

Realities of Rural Recruitment: Remedies and Resources: Helpful Links

Website Link	Description of Resource
VISTA Campus	Online learning resources on a variety of topics for VISTA members, leaders, alumni, and supervisors.
Recruitment Plan Worksheet	Use this worksheet to create a plan for organizing your recruitment efforts.
VISTA Recruitment Checklist	Sample tasks outlining the multi-step process of VISTA recruitment.
VISTA Recruitment Planning Calendar	List of recruitment milestones and timelines based on your members' VISTA Member Orientation dates.
VISTA Outreach Resources	Marketing and recruitment materials for you to use when advertising your positions and promoting VISTA service opportunities.
Considerations for Rural/Village Local VISTA Recruitment	Thoughts about how to recruit the best applicants in rural areas and in local villages, shared from a VISTA project.
Recruitment Ideas	List of different recruitment suggestions for your VISTA project to consider and adapt for your needs.
Getting the Word Out - Inclusive Recruitment Avenues	Suggested ways to bolster your in-person and electronic recruitment efforts along with examples of two-line teasers to capture interest in your VISTA program.
Recruiting: Attracting Successful VISTAs Webinar	Webinar providing tips and resources on how to recruit the best candidates for your VISTA project.
Creating a Service Opportunity Listing in eGrants	Step-by-Step guide to create an accurate and effective service opportunity listing in eGrants.
Leveraging Digital Marketing to Promote Your Opportunity Listings	Recorded webinar & PDF providing methods and tips on how to use digital marketing to make your opportunity listings more visible.
Strengthening VADs and Service Opportunity Listings	Recorded webinar discussing ways to develop strong and effective VADs, ideas on how to improve service opportunity listings, and resources to assist you in recruitment.
Benefits of VISTA Service	Section of the VISTA Campus outlining VISTA member benefits. All benefits may not apply to every VISTA member, but you will want applicant to explore their potential benefits to see if the VISTA program is of interest to them and if they can be successful as a VISTA member.
VISTA Member Handbook	Comprehensive source for VISTA policies, procedures, definitions, and legal information for your records and to answer questions from applicants.



<p>VISTA Member Orientation Checklist</p>	<p>Use this checklist to let individuals know during the application and interview phases about their requirements to start AmeriCorps VISTA service.</p>
<p>Living Allowance Calendar</p>	<p>Review a sample living allowance statement, a schedule of pay periods and pay dates, and view FAQs. Share some of this information with potential applicants to help them determine in advance if they will be able to live on the living allowance.</p>
<p>Marketing, Outreach, and Recruitment</p>	<p>Section of the VISTA Sponsor Handbook with ideas on how to spread the word within your communities and network, acknowledge VISTA and CNCS as a funder using logos and more, sharing the stories of your members, branding guidance, and other resources.</p>
<p>Administrative Support</p>	<p>Section of the VISTA Sponsor Handbook containing instructions on how to support the VISTA member administratively with space, technology, necessary office supplies, service-related transportation as required and necessary by the VISTA project, and more. The VISTA project must know this information in advance of recruitment to know how many VISTA members it can support, and to be adequately prepared for its VISTA member(s).</p>
<p>VISTA Sponsor Handbook</p>	<p>Document providing details about roles, responsibilities, and expectations for VISTA supervisors. Use this information to inform your applicants about your role in the VISTA project, how the VISTA member(s) will be supported and supervised, and more.</p>

Realities of Rural Recruitment: Remedies and Resources: Next Steps

- Review and update your current recruitment plan and materials
 - Make adjustments to improve your recruitment materials and show how your VISTA project is unique. You may need to create different materials for different audiences so that you can customize your strategy to which type of recruitment (e.g. electronic, printed, word-of-mouth) may work the best for each audience.
- Consider how to market your rural project as ‘domestic adventure’
 - Use captivating adjectives, words, and images that accurately describe your great location. It can be difficult to recruit individuals to serve in rural areas, so find ways to explain why your rural location is meaningful and can be a meaningful experience for a VISTA member.
- Help find affordable housing; offer housing subsidy to landlord
 - Especially for any VISTA member who relocate to serve with your project, housing is a major concern in terms of affordability, geographic proximity, and safety. Do what you can to point them to resources or specific housing units that may work for them. If you have the ability, offer the VISTA a housing subsidy that would go to the VISTA member’s landlord on behalf of the VISTA, to help offset the cost of housing.
- Follow-up with applicants between selection and start of service
 - Lack of communication can make or break someone’s decision to serve. Once you select a candidate to serve, that individual will likely have a few weeks or a few months before they start service, depending on when you select them. Communicate with them every week or two, providing them materials and information to explore about your organization, just saying hello and how excited you are for them to start serving, asking if they have any questions, and more. It really shows the applicant that you care and really want them there.
- Start a rural recruitment discussion thread on the VISTA Campus Supervisor Forums
 - Make use of a discussion forum created specifically for supervisors! Supervisors talk about wanting to share resources, have conversation, and network, and you can do just that on the Supervisor Forums. Begin talking about your recruitment needs, ideas for rural recruitment, and more.
 - Supervisor Forums: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/forums/supervisor-cafe-0>
- Ask VISTA members and alumni to create a service video or story
 - If you have VISTA alumni, ask any of them if they have great moments they want to capture in a short video, or in a short written story. Storytelling is extremely powerful and can be very inspiring for applicants to actually see a VISTA’s face and hear them talk about their experience. Be creative in recruitment, as the short videos could show part of the community, some of the work the VISTA completed, and more.
- Imagine yourself as an applicant. What would make you want to apply to your this VISTA project?
 - If you were an applicant looking at your current recruitment and marketing materials, and if you would not be interested in the VISTA project based on that information, it may be time to rejuvenate those materials and get others (including people in your organization who know nothing about VISTA) to provide feedback. Recruitment works well when you at least get people interested enough to submit their application or ask a question.
- If you have surplus of applicants, consider having a waitlist and also consider encouraging applicants to apply to other nearby or related projects if you will not have positions for them.



- If projects end up with more people applying than they can accept, you may want to interview a few extra applicants and if you like them, ask them to be on your waitlist. Let them know that they do not yet have a position, but if one becomes available you will let them know. That can help you expedite filling a position if an applicant drops out after you select them.
- Whether you create a waitlist or not, why not try to 'pay it forward' and encourage those applicants who you do not accept, to submit their applications to other projects nearby or who have similar focus areas? You may know of nearby or related projects that you can mention. You are helping the VISTA applicant consider other options to serve, and you may be helping another VISTA project that could be struggling with recruitment.
- Visit our websites for recruitment materials and resources
 - VISTA Outreach Resources: <https://nationalservice.gov/SponsorVista>
 - VISTA Campus Marketing, Outreach, and Recruitment: <https://www.vistacampus.gov/marketing-outreach-and-recruitment>
 - "Pubs" site for brochures, posters, bookmarks, and other recruitment materials: <https://pubs.nationalservice.gov/>