

Identifying and Establishing Relationships V-Cast



Key Points

- Forming relationships is the first step to collaboration and introducing yourself is the first step to forming relationships.
- Establishing relationships as a VISTA leader begins the building of a network of relationships that has the potential to benefit you for a lifetime.
- Achieving your goals as a VISTA leader, and supporting members in achieving their goals, is directly related to building collaborative relationships.
- Take the initiative to meet all of the stakeholders whose work and/or roles overlap or impact yours, this includes:
 - your supervisor
 - the VISTAs you will be supporting and their site supervisors
 - the organization's executive director
 - administrative staff
 - the board of directors (if feasible)
 - advisory council members
 - program staff
 - pertinent community partners
- Gather information about stakeholders you intend to meet with beforehand so that your initial interactions can be centered on them. Find out:
 - How long has this person been working in this position/this organization?
 - What's his/her role and relationship to the VISTA program?
 - What other positions has this person held at this organization?
 - What's his/her experience with the VISTA program?
 - And, how does this person's position relate to the VISTA Leader's role?

- Ask stakeholders about the best way to communicate with them. Doing so is sign of respect, both of their boundaries and their time.
- Convey to stakeholders that you see them as a guide or supporter and that you would like to reach out if necessary.
- Seek first to understand and then seek to be understood. To that end, begin the communication process by asking a lot of pertinent questions.
- Be thoughtful about what you want others to know about you and do your best to be sure the impression others form of you is real and true.
- Know yourself and your tendencies. If you are more introverted, practice stepping up and into what may be uncomfortable roles. If you are more extroverted, practice stepping back and, among other things, listening actively.