

3 Week Sample Agenda

Note: The following is just one example of an onsite orientation and training plan. Significant detail is provided to give you an idea of the content that might be included and how activities might be carried out. The plans you submit to your Corporation state office need not go into this much detail. Also, some plans might cover the first three weeks of a member's service - like this one - others might just be one or two weeks long. How detailed and involved your plan depends on your organization, project, and member.

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 1

ONSITE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PLAN

Week 1

Day 1. Welcome to the community organization; getting started

Morning

- Welcome new member.
- Introduce member to the head of the organization (president/CEO/ director). The head then briefly discusses the history and purpose of the organization, the project, and how the member fits in.
- Introduce member to co-workers during tour of facility.
- Show member his or her work area.
- Show location of rest rooms, lunch, and break rooms/space.
- Member attends regular staff meeting. Take time at staff meeting to remind everyone what the member's role will be. Help the member feel welcome and part of the team.

Lunch with the member to make him or her feel at home.

Afternoon

- Discuss basic terms of work, policies, procedures.
- Explain hours of work and overtime policies, holidays and leave days.
- Explain organization rules about absenteeism, tardiness, process for reporting absence or illness.
- Discuss timesheets, leave usage.
- Explain the VISTA compensation process.
- Explain break policy and lunch hour (tell about restaurants in area).
- Explain use of telephone, mail services, copier (security code), fax machine.
- Provide phone list(s).
- Explain standards of conduct, including rules of dress, personal grooming, smoking, house-keeping, etc.
- Explain parking practices and provide (or arrange for) building, office keys.
- Explain safety procedures.
- Explain how to order supplies.
- Ask colleague to show the new member how to use essential equipment (telephone, computer, fax, copier).

If the member has moved from another part of the country, ask how the transition is going and if you might help. Discuss housing situation, local shopping and services, banks, medical facilities, etc. If there is time at the end of the day, give member time to take care of some of these needs - everything related to housing, bank account, phone service, post office, etc.

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 1 (cont.)

Day 2. Taking care of basic needs

Morning

- Give the member the morning to take care of any additional basic needs related to, for example, housing, bank account, phone service, post office, etc. If a staff member is available to help, have her or him accompany the new member.

Lunch with group of office colleagues.

Organizational purpose and mission and the VISTA project

Afternoon

- Discuss in more detail the mission, background, and purpose of the sponsoring organization.
- Explain history and purpose of the organization.
- Review organization mission, goals, and objectives.
- Review organization structure.
- Provide copy of organizational chart and review staff duties.
- Explain departmental and divisional functions, goals, teams and team structure, major projects.
- Explain the purpose of the VISTA project and role of the members.
- Explain project goals and objectives.
- Review past work of project if in year 2 or 3.
- Give the member time to read any materials given to him/her.

At the end of the day, do a half-hour check-in to answer questions about the organization or project. Tell member that tomorrow you will go over the member assignment in more detail.

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 1 (cont.)

Day 3. Member assignment, supervisory relationship, and community investigation

Morning

- Clarify individual member assignment(s), how goals will be achieved, and how the member's progress in achieving project objectives will be assessed.
- Review the VISTA Assignment Description, explain specific responsibilities.
- Important: Make it clear what the expected project outcomes are, what the member will help create and how it will help individuals or communities move out of poverty.
- Explain performance reviews (date for first review, frequency thereafter).
- Provide a copy of performance standards.
- Discuss performance expectations and standards and reporting requirements.
- Discuss specific performance objectives that will be reviewed during the initial period.
- Explain supervisory and support structure, communications, reporting, accountability.
- Discuss the working relationship between the member and direct supervisor, mutual expectations, communications style, work style, support needs, etc.
- Discuss and clarify communication procedures and practices.
- Review staff meeting and team meeting schedules.
- Explain steps in discipline procedure (verbal warning, written warning, etc.) and specify actions that result in disciplinary action.
- End on a positive, affirming note about how excited you are to have the member working on this project.
- Have the member interview other staff about work styles, communications, etc.

Afternoon

Independent Community Investigation: The member spends afternoon exploring community and making a mental inventory of assets, needs, and cultural practices. Brief the member before he or she heads out into the community about where to go, what to look for, and how to ensure safety. Explain that the member will be reviewing his or her observations with an expert on the community the following morning.

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 1 (cont.)

Day 4. Deepening understanding of the community and the project

Morning

- The member spends the morning with someone knowledgeable of the community to discuss observations from the previous day.
- This community “expert” provides a background on the community during a more guided tour than the member’s previous day’s meanderings.
- The expert explains the nature of the low-income population served by the project.
- The expert introduces the member to community leaders, especially those involved in the VISTA project.
- The expert discusses cultural norms, do’s and don’ts, social outlets to enjoy and those to stay away from, etc.

Afternoon

- Have the member spend the afternoon with one or more partner organizations or other members and AmeriCorps state and national members involved in this or related projects.
- Have the member gather as much information as possible to help him or her understand the community and the project.

Day 5. Reflection, team building, celebration of the first week

Morning

- Discuss impressions and findings from Day 4 with supervisor. Discuss implications these have for the project and the member’s assignment.
- Discuss potential resources that can be applied to help achieve project goals.
- Review use of volunteers on the VISTA project.
- Meet with recruitment representatives from Volunteer Center, RSVP.
- Review barriers and successes to volunteer use of resources discussed.
- Discuss how member can best help volunteers and others involved in the project.
- Discuss support/recognition, helping volunteers to feel valued, ways to recognize.

Afternoon

- Team building activity with staff, other members, project collaborators, other AmeriCorps members, etc.

Evening

- Potluck dinner with office staff, other members, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members, and VISTA alumni.

Celebration of the first week of the member’s assignment!

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 2

ONSITE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PLAN

Week 2

Day 1. Skill development: Shadowing staff of sponsor organization

Morning and Afternoon

- The member accompanies staff member for the whole day out of the office - conducting community interviews, recruiting volunteer participation in project, managing volunteers on project, etc.

Day 2. Skill development: Shadowing staff of another organization involved in similar work

Morning and Afternoon

- The member accompanies staff member of another organization involved in similar or complementary efforts for the whole day, conducting community interviews, recruiting volunteer participation in project, managing volunteers on project etc.

Day 3. Reflection; informational/collaborational interviews

Morning

- The member meets with supervisor to discuss previous days' shadow activities and to reflect on community interviews, recruiting volunteer participation in project, managing volunteers on project, etc.
- Discussion of additional training the member needs to carry out assignment.
- The member begins contacting community/organizational leaders with whom he or she will be collaborating on the project to set up informational interviews, beginning this afternoon.

Afternoon

- Informational/collaboration interview 1: Discussion with Father O'Brien from the Ecumenical Outreach program.

Day 4. Informational/collaborational interviews (continued from Day 3)

Morning

- Informational/collaboration interview 2: Discussion with Tanika Roberts from the Community Employment Training and Services agency.
- Informational/collaboration interview 3: Discussion with Sam Parker from the Gotham City East End Community Center.

Afternoon

- Discussion with supervisor and other sponsor organization staff about conclusions from informational/collaboration interviews. What implications can be drawn related to the project? What recommendations and cautions do the supervisor and other staff have about those conclusions?
- The member spends the rest of the day drafting a one-month, detailed member assignment, with clear and detailed activities.
- The member drafts a month-long plan and reviews with the supervisor at the end of the day.

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 2 (cont.)

Day 5. Skill development: Computer skills

Morning and Afternoon

- The member spends day with local Teaming for Tech computer specialist learning or refining computer skills he or she will need (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, Access) for producing flyers, pamphlets and posters; writing grant proposals; building or using contact databases; etc.

3 Week Sample Agenda - Week 3

ONSITE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PLAN

Week 3

- The member begins independent implementation of project with frequent check-in sessions with supervisor and other key organization staff to see how the work is going. Supervisor makes it clear to the member that this third week is still a period of learning, practice, testing, and adapting. He or she should not worry about making mistakes, asking lots of questions, and experimenting.
- Additional skill training is set up for the member as needed: For example, the member could participate in a public speaking class offered by the community continuing education program; learn from an experienced staff member the key components of a quality grant proposal; or spend an afternoon with someone from the credit union to learn about the management of low-income loan programs, interest rates, and starting a small business.