

VISTA Leader Roles in Member Recruitment



Responses from Webinar Activities

Ways VISTA leaders are involved in VISTA member recruitment

- Posting opportunities on Indeed
- University Career Fair
- listing sites in eGrants
- working mostly on screening interviews and passing along applications to host sites.
- I have contacted pending sites to make sure the VAD had been written and submitted
- attending career/internship fairs.
- conduct first round interviews for applicants and answer any questions that a potential VISTA may have about AmeriCorps or my organization.
- helped to screen candidates, request additional documents, set up interviews, edit Service Opportunities, and answer questions about the VISTA program
- I promote opportunities to classmates and employees who I believe possess the traits, talents, and desire to be a VISTA,
- contacting some of the summer employees at our site to see if they would be interested in a summer VISTA associate position, which could lead to a year-long VISTA position.
- I've helped screen candidates, upload positions and VADs into eGrants, and I help run interviews between us and the host sites. I also send out recruitment announcements through newsletters.
- I post on recruitment websites, conduct initial contact with applicants, set up interviews, offer positions, edit SOs and VADs, utilize eGrants, etc.
- I have helped to screen candidates, develop internal recruitment guides, flow charts and email templates. Develop marketing materials on Canva, and communication guides for our host sites and current vistas; engage our alumni on LinkedIn and post for positions in multiple platforms.
- Screen & interview candidates. Edit RFP's, VAD's and post opportunity listings
- Mainly screen candidates, answer questions about the VISTA program, sometimes social media, setting up interviews, and send out support to our sites
- we've moved a lot of our recruitment online with postings on job boards. keep in contact with Summer Associate alumni that may be interested in serving again!

Ways VISTA projects promote their opportunities

- We mostly use Facebook. We've tried handshake in the past and it was not successful at all
- Although you'll need to pay to post a job, it's free to post volunteer opportunities on Idealist.
- I find local colleges and universities and reach out to pre-law programs, as I am based out of a law school.

- LinkedIn
- We're located on a college campus, so we do a lot of tabling.
- job fairs
- Craigslist
- Tabling, online job boards (Indeed, Handshake, environmental job boards), eGrants pushes, etc. I would say we get most applicants from Indeed.
- newsletters and career fairs!
- Social media pages
- We use a nonprofit job board along with some of the other methods we talked about already.
- Indeed postings, career fairs
- We use our social media platforms, and send a mail chimp to all of our partners
- Using LinkedIn, Facebook and Indeed has been successful
- Alumni groups, vistas emailing alma mater career services; reddit, Peace corps career page;
- eGrants pushes
- While Handshake is extensive - we do not see candidates moving from HS to the portal
- We've been trying Handshake with some local universities, but that hasn't been too helpful on the job board front. Indeed seems to be the most successful job boards for us.
- We use: Indeed, Idealist, Handshake, LinkedIn, et. Keeping our postings up-to-date on our own website is important too.

Effective outreach strategies for recruiting strong VISTA candidates

- We live in a college town, so we do quite a bit of word-of-mouth and in person recruitment at job fairs.
- We mostly do outreach to college campuses either through career offices or professors and that works really well!
- job fairs, word of mouth
- volunteer opportunities have turned into interest in a position. Job fair on campus
- Using eGrants to reach out to people via email
- Social Media, Email List serves, nonprofit job boards, word of mouth
- speaking to community members when I'm out and wearing gear
- Service Year, Idealist, Peace Corps Job Board, College Boards
- VISTA Alumni Facebook groups are a good resource for us too!
- Using our location helps too. A lot of young people want to move to a city like Austin
- Virtual online college/university platforms
- I highly recommend creating a Handshake account. It is similar to LinkedIn, but involves university networking and collaboration.
- community information fairs
- We visit all capstone classes and present!
- Reddit (AmeriCorps subreddit) and Service Year are also good places to post.
- a lot of our coalitions do their own recruiting locally and then let us know about the applicant
- I found replacements for my previous sites via Reddit! A great resource!

- I also table a lot of job fairs and other community events.
- I would use my college alum web pages
- I've heard recruiter stories. They are making videos to give to professors to share with their students.
- Indeed hasn't worked for me
- I posted in reddit on the peace corps reddit channel, as an RPCV I could speak from personal experience, we are especially heavily recruiting RPCVs
- We may address this later, but in terms of candidates not moving to the portal- we interview and hire apart from the portal, and then just have them create an account and apply as a formality.
- Here's an article: Where to Post Volunteer Opportunities: 15 Volunteer Recruitment Websites for Nonprofits -- <https://www.wholewhale.com/tips/where-to-post-volunteer-opportunities>
- I would definitely recommend talking to the site supervisors and seeing what hiring pipelines they utilize and seeing if you can tap into those or make them more efficient
- Segal Award
- Someone thinking about grad school or taking a break between college graduation and grad school, may get excited knowing that there are 100s of schools that will match the education award.
- You can find VISTA photos here to use for your outreach promos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/amicorpsvista/>
- 90% of my placements are in Rural. We have found quite the opposite - they want someone from outside with a fresh set of eyes.
- Presented at a local chamber of commerce meeting and a couple of churches
- Testimonials. The fact that this is more than a job resonates with the right candidates
- We have a video on our website where VISTAs tell their stories from service! Also, sending out newsletters
- recruit from existing volunteer bases
- I have gone to local universities / colleges and spoken to their job specialist
- Reached out to friends with children in college which passed on to their peers too
- This is something we struggle with and haven't really figured out yet. I'd say at least 75% of applicants *aren't* strong, and those that are often turn down the position offer for something with more pay.
- We work closely with our current sites to help them recruit from their own volunteer pools. A lot are at schools and universities so it's similar to highlighting a 5th year experience.
- I have also done job fairs, community information fairs
- Working closely with our sites to help recruit
- Along the same lines, we have each VISTA make a personal video. We put those into one larger promo video to send out!
- Most of our applicants find out about our positions through the AmeriCorps portal
- I am very vocal about my service site, so I frequently get asked about what I do. This gives me an opportunity to recommend VISTA service.
- sharing information to members of local youth sports programs

- We created both a communications guide & recruitment guide for our host sites... we are a national program so it's a little difficult to do in-person/local recruitment ourselves, so our host sites do a lot of recruitment on their end. We do a lot of online recruitment and developing resources
- We have our sites add the VISTA positions on their HR Sites. Just like a "job"...
- very rural & building a recruiting program. I can vouch for your earlier slide. . . IT IS all about the personal touch! Connection to the community is key! We have had interest by inviting church groups, organizations to volunteer.
- We have a project with sub-sites all over the state, so we've found it useful for those sub-sites to advertise positions through their networks and community meetings as well as any schools that are in or near the community
- exiting 4th year AmeriCorps members
- reaching out to state and national programs
- Partnerships with faculty at local high schools and universities have been our best method. Recent college graduates (especially those looking to continue education) are certainly our main demographic for applicants. Personally, I found my initial VISTA position on my.americorps while searching for my own "domestic adventure."
- Scroll down to CUSTOMIZABLE RECRUITMENT/OUTREACH FLYERS for more promo materials: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/SponsorVista>
- We have a project with sub-sites all over the state, so we've found it useful for those sub-sites to advertise positions through their networks and community meetings as well as any schools that are in or near the community
- We ask applicants where they first saw our posting in our interviews.
- Do you acknowledge every candidate ? we send a thank you note to all applicants
- We also send thank you emails to all candidates and send them to an applicant survey where they can see all our openings and give the option for them to ask questions or add a cover letter to their application
- Search online for your city's local public access channel or station; they usually allow free advertising.
- Between steps 1 and 2 - before we conduct the interview - we make sure the candidate knows where our positions are located (RURAL) and that they must have a car/be able to drive.

Tips and suggestions for interviewing

- We've found it's important to remind and make sure the candidate understands the difference between direct service and capacity building
- Be a good listener. Let their answers guide your next question
- After interviews, take five minutes to reflect on what worked/didn't work so you can apply those ideas to next time
- We ask specific program questions
- i don't know about what works, but how do you end an interview if you know that's not going to end well?
- Very helpful question "Are you comfortable spending more than 50% of time in office setting."

- Since I do the initial interview, I always cover basics/logistics first: if they're aware of the stipend, the type of service, etc. and then a few questions about why they're interested
- we interview as a team. Questions were developed from a team aspect & the team is involved in the interview.
- do they know what a coalition is, have they ever worked in a coalition, etc.
- As an intermediary, we have our site supervisors make final decisions on the candidate. We screen them, and then pass them on if there are no red flags
- We ask " when have you failed to keep a commitment?"
- We have a two-step interview process where we interview potential candidates in house then share them with the site supervisors with preliminary interview notes. This has allowed us to emphasize VISTA program in general and what makes a good VISTA
- I interview candidates with the program director and the host site supervisor, we talk about the candidate after the interview.
- Asking follow-up questions when covering things like capacity building or the living allowance always seems to help in interviews. We like to find a way for them to reiterate that information at some point during the initial interview.
- We ask about their ideal supervisor and conflict management styles
- We ask about how they plan to make ends meet on a small living stipend.
- I ask my candidates how they think serving as a VISTA will help them in their long-term goals. I also ask them how they would like to see the program grow.
- What are you looking to gain through your year of service?
- I ask why VISTA makes sense for them at this time in their lives
- When I set up the interview, I tell them to call us to ensure that they are serious
- Host sites usually pick their candidate, and then we screen them -We talk about the role of VISTAs, expectations (around communication), the importance of our corps model & community building, professional development & retreat opportunities, capacity building/direct service; living allowance, do they need support relocating
- We call all of our candidates to screen them before interviewing
- RE: how do you make sure site-supervisors work with your timeline? We make them choose a target start date and make them aware of the deadlines we have to start. Unfortunately, if they don't follow our timeline, they can't have a VISTA due to background screenings and other factors. It is up to them
- These are my favorite two questions to ask: What professional strength do you think will make you successful in a VISTA role? and What is a professional skill or area you want to improve upon in the coming year?
- We also ask the candidates we select that say no - why - was it 1) our process , 2) another national service position, or 3) a full time full paid job ? We can control #1, # 2 - yeah - but not #3.
- We ask applicants why they think people are poor and why healthcare is important. They can answer however as long it is a good answer.
- Most recently we have asked interviewees about their ability to do remote setup based on most sites being shut down. We are still hiring even though we know they will start on a remote work plan.

- RE: screening for a saviorism mentality that would be harmful to vulnerable communities during the interview as feedback:
 - we can tell from their purpose/motivational statement in their application
 - we take notes about the "savior" mindset if it seems to come out, but we don't explicitly talk about it. I think we may start though!
 - Our Storybanking Texas Initiative helps us get a peek into the savior mindset and we look at their motivational statement.

Ideas for keeping candidates engaged between selection and start date

- We send them our newsletter/put them in it when they start.
- We had four candidates for the April VMO - rescheduled to May. We've added them to our ZOOM Meetings, self-care tips, etc. daily email outreach. We've also encouraged our site to reach out. We even had one group have a "Welcome to" Zoom call w/community members that would need to work with her. She was on the call and they had a reception locally. She felt part of the community before she ever got there.
- We also have them join our newsletter before they officially start
- Since we are in food banks, I send volunteer opportunity
- Adding them to a Facebook group for all AmeriCorps member in the city
- We've created a welcome packet
- we have a welcome packet
- Site- and city-specific resources related to surviving on the VISTA living allowance
- we also have a Feeding Texas VISTA Slack
- we have a welcome packet, an informational packet, and an on-boarding packet
- We provide housing resources and a SNAP benefits application, do regular check-in emails about how the housing search is going, etc. as most of our VISTAs relocate
- housing guide to neighborhoods in Chicago
- we regularly have members come into the office to complete documents
- we also send optional books, podcasts, and shows to watch concerning the opioid crisis in California
- If they are local we invite them to community events where our VISTA's will be
- We are planning a new program that is like a "big/little" selection from Greek life on universities. We think these peer-to-peer mentoring relationships may be helpful early on.
- Right now, I am doing my best to keep a candidate interested because his VMO got moved to May. He quit his job two weeks before his start date, so he is currently without a job. I am messaging him and ensuring that he knows that I am sympathetic.
- Readings and videos--ted talks, books, and podcasts are also helpful :)
- Here's an article: Where to Post Volunteer Opportunities: 15 Volunteer Recruitment Websites for Nonprofits -- <https://www.wholewhale.com/tips/where-to-post-volunteer-opportunities>
- We also let the other VISTA programs in our state what we are recruiting for and ask what they are looking for. Just because someone doesn't want to serve in a rural community doesn't mean they wouldn't love another community

- Ways that we as VISTA Leaders are keeping our current vistas engaged remotely and providing virtual support:
 - I do weekly Zoom meetings, and we use Microsoft teams for daily check-ins
 - we do check-in calls with each VISTA every 10-15 days
 - We are doing weekly Zoom meetings as well.
 - virtual meetings with 15 people has been.....interesting lol
 - we are doing ZOOM and our VL is sending out emails on a regular basis.
 - We have a weekly newsletter
 - We do weekly Go To Meetings
 - We have done a few VISTA Challenges to keep vistas engaged and ensure they are taking care of themselves- positive coping bingo, a “why I serve” challenge (make a video, write a poem, paint something- just be creative - extra perk, we will be putting on our website and can use it for marketing/recruiting). Also doing Trivia night for fun too. We also use slack and have monthly communities of practice and webinars.
<https://bingobaker.com/view/2916123>
 - virtual meetings
 - I have started sending out weekly email with self-care tips and updates and have created a COVID-19 section on our members-only website