasonable steps to address the immediate situation; document the actions and contact the CSO to discuss

### **Prohibited Activities**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Suggested Action</b>
A VISTA has outside employment	Immediately inform the CSO
A VISTA accepts money for work at the project site	Immediately inform the CSO
A VISTA is related by blood or marriage to project staff, sponsor staff, officers or members of the sponsor's board of directors	Immediately inform the CSO
A VISTA participates in political or lobbying activities	Immediately inform the CSO
A VISTA enrolls in an educational course without approval of the sponsor and CSO	Immediately inform the CSO

### **Early Termination**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Suggested Action</b>
A VISTA wishes to leave the project before his/her term of service is scheduled to end	Contact the CSO
The supervisor wishes to have a VISTA leave the project before his/her term of service is scheduled to end	Contact the CSO prior to taking any action; be prepared to document the reasons. Only the Corporation staff can terminate a VISTA.

## Housing

Issue	Suggested Action
VISTA has difficulty finding affordable housing	Reasonably assist the VISTA, as best you can, in locating housing through community residents, board members, local businesses, etc. (See <a href="#">Chapter 4</a> for ideas)
VISTA accepts money for rent, utilities, or other housing costs	Contact the CSO
VISTA has difficulty with the landlord	This issue is between the VISTA and the landlord, and primarily the responsibility of the VISTA