

VISTA ... A Legacy of Service



PRE-SERVICE ORIENTATION

Know. Grow. Change.

Summer 2018



7 Things About Me

Name: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____



GROW

IMAGINE

INQUIRE

PLAN

PRESENT

LEARN

Your VISTA Year of Service

Road Map

Key Questions to Ask My Supervisor

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____
 11. _____
 12. _____
 13. _____
 14. _____
 15. _____
-

VISTA Individual Development Plan

Knowledge & Skills Needed to Accomplish the VAD	Priority <i>LMH</i>	Learning Opportunities & Resources	Type <i>(see below)</i>	Timeframe <i>(mo/yr)</i>

PRIORITY: L = Low M = Medium H = High

TYPE OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: 1 = Online 2 = In-person 3 = Informal 4 = Other

Your Vision for Your VISTA Year

Use this space to draw your napkin sketch.

Minute Message Model

_____ believes _____.

(NAME OF ORGANIZATION) (DEEPLY HELD VALUE)

Every day, we _____ for _____

(VERB) (OBJECT) (CONSTITUENTS)

because _____.

(PROBLEM STATEMENT)

Example

I am Sandra, and I am an AmeriCorps VISTA with Prescott Area Women's Shelter. We believe that housing is a human right. That's why we ensure that our clients have a roof over their head. Nobody should ever have to call the streets their home.

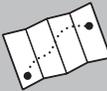
Example

I am Erik, and I am an AmeriCorps VISTA with Harmony Clinic. Harmony Clinic believes that everyone should have access to quality healthcare despite their ability to pay. Every day, we meet the needs of these patients at no cost because healthy people build healthy communities.

Draft your minute message introduction:

VISTA Blended Learning & Development Program

A continuum of training, resources, and peer connections to ensure VISTA members build capacity, alleviate poverty, and thrive throughout their service experience.

	 In-Person Training & Support	 VISTA Campus www.vistacampus.gov
PRE-SERVICE	 Pre-Service Orientation	 Pre-Service Online Tutorials
IN-SERVICE	 On-Site Orientation & Training	 Online Courses <i>Resource Development</i> <i>Volunteer Mobilization</i>
		 In-Service Resources & Tutorials
	 Classes, Workshops & Conferences¹ <i>Supported by Sponsor</i>	 Webinars
		 Forums
CLOSE OF SERVICE	 Life After Service Events²	 Transition Resources

1. While the On-Site Orientation & Training is required, any additional classes, workshops or conferences offered during service depends on the sponsors' capacity to make them available.

2. Life After Service events are offered by State Offices, sponsors and other entities depending on their capacities to make them available.

Getting Started at Your VISTA Site

Step	Resources Needed	People Involved	Target Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

When you are done, go back to your Development Plan. Do you need to add skills to that chart?



 facebook.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA

 youtube.com/nationalservice

 linkedin.com/company/americorps-vista

 instagram.com/nationalservice

 twitter.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA



AmeriCorps VISTA Oath Form

For US Citizens

1. FULL NAME (as it appears on my.americorps.gov):

2. NAME OF YOUR PROJECT SPONSOR:

3. SERVICE LOCATION CITY & STATE:

4. DATE OF YOUR FIRST DAY OF SERVICE AT YOUR SITE:

5. NAME OF CNCS OFFICIAL WHO ADMINISTERED THE OATH:

6. OATH OF SERVICE *

The following oath or affirmation of service is required by the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, and must be administered by an authorized staff member of the Corporation for National and Community Service:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

AmeriCorps VISTA Member's signature

___ / ___ / ____
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

Witness

___ / ___ / ____
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

**NOTE: The words "So help me God" in the oath, and the word "swear" wherever they appear above, may be stricken when the Member elects to affirm rather than swear to the Oath of Service; only these words may be stricken and only when the Member elects to affirm the Oath of Service.*

This oath is valid and effective when the following conditions have been met:

- 1) All fields on this form have been accurately completed, and
- 2) You have been sworn in by an authorized federal official.

Instructions for Submitting the Oath Form:

1. Member and Witness sign and date using blue or black ink. Digital signatures are not accepted.
2. Scan the completed Oath form as a pdf. Photographs are not accepted.
3. Email the completed Oath form to the VISTA Member Support Unit at vmsu@cns.gov by the end of today. The subject line and body of the email must include the following:

OATH – First name Last name – MM/DD/YYYY (first date of VISTA service)



Dear VISTA Candidate:

On behalf of the AmeriCorps VISTA program, I welcome you to the Corporation for National and Community Service, to AmeriCorps VISTA, and to your Pre-Service Orientation (PSO).

I am continually inspired by the fresh spirit of service and idealism common to those who join VISTA. VISTAs are agents of change in low-income communities who bring perhaps the most important resource to organizations and communities: motivated, capable people. I am impressed by the courage and joy VISTAs bring to the lifelong adventure of community development. I want to thank you for the valuable contributions you will make to the renewal of America.

The VISTA PSO introduces you to VISTA, our mission, history, and policies, and to your roles and responsibilities as a VISTA member. Here, you will meet other passionate, talented people who are also committed to helping others. At the end of the orientation, you will take the oath of service and join thousands serving as VISTAs.

Best wishes for an amazing year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Eileen Conoboy'.

Eileen Conoboy
Acting Director, AmeriCorps VISTA

Acknowledgments

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Icon Legend



Activities



Resources

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Mission & PSO Goals

Corporation for National & Community Service Mission Statement

The Corporation’s mission is to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in service that addresses the nation’s educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results and to encourage all Americans to engage in such service. In doing so, the Corporation will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunities for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

VISTA Mission & Legacy

For over 50 years, VISTA has been building capacity in nonprofit organizations to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Today, nearly 6,000 VISTA members serve in hundreds of nonprofit organizations and public agencies throughout the country—working to promote literacy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, and bridge the digital divide.

Overall Goals of VISTA Training

By the end of the Pre-Service Orientation, you should be able to:

- Describe the VISTA program and its mission in broad terms.
- Explain how VISTAs build capacity and empower communities.
- Be inspired to fight poverty as part of your service.
- Describe your service responsibilities and activities as identified in your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) and connect them to building capacity and fighting poverty.
- Identify skills and development needed to successfully carry out your service assignment.
- Describe how strong communication, relationship-building, and problem-solving skills are essential to effective VISTA service.
- Practice community input and engagement techniques.
- Be better able to communicate with others and solve problems at your site.
- Utilize relationship-building and donation-solicitation skills to secure financial and in-kind resources for your project or program.
- Identify the steps to develop a volunteer program.
- Write a compelling volunteer recruitment message.
- Develop a plan for your personal and professional development during your service year.

VISTA Impact Facts

AmeriCorps VISTA 2017 Accomplishments



\$206 million

Cash and in-kind resources generated by AmeriCorps VISTA members, more than doubling every federal dollar invested.



800,000

Community volunteers were mobilized to serve over **8 million hours**.



3 million

Disadvantaged youth were served.



140,000

Veterans and military families were served.



70%

VISTAs served in their hometown.



8,500

VISTA members served at **more than 4,500 sites** across the U.S.



220,000+

Individuals have served as VISTAs since 1965.

VISTA Skills & Issue Areas

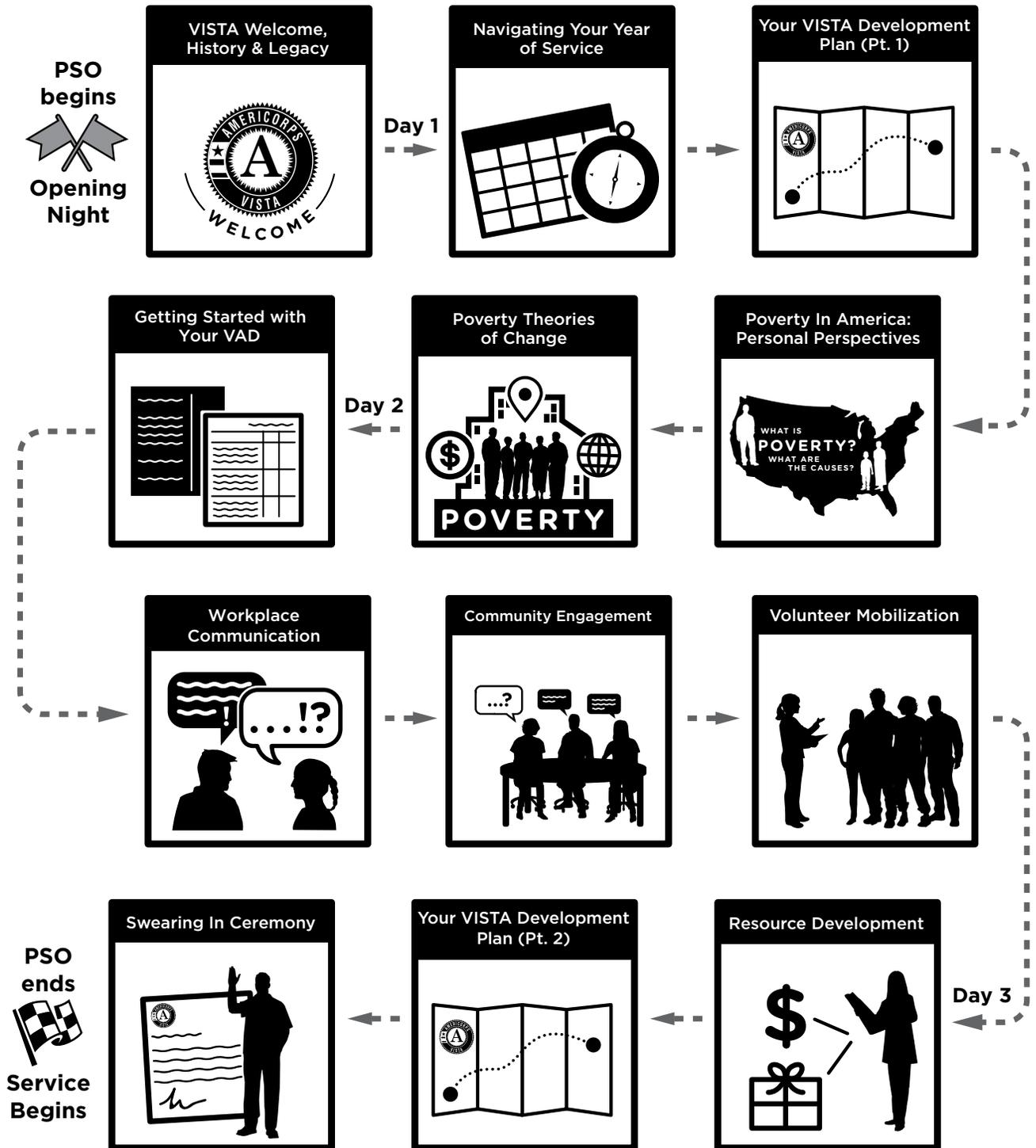
Skills

- Communications
- Program Development
- Technology
- Partnership Building
- Resource Development
- Volunteer Mobilization

Issues

- Access to Health Care
- Community and Economic Development
- Education
- Employment Services
- Financial Literacy
- Housing/Homeless Services
- Hunger/Food Security
- Veterans and Military Families
- Other Anti-Poverty Programs

PSO Flow



Poverty Thresholds

Poverty Thresholds for 2017

by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years

Total Family Size	Number of Related Children Under 18 Years								
	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
One person									
<i>Under 65 years</i>	12,752								
<i>65+ years</i>	11,756								
Two people									
<i>Householder under 65 years</i>	16,414	16,895							
<i>Householder 65+ years</i>	14,816	16,831							
Three people	19,173	19,730	19,749						
Four people	25,283	25,696	24,858	24,944					
Five people	30,490	30,933	29,986	29,253	28,805				
Six people	35,069	35,208	34,482	33,787	32,753	32,140			
Seven people	40,351	40,603	39,734	39,129	38,001	36,685	35,242		
Eight people	45,129	45,528	44,708	43,990	42,971	41,678	40,332	39,990	
Nine+ people	54,287	54,550	53,825	53,216	52,216	50,840	49,595	49,287	47,389

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Supplemental Poverty Measure

Since 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau has calculated an alternative poverty measure to complement the official one. Instead of looking solely at the cost of food as the official measure does, the Supplemental Poverty Measure, or SPM, calculates the costs of a broader array of basic needs, including housing, utilities, and clothes.

The SPM thresholds change the calculation for how many people in the U.S. live in poverty—raising the percentage from 12.7% of the population to 13.9% in 2016, adding about 3.86 million people to the ranks of people living at or below the poverty line at that time.

The SPM also alters data on how poverty is distributed among different groups. For example, since the SPM counts the value of things like the National School Lunch Program and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which especially benefit children, it shows their poverty as lower than the official measure. By contrast, poverty rates for those 65 years and over are higher under the SPM compared with the official measure. This partially reflects that the official thresholds are set lower for individuals with householders in this age group, while the SPM thresholds do not vary by age.

These variations between the SPM and the official poverty measure can have implications for policymakers. Knowing whether poverty among children or the elderly is higher, for example, might influence whether public antipoverty efforts are focused primarily on the young or primarily on the old.

Poverty Measure Concepts: Official & Supplemental

	Official Poverty Measure	Supplemental Poverty Measure
Poverty Threshold	Three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1960.	A more sophisticated calculation of current costs of living that takes into account expenditures on food, clothing, housing and utilities.
Threshold Adjustments	Vary by family size, composition, and age of householder.	Adjustments to reflect the needs of different family types and geographic differences in housing costs.
		

Source: *The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2016*, U.S. Census Bureau. Available at www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-261.pdf.

Selected Poverty Statistics

Who's Living in Poverty Today?

The poverty rate varies between ethnic groups. 8.8% of Whites; 10.1% of Asians; 19.4% of Latinos; 22% of African Americans; and 26.2% of Native Americans lived in poverty in 2016. While Whites had the lowest poverty rate, they have the highest number of people in poverty due to their large population size.

The poverty rate for children under 18 was 18 percent in 2016. People aged 65 and older had a much lower rate, only 9.3 percent.

Regionally, the 2016 poverty rate was 12.8 percent in the West, 14.1 percent in the South, 10.8 percent in the Northeast, and 11.7 percent in the Midwest.

In 2016, 26.6 percent of households headed by women lived in poverty.

From 2009 to 2012, 34.5 percent of the population had at least one spell of poverty lasting 2 or more months.

The official poverty rate in 2016 was 12.7 percent, with 40.6 million people living in poverty in the U.S.

Income

In 2016, the median household income was \$59,039, slightly higher than the median of \$58,149 in 2007, the year before the most recent recession.

In 2016, the real median earnings for men who worked full time year round was \$51,640 and it was \$41,554 for women. The female to male earnings ratio was 0.805.

Unemployment

In 2016, the median duration of unemployment was 10.6 weeks.

The unemployment rate has been dropping since 2011. It was 8.1 percent in 2012; 7.4 percent in 2013; 6.2 percent in 2014; 5.3 percent in 2015; and 4.9 percent in 2016.

Health Insurance

In 2016, 28.1 million Americans were without health insurance, a decrease of 0.3 percent from 29 million in 2015.

The uninsured rate for children under age 19 in poverty in 2016 (7 percent) was greater than the rate for all children (5.4 percent).

Sources:

1. *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016*, U.S. Census Bureau. Available at www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf.
2. *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2016*, U.S. Census Bureau. Available at www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-260.pdf.
3. *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*, U.S. Department of Labor. Available at www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat30.htm and data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU04000000?years_option=all_years&periods_option=specific_periods&periods=Annual+Data.
4. *2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17001C*, U.S. Census Bureau. Available at factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_1YR_B17001C&prodType=table.

Poverty Theories of Change

1. Individual Circumstances

Cause

People are in poverty due to individual circumstances. Some may have made poor choices, while others may suffer from chronic illness, mental or physical disabilities, or other personal challenges and circumstances over which they have little control.

Approach

In the case of poor choices, use incentives or penalties to change an individual's behaviors so that they make positive / productive choices. This theory also supports addressing individuals' needs through activities such as providing support services to those with illnesses and disabilities, as well as assistance in removing barriers to education or work. Many initiatives emphasize strategies that move individuals in poverty into living wage employment. For example, to qualify for or to continue to receive public benefits, an applicant might be asked to demonstrate that he or she is working, actively seeking employment, or pursuing education.

2. Cultural

Cause

The transmission across families, generations, or affiliated groups of people with a shared set of beliefs, values, and skills, reinforces behaviors and choices that result in poverty. Individuals belonging to these cultures or subcultures make choices embedded in the identity or acceptance of the group. For example, a young person who feels disconnected may join a gang in which he is forced to steal to gain acceptance. As an individual, he may not have been inclined to steal otherwise. In some cases, these subcultures develop and reinforce unhealthy behaviors after having been actively oppressed or discriminated against.

Approach

Interventions focus on changing a culture or a person's relationship to that culture. This could be approached in several ways. First, individuals can be physically relocated to expose them to a different culture (for example, an intervention may try to relocate prisoners from the environment where they got in trouble to help support the adoption of new, more appropriate values for work). Second, special attention and supports may be targeted at young people to influence how they make choices (for example, Head Start and other educational programs that provide alternative socialization for children living in poverty). Third, interventions can work within a culture to redefine culturally appropriate strategies to improve a group's well-being (for example, working with gang members to redirect their need for a sense of belonging into more positive affiliations or working with Native American communities to bring back food-cultivation traditions).

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

3. Geographic

Cause

People in certain geographic areas (e.g., underdeveloped urban neighborhoods and rural counties) are in poverty because these areas do not provide a strong enough economic base to generate adequate resources for well-being and income. Public and private-sector investment tends to flow to areas where there is already substantial investment, bypassing less developed and/or more remote areas, thereby exacerbating economic decline. This disinvestment can be motivated or made worse by discrimination and political indifference.

Approach

Redevelop or revitalize a distressed geographic area to grow its economic base. This might be done through: community organizing; improving local industry competitiveness; establishing enterprise zones and other tax-based incentive programs to encourage economic development and private investment; making civic improvements that increase amenities and make areas more attractive in hopes of increasing employment and tax revenue; investing in public infrastructure such as parks, schools, and roads; and redistributing funds from thriving economic areas to distressed ones.

4. Structural

Cause

Social, political, and economic structures limit access to opportunities and resources for certain groups of people, keeping them in poverty. For example, economic structures, such as a low minimum wage, have created a large working poor population. People in low-wage jobs often do not have access to benefits like childcare and health insurance. In addition, funding for education in low-income communities tends to be lower than in areas of wealth, leading to substandard (and unequal access to) education. Forced to live and work in survival modes, people in poverty are less likely to be involved in the political process and have fewer opportunities to advocate on their own behalf. This lack of access to opportunities and political power can result from institutional discrimination and stigma against social and cultural minorities.

Approach

Change systems and structures to give people in poverty access to opportunities, resources, and power. Grass roots movements can exert pressure on the system to promote desired change. Create and develop more inclusive and open programs and institutions that work with people in poverty. Small business and microloan programs can also create alternative businesses and build entrepreneurship, which helps people move out of low-wage jobs. Improve schools and housing while also developing programs that give people in poverty access to benefits like childcare and health insurance. Community-owned businesses such as community bank can also provide alternative structures.

Poverty Theories of Change, cont.

5. Cumulative

Cause

A complex combination of individual and community-level forces interact and create a downward spiral that moves people into and keeps them living in poverty. For example, a factory may shut down in a community, leading to a lack of employment which causes people to move elsewhere to seek jobs, leaving behind an economic void, which impacts schools and local services as the tax base erodes. At the same time, those who remain in the community cannot find work, resulting in depleted savings and benefits. The spiral also impacts people emotionally and psychologically: as their confidence decreases, they may lose motivation to pursue better jobs and ways of life. Chronic discouragement can lead to depression and other mental health issues, or unhealthy behaviors, such as substance abuse. This complex cause of poverty incorporates many of the other theories as it describes how people become disadvantaged in their geographic, and/or social context which then can affect physiological and psychological abilities at the individual level.

Approach

This complex theory of poverty requires multiple solutions to address multiple challenges. It is essential to generate a positive upward spiral by creating a comprehensive system of supports for individuals and the community. Set up comprehensive programs that include a variety of services which strengthen and build on assets in the community. These include: income (economic) assets, education/skills, housing and safe environments, access to health care and other social services, and social capital. Programs work collaboratively while also empowering the community to become engaged in the work and help to shape the services provided.

Adapted from:

Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development (Working Paper No. 06-05), Ted K. Bradshaw, Rural Poverty Research Center, 2006. www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf.

Poverty Theories of Change: Examples

Example #1: The Center for Social Inclusion (CSI): Nationwide

The Center for Social Inclusion is a nonprofit that identifies and supports strategies to end racial disparity and promote equal opportunity. For example, because many low-income people lack access to private and public transportation, CSI works with grassroots groups nationally to generate policy strategies that will lead to investment in innovative transit options. In addition to promoting equal opportunity for transportation, CSI works with local, state and federal leaders to develop strategies for advancing innovative broadband models like community-owned and community-driven broadband to support low-income Americans who may be socially or geographically isolated and would benefit from community-wide structures that improve access to the internet.

Example #2: Mountain West Rural Community Action Program

Persistent poverty is disproportionately found in rural areas. Residents in such communities often lack access to job opportunities, social services, and affordable and reliable transportation. The Mountain West Rural Community Action Program is a regional collaborative operating in several Western states to create sustainable, healthy, and thriving rural communities. It convenes stakeholder groups in rural communities to identify local needs and resources to fight poverty. It then identifies and recruits community partners — including churches, school districts, and college extension offices — to coordinate funding and services to meet the identified needs.

Example #3: JEVS Human Services: Philadelphia, PA

There is a variety of welfare-to-work programs around the country aimed at improving individual self-sufficiency. This program in Philadelphia, PA is designed for residents receiving cash assistance and who are nearing or have exceeded their five-year lifetime limit for assistance and are in need of specific help overcoming obstacles to self-sufficiency. Program recipients are provided with multiple services, as needed, including job coaching, mental health, dental care, and transportation assistance to aid them in finding and keeping a job that will move them off of state and federal aid. They are assigned a case manager who assesses their obstacles, provides intensive support, and creates an individualized plan for professional development and job readiness.

Poverty Theories of Change: Examples

Example #4: Mercer Valley Credit Union

Over the past few years, a string of muggings and robberies targeted immigrant groups in Mercer County. In interviews following the attacks, victims claimed that their perpetrators must have been aware that they were carrying cash or hiding it at home because they did not understand how to use, or felt they were unwelcome at banks and other financial institutions in the area. Grassroots groups in the community met to discuss how to address the issue and decided to found the Mercer Valley Credit Union. The credit union provides banking services and financial education, including classes in financial literacy and investing, available in both English and Spanish. Clients can also participate in an Individual Development Account (IDA) program and in some cases receive micro-finance loans.

Example #5: Strength in Social Support and Self-Sufficiency (S-5)

This program provides financial support, and facilitates social connectedness, personal control, and the “discovery of options” for working poor families in both urban and rural areas through a family’s five-year participation in the program. Participants network inside and outside their communities— tapping into the power of “who you know.” They also learn to mobilize their resources to identify and create new opportunities for themselves and each other. The program provides cash incentives for family members to set and reach goals such as educating a child, earning a college degree, starting a business, developing a new career, or owning a home. A group of five families called a “cohort” meets monthly with an S-5 facilitator to discuss challenges and to work on solutions together.

Example #6: The “Do It Right” Program

As individuals are released from prison, the program offers them housing, work, and training to develop new ways of living. Participants reside on-site for a minimum of two years in dormitory-style housing. After two or more years of routine, hard work, and recognition for positive behaviors, participants emerge from the program ready to find working- or middle-class employment. In addition to work and training, participants learn healthy interpersonal and coping skills. Participants also adjust to mainstream cultural norms. They learn to dress professionally, set a table, and order at a restaurant.

Poverty Theories of Change: Examples

Example #7: Northwest Side Community Development Corporation: Milwaukee, WI

The Northwest Side Community Development Corporation (NWSCDC) has served the economic development needs of Milwaukee's low-income communities since being founded in 1983. The NWSCDC has assisted with neighborhood strategic planning to improve safety, land use planning and development on the Northwest Side to spur retail growth and numerous business and workforce development programs. It does so by providing loans and grants, technical assistance, and support for advocacy and community-building efforts. NWSCDC partners with businesses, public/private entities, and nonprofit agencies to support projects and programs that increase economic activity. Throughout its 33-year history, the NWSCDC has innovated and adapted to changes in the community and economic development landscape.

Example #8: The Bloomingdale Family Program: New York, NY

The Bloomingdale Family Program serves children and parents from low-income families drawn from upper Manhattan. The program focuses on breaking the cycle of poverty by supporting the development of the whole family, not just the child. Bloomingdale offers an enriched early-childhood curriculum that addresses the abilities and needs of each child. To ensure that children continue to succeed and thrive, the program also offers after-school tutoring and support through the elementary grades. In addition, Bloomingdale includes social service staff members that focus on the needs and aspirations of parents and help parents take advantage of opportunities for education, training, and employment.

Example #9: Resident. Connect. Care: New York, NY

The purpose of this program is to educate participants about how to select and prepare the kinds of foods that will restore and sustain long-term health. The program fosters food awareness and food traditions in communities that lack access to the most recent science on wellness and healthy food choices. To support this effort, the program distributes plant-based meals to people within these communities who are living with chronic illness associated with poor diet. Staff members also collaborate with medical doctors to provide needed care and information to participants, and provide meal and snack food demonstration workshops that teach community members how to maximize the nutrient intake of the food they're eating at home.

Poverty Theories of Change: Examples

Name That Theory!	
<i>Example #1</i>	
<i>Example #2</i>	
<i>Example #3</i>	
<i>Example #4</i>	
<i>Example #5</i>	
<i>Example #6</i>	
<i>Example #7</i>	
<i>Example #8</i>	
<i>Example #9</i>	

Poverty Theory Analysis



Theory Name _____

Strengths _____

Limitations _____

Draw what you think this theory looks like in action:



Learn More About Poverty

On the VISTA Campus

The Work: Poverty in America.

A robust collection of readings, tools, tutorials, and multimedia materials that will inform and equip you to support and empower people living in poverty in your community.

Go to vistacampus.gov/poverty-america. Resources you can find there include (at right):

How Poverty is Measured in the United States. Watch the animation viewed at PSO which describes the history of how poverty is measured in the United States.

Poverty in Your Community: Developing a Community Profile.

Inform the types of partnerships you pursue, the funding you apply for, and the programs you develop by exploring online resources to create a profile of poverty in the community you serve.

Poverty in the US: The National Data. Explore 2010 poverty data with Stephen Pimpare and learn how the poverty rate in the U.S. varies by group and place. Find out where to locate current poverty data online.

Conversations with Stephen Pimpare on poverty in America (recorded webinars).

Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development. A downloadable copy of the Ted K. Bradshaw paper used in the Poverty Theories of Change session.

Books

The Great Recession (2011) by David Grusky, Bruce Western and Christopher Wimer

A People's History of Poverty in America (2011) by Stephen Pimpare

So You Think I Drive a Cadillac? Welfare Recipients' Perspectives on the System and Its Reform (2010) by Karen Seccombe

The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination (2008) by Bradley Schiller

See Poverty, Be the Difference (2007) by Donna Beegle

Field Guide to the U.S. Economy (2006) by Johnathon Teller-Elsberg, Nancy Folbre and James Heintz

Understanding Poverty (2002) by Sheldon H. Danziger and Robert H. Haveman

Articles / Videos

"The U.S. is Losing a Generation to Poverty" by Monica Potts (*The Daily Beast*, September 18, 2014)

"The Suburbanization of Poverty: Trends in Metropolitan America, 2000 to 2008" by Emily Garr, Elizabeth Kneebone (*Brookings Institution*, January 20, 2010)

"Inside the Meltdown" (*Frontline*, February 17, 2009)

"Relatively Deprived" by John Cassidy (*The New Yorker*, April 3, 2006)

Websites

The U.S. Census Bureau reports U.S. income and poverty data and trends from several major household surveys and programs. www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty.html

Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison www.irp.wisc.edu

Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, Stanford University inequality.stanford.edu

National Center for Children in Poverty www.nccp.org

For Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) in your area, go to cfed.org/programs/idas/directory_search

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

TITLE	Mentor Recruitment and Management Systems Designer
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	Waketa Community Services (WCS)
PROJECT NAME	MentorCorps
PROJECT NUMBER	12ABCD345
PROJECT PERIOD	08/20/20XX - 08/19/20YY
SITE NAME	<i>if applicable</i>
FOCUS AREA(S)	Education (Primary)
NOTE	If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.

VISTA Assignment Objectives & Member Activities

PROJECT GOAL	<i>To help ensure that children of incarcerated parents receive the educational, social, and emotional support they need to help them break the cycle of poverty, the MentorCorps VISTA project will build the capacity of WCS by developing a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management system for its mentoring program.</i>
OBJECTIVE	Assess the current state of WCS' efforts in reaching, selecting, and supporting volunteer mentors, and create or revise policies, procedures, and documents to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentor-recruitment and matching system.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research the history of volunteer programs at WCS. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify strengths and challenges of the current program. Based on this report, make a plan for improvement. 2. Develop systems for screening and matching mentors.
OBJECTIVE	Set up outreach systems and build partnerships with community organizations in order to spread the word about the mentor program. Develop targeted marketing materials.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan for outreach and recruitment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify skills, abilities, and experiences sought in volunteer mentors. b. Write volunteer task descriptions that include: qualifications, activities, benefits, time commitment, and other expectations. c. Develop partnerships with community organizations whose members are possible mentors or who can support the organization in other ways. d. Develop partnerships with people or organizations that understand the needs of children of prisoners and can assist with the training and support of mentors. 2. Market the program to targeted audiences.

Capacity Building & Community Empowerment

ca·pa·ci·ty build·ing *a set of activities*

Capacity building is a set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. Capacity building allows the organization and the community to sustain the VISTA's project activities once the project period has ended. Tasks and activities are designed to:

- Create, expand, or strengthen an organization's systems or processes
- Transfer knowledge, products, and relationships to the staff and volunteers of the host site

com·mu·ni·ty em·pow·er·ment *a process*

Community empowerment is the process of engaging the community you serve to help plan, develop, and implement a VISTA project. To be responsive and relevant, VISTA projects need to recognize the community assets that are valued by community members, and to tap into inherent community strengths and resources.

Communication Styles



DIRECT



INDIRECT

DIRECTNESS

- People say what they mean and mean what they say.
- It's important to be direct and tell it like it is.
- The truth is more important than sparing someone's feelings.
- People are indirect; they imply/suggest what they mean.
- You need to read between the lines.
- Telling the truth, if it hurts, should be tempered.



NOT IMPORTANT



IMPORTANT

SAVING FACE

- The facts and expediency are more important than being careful about what you say.
- Getting/giving information is the overriding goal of the communication exchange.
- It's okay to say 'no' and confront or criticize people.
- Maintaining harmony is the overriding goal of the communication exchange.
- Confrontation, criticism, and saying no are avoided or handled delicately.
- What one says and what one feels often are not the same.

Communication Styles, cont.



- Do business first and then have small talk.
- Establishing rapport and a good personal relationship are not essential to getting the job done.
- The goal is accomplishing the task.

- Begin with small talk and then move to business.
- A personal relationship is a prerequisite to getting the job done.
- The goal is building the relationship.

Communication Styles Case Study



Section 1

Two VISTAs, Rachelle and Jake, work directly with one supervisor, Sally. Both Rachelle and Jake are recent college graduates and excited to be VISTAs. Sally is new at supervising entry-level staff members and has acknowledged that this will be a learning process for her.

Sally scheduled an On-Site Orientation and Training (OSOT), starting at 8 am, to cover all the needed details. She spends most of her time out of the office with external stakeholders, so this was the one time she had available to orient Rachelle and Jake. Sally started the meeting at 8 am. She spent the first ten minutes talking about her weekend trip with her family. She asked Rachelle and Jake about their weekends. She then asked both of them how they were feeling after their week at PSO. At about 8:45 am, Sally started into the agenda.

Section 2

Sally spent the entire day working with the VISTAs, going over all relevant policies and answering questions about their VADs. At the end of the day, Sally said, "I've got meetings the rest of the week. Just send me an email if something comes up. Let's then plan to check in a month from now. How does that sound?" Rachelle felt overwhelmed. She expected more frequent check-ins, but didn't say anything. Jake just said "Okay" and left the meeting.

Section 3

A couple of months later, Sally held a meeting with Jake, Rachelle, her assistant, Remy, and John, a community volunteer working on fundraising. Sally explained that Jake and Rachelle would be updating the organization's donor database by mailing and collecting donor information forms. Jake thought there might be a faster way to manage the project—an idea that was pretty much the opposite of how Sally said to do it. He spoke up, saying: "I would probably go about that differently. Like, what about if we go directly to the donors to get their updated email addresses, instead of having them fill out the form?" Sally quickly responded, "Well, this is the way we've been doing it for three years and it has worked fine."

Jake responded, "I disagree with you. I think it will take more time in the long run to do it this way."

Section 4

Unfortunately, the database project went awry. Jake filled in the wrong fields in an Excel file that Rachelle sent out to the organization's board of directors. Remy (Sally's assistant) worked with Jake and Rachelle to remedy the situation and within two hours, the data file was corrected and sent out again. Later, Sally sent an e-mail to Jake about what happened. At the end of her message Sally wrote, "Jake, I am deeply disappointed. You made a major mistake with the data."



Case Study Discussion

Discuss the following questions:

Preventions

What could the VISTAs have done to prevent the database issue? What could the supervisor have done to prevent the database issue?

Interventions

What could they have done during the situation?

Follow up

What could they do after the situation?

Asset Brainstorming Worksheet



WHO	HOW
<p>Who might use the library?</p> <p>Brainstorm different types of community members for whom the library might be an asset.</p>	<p>How might the library be an asset?</p> <p>Brainstorm different ways community members might use the library.</p>



Learn More About Assets & Community Engagement

Participatory Asset Inventorying/Mapping

The term “community assets” refers to the practices, knowledge, resources, relationships, and institutions within a community that benefit and strengthen the community and its members.

Participatory asset inventorying or mapping is a process in which people who belong to a community work together to identify the assets that exist within their community, resulting in a written or visual inventory or map. The participatory asset inventorying or mapping process includes seven steps:

1. Define what use an asset inventory/ map could serve for the community
2. Consider whose input to seek
3. Develop shared understanding among community members of what is meant by “asset”
4. Use participatory process to gather input from community members
5. Create asset map (not necessarily in form of a literal map) or inventory
6. Present the map/inventory to community members and other stakeholders for their review, and refine based on their input
7. Use map/inventory in collaboration with community members

On the VISTA Campus

Activating Asset Mapping. This course provides the fundamentals of creating an asset map for your community. www.vistacampus.gov/what-asset-mapping

Mapping Assets to Build Community. Watch this recorded webinar to learn about different types of community assets and how to identify and engage them. www.vistacampus.gov/resources/webinars-vistas-mapping-assets-build-community

Strengthening Your Organization, Your Community, and Your Projects. This course provides capacity building tips for identifying assets in your community and strengthening your program’s ability to leverage those assets for win-win outcomes. www.vistacampus.gov/lessons/strengthening-your-organization-your-community-and-your-projects

Making Decisions Better. Developing community projects involves lots of decision points. Watch this recorded webinar for information on when and how to involve others in the decision-making process. www.vistacampus.gov/resources/webinars-vistas-making-decisions-better

Other Online Resources

Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Case Western Reserve University. appreciativeinquiry.case.edu

Appreciative Inquiry in Community Development, Imagine Chicago. www.imaginechicago.org/inquiry.html

Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy. www.abcdinstitute.org

Community Toolbox, University of Kansas. [ctb.ku.edu/en/Organizer's Workbook](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/Organizer's%20Workbook), Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center. www.instituteccd.org/resources/4763
Participatory Asset Mapping Toolkit, HealthyCity. www.healthycity.org/cbpar-toolbox

Categories of Community Engagement

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Allow to Lead
Public Participation Goal	To provide information to help the public understand	To obtain public feedback	To work with the public through a process	To partner with the public in decision-making	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed	We will seek your input	We will look to you for guidance	We will work together with you	We will implement what you decide
Sample Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses • Tabling at community events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Polling • Gallery walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings • Workshops • Brainstorming • Community walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Adapted from the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

Gathering Community Input: How We Ask Matters

Strategy	Example
Ask open-ended, neutral questions. Instead of questions that invite simple “yes” or “no” answers, ask people to share their ideas and insights with you.	Ask, “How do you spend time after school?” or “What are some of the ways you learn about upcoming community events?” rather than, “Wouldn’t it be great if we had a basketball court in the park?” or “Don’t you think we need to add a calendar to our neighborhood newsletter?”
Frame your questions in a neutral manner to invite authentic responses, instead of asking leading questions or suggesting certain responses.	Say, “Tell me your perspective on the new food bank program.” Instead of “How badly have you been inconvenienced by the long waiting times in the new food bank program?”
Embrace silence at times. Sometimes people need additional time to think about their responses. Give people opportunities to be thoughtful before responding at their own pace in their own way.	Say, “Take your time to think it over,” and then remain quiet until the person speaks.
Remain open to continuing a conversation even after you think it’s over. Instead of forcing closure at the end of your discussion, give people a way to get in touch with you after your conversation ends.	“If you think of anything else, I’d really appreciate hearing it. Here’s how to get in touch with me if you have anything you want to add or if any questions come up”
Ask follow-up questions, seeking to understand the “why” behind the answer.	“What would be most valuable about us adding that option?” or “Who do you think would be likely to use that option?” or “Is that something you’ve heard other people mention?”
Encourage people to share stories to help explain their point of view and add context.	Say, “Tell me about a time . . .” or “What’s your experience been when X happens?”
Pay attention to nonverbal cues. Sometimes what isn’t said reveals as much or more than what’s being said.	Body language is an example of nonverbal communication. Someone who is wrinkling their brow or biting on their lip, or suddenly leaning forward or back in their chair, might be thinking about something that they haven’t yet expressed verbally. In response to those cues, asking, “Is there anything you’d like to add?” or “Would you agree with what so-and-so is saying?” can help draw people into the conversation.
Notice inconsistencies, and ask open-ended follow-up questions to help you understand what appear to be discrepancies.	“I’m not sure from what you’re saying whether the issue is that the gym lacks good equipment or that it’s hard to get there during the hours it’s open. Could you help me understand more about what you think keeps people from using the gym?”

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs

General Trends

Time Scarcity

Time scarcity is the number one barrier to effectively recruiting and retaining volunteers. More and more individuals are seeking volunteer opportunities that are project-oriented and short-term in duration. These volunteers are often identified as short-term or episodic volunteers. Many organizations have volunteer opportunities and marketing materials that are still geared only for the long-term volunteer. Organizations need to develop marketing materials and expand opportunities for episodic volunteers.

Work Values

The increased percentage of women in the workforce has decreased the time available from the largest segment of the volunteer population.

The number of individuals working from home is increasing. This often allows more flexibility in their volunteer hours.

More volunteers have "high tech" skills learned at the workplace.

Education

Volunteering rises with education and is less common in high poverty areas.

Career experience is a major motivator of youth volunteers.

Educational institutions are requiring more community service.

The need for internships for work experience is growing.

Training is a major motivation for most volunteers, especially if the training increases their job skills or enhances their résumé.

Expectations

People are more interested than ever in issues and causes.

People are more demanding about the nature of their volunteer work and want meaningful, challenging projects.

People are becoming less tolerant of authoritative management and bureaucracy. And because of the increasing number of highly skilled volunteers, many expect to be treated professionally.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

Generational Trends

VISTAs and agency staff need to be prepared to supervise and support volunteers of all ages—possibly six or more generations. Each generation of volunteers has its own unique patterns of living, thinking and interpreting information, which can be a real challenge for any manager!

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its 2016 *Volunteering in the United States* report, estimated the rate of volunteerism among different American age cohorts as follow:

Age	Rate	Age	Rate
16-24	21.8%	45-54	28.0%
25-34	22.3%	55-64	25.1%
35-44	28.9%	65+	23.5%

Traditionalists or Silent Generation

1928–1945

Ninety-five percent (95%) of this group are retired.

Hardworking: Often raised on farms and in rural America, Traditionalists brought a strong work ethic into industrialized society. This generation believes you earn your own way through hard work and they are willing to put in long hours to get ahead.

Loyal: Traditionalists are civic-minded and loyal to their country and employer.

Respect Authority: Traditionalists were taught to respect authority. They are good team players, averse to risk and avoid conflict in the workplace.

Tech-Challenged: Traditionalists may struggle to learn new technology and work processes.

Baby Boomers

1946–1964

When Boomers retire, many often work at least part-time, either by choice or by necessity. Don't call them seniors—they are "experienced."

Work-Centric: Boomers are extremely hardworking and motivated by position, perks and prestige. Boomers may criticize younger generations for a lack of work ethic.

Independent: They grew up in an era of social reform and turmoil and believe they can change the world. They questioned authority, challenged the status quo, are not afraid of confrontation and will not hesitate to challenge established practices.

Goal-Oriented: They welcome exciting, challenging projects, life-long learning and strive to make a difference.

Competitive: Since Boomers equate work and position with self-worth, they are quite competitive in the workplace. They are clever, resourceful and strive to win.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

Generation X

1965–1980

On the whole, they are more ethnically diverse and better educated than the Boomers. Over 60% attended college.

Individualistic: They value freedom and responsibility. Many dislike authority, structured work hours and being micro-managed

Technologically Adept: They are the first generation to grow up with computers and technology.

Flexible: Many Gen Xers lived through tough economic times in the 1980s and saw their workaholic parents lose hard-earned positions. Thus, they are less committed to one employer and more willing to change jobs to get ahead than previous generations.

Value Work/Life Balance: Unlike previous generations, members of Generation X work to live rather than live to work. They appreciate fun in the workplace and Generation X managers often incorporate humor and games into work activities.

Millennials, Generation Y, Echo Boomers

1981–2000

The Millennials are the fastest growing segment of today's workforce.

Tech-Savvy: Millennials are plugged-in 24/7. This generation prefers to communicate through e-mail and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact and prefers webinars and online technology to traditional lecture-based presentations.

Family-Centric: The fast-track has lost much of its appeal for Millennials who are willing to trade high pay for fewer hours, flexible schedules and a better work/life balance.

Achievement-Oriented: Millennials are confident, ambitious and achievement-oriented. They have high expectations of their employers, seek out new challenges and are not afraid to question authority. They want meaningful work and a solid learning curve.

Team-Oriented: Part of a no-person-left-behind generation, they are loyal, committed and want to be included and involved. They may benefit from mentors who can help guide and develop their careers.

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

Generation Z, Net Generation, Digital Natives

2001–present

This tech-savvy, multiethnic generation has grown up entirely in the post-Cold War world.

Highly Connected: Members of Generation Z have never known a world without the Internet, cell phones/smartphones, MP3 players, text messaging, and other communication and media technologies.

Diverse: Generation Z's ethnic composition is the most diverse of any generation in America: 54% Caucasian, 24% Hispanic, 14% African-American, 4% Asian, and 4% mixed race/other. They welcome and celebrate this diversity.

Lowered Economic Expectations: With the lingering effects of the Great Recession, Generation Z is the first generation expected to earn less than their parents. However, having gone through such difficult economic times, they have developed a sense of social justice, philanthropy, and maturity, and are more likely to pursue careers they think will help society.

Empowered: The combination of the independence gained from powerful, mobile technology and the constant sense of affirmation from their parents has produced a sense of entitlement in Generation Z that can be seen as a double-edged sword. They have the resources and initiative to make positive changes where they see the need, but may not have the experience with failure necessary to know what it takes to persevere.

Sources:

1. The Pew Research Center's Social and Demographic Trends, www.pewsocialtrends.org
2. "Volunteering and Civic Life in America" (2015) by the Corporation for National and Community Service, www.nationalservice.gov/vcla
3. "Volunteering in the United States" (2015) by the Bureau of Labor Statistics – U.S. Department of Labor, www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

General Facts

Volunteering Can Make You Healthier

A growing body of research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer. Older volunteers can gain greater health benefits than younger volunteers. Additionally, older adults who volunteer (ages 65 and older) are significantly less likely to face depression than those who do not volunteer.

Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression.

College Students Like Temporary Volunteer Assignments

College students tend to be in more of a state of flux than most other adults and are more likely to be episodic volunteers, serving fewer than two weeks per year with their main service organization, or occasional volunteers, serving three to eleven weeks per year with their main service organization. In 2015, tutoring, teaching, and mentoring were the most popular activities performed by college student volunteers. In that year, 3 million college students volunteered 286 million hours, with 21.1 percent volunteering as tutors/teachers and 22.2 percent volunteering as mentors.

286
million hours
volunteered by
college students
in 2015.

Homeowners Boost Volunteer Rates

Often when someone makes an investment in a home, they also commit to investment in the local community. This investment, however, is more than just financial—it involves a personal commitment to cultivating a community that offers a high quality of life. Thus, it is not surprising that we should find that metropolitan areas that have a higher rate of homeownership also have higher volunteer rates.

Home
Investment
=
Community
Investment

Trends Impacting Volunteer Programs, cont.

General Facts, cont.

Volunteer Retention Remains a Significant Issue

A 2010 study showed that 64% of volunteers who served in 2009 returned to volunteer again the following year. The right types of volunteer opportunities and management of volunteers can encourage an individual to continue volunteering. On the other hand, as with paid employment, a poor fit between a volunteer and a nonprofit increases the probability that a volunteer will not be retained. For nonprofits that depend on volunteers, turnover results in the need to incur substantial additional costs associated with recruiting, orienting, and managing new volunteers.

64%
of volunteers
returned the
following year.

Rural Volunteering

In rural communities, a small population spread out over vast distances can present obstacles to volunteering. Due to the geographic and social isolation, rural residents rely on neighbors, family members, and friends to meet many critical needs, and are less likely than urban residents to know about and ask for help from social service providers. The need to travel great distances, coupled with limited or nonexistent public transportation options makes mobility difficult, especially for lower-income residents. Likewise, the lack of awareness about available volunteer opportunities is more acute for rural residents because they may not have access to the Internet and/or may not know how and where to access volunteer opportunities online. The result is increased difficulty in finding enough people with the time, inclination, and flexibility to support volunteer-run activities.

Greater distance, limited public transportation, and unreliable access to the internet challenge volunteerism in rural areas.

Source: Volunteering and Civic Life in America, Related Research, www.nationalservice.gov/vcla/research.

Volunteer Trend Analysis



Select your focus: *General Trends* *Generational Trends* *General Facts*

Trends

Implications for Volunteer Program Outreach, Recruitment & Management



Sample Recruitment Message

Review the sample recruitment message below and reflect on the questions that follow.

Safe Place Resource Advocate

Company: **Safe Place Women's Shelter**

Employment Type: **Volunteer**

Description: Safe Place Women's Shelter has been dedicated to ending abuse and providing compassionate treatment for victims of domestic violence in western Massachusetts for over 15 years. Grow your skills and be an advocate for change as you help victims, survivors, and their families find the things they need to start a new life. As a safe-place resource advocate, you will identify, research, and compile a database of sources of local services our clients can access, including transportation, food, shelter, educational opportunities, support groups, and others. If you are at least 21 years old, are willing to learn, and have good writing and research skills, we want to hear from you!

Contact: For further details and a schedule of upcoming orientations, call us at (866) 999-9999, email us at volunteer@safeplacema.org, or visit us online at www.safeplacema.org/volunteer.

Reflection Questions

1. Is the message effective in grabbing and holding your attention? If so, how?
2. How could the message be improved?

Adapted from:

1. McCurley, S., & Lynch, R. (2011). *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community* (3rd ed., Appendix 3, p. 356). Plattsburgh, NY: InterPub Group.
2. U.S. Department of Education, Mentoring Resource Center. (2006). *Volunteer Motivation and Mentor Recruitment* (Mentoring Fact Sheet No. 8). Retrieved from Education Northwest website: educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/factsheet8.pdf

Targeted Recruitment Message



Craft a brief (two to three line) message that grabs the interest of your targeted volunteer group. Use succinct language to create an engaging description of one of the volunteer opportunities at Foodbank USA.

Your targeted group:

Type of position you are recruiting for:

Step 1

Review the questions posed in the first column of the table below. Write any possible key words that spring to mind as you think about each question in the second column. In the third column, start piecing together the key words into a phrase or sentence that answers each question.

Guiding Question	Key Words	Brief Description
Who are you? What is your organization, mission, history, and role in the community?		
What is the need in the community the volunteers will work on?		
What will volunteers do? Use active words that convey challenge and excitement.		
Why should people volunteer? What will they learn? What will they accomplish? What do you offer that's unique? What are some benefits of volunteering?		

Step 2

Write your catchy, concise and compelling message below.

Tips

Be sure to include relevant URLs, including links to the organization's website and social media outlets, and a direct link to the recruitment message.

Don't forget to promote the message via your social media networks!



Learn More About Volunteer Mobilization

On the VISTA Campus

The Work: Working with Volunteers. Readings, tutorials, and downloadable documents you can use to strengthen your organization's volunteer mobilization plans and practices.

Go to vistacampus.gov, click "The Work," and then select one of the "Working with Volunteers" subtopics.

Online Course: Volunteer Mobilization. This online course was designed specifically for VISTAs working to mobilize volunteers in their communities. Learn current trends in and best practices for recruiting, matching and screening, and training volunteers as you earn three undergraduate credit recommendations and network with other VISTAs. Learn more about the course's content, availability, and requirements by going to vistacampus.gov/onlinecourses.

Troubleshooting Volunteer Mobilization. Find the answers to your questions about volunteer mobilization. Select the topic you need information from a list of curated volunteer development resources. Go to vistacampus.gov/resources/troubleshooting-volunteer-mobilization.

Books

Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community, 3rd Edition (2011) by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch

Volunteer Administration: Professional Practice (2013) by Keith Seel (editor)

Reports

"Volunteering and Civic Life in America" by the Corporation for National and Community Service. www.nationalservice.gov/vcla

"Volunteering in the United States" (2015) by the Bureau of Labor Statistics – U.S. Department of Labor. www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm

"Volunteers and the Economic Downturn" (2009) by the Corporation for National and Community Service. www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5108474.pdf

Policy Templates

Generic program policy and procedure manual (2007) by Linda Ballasy, Mark Fulop, and Michael Garringer. educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/181

Volunteer Organizations & Websites



+ Developing & Managing Volunteer Programs

Free management library—complete and integrated for nonprofits and for-profits.
managementhelp.org

+ DOVIA Directory of North America

A list of membership associations at provincial, state, and local levels for professionals who lead volunteer programs. DOVIA's are often connected to a local Volunteer Center or United Way. www.energizeinc.com/prof/dovia.html

+ Energizeinc.com

An international training, consulting, and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Stay current on the latest issues and news in the field of volunteer management.
www.energizeinc.com

+ Idealist.org

Idealist is an interactive site where people and organizations can exchange resources and ideas, locate opportunities and supporters, and take steps toward building a world where all people can lead free and dignified lives. www.idealist.org

+ LinkedIn Discussion Groups for Volunteer Managers

LinkedIn, the professional social networking website, hosts several discussion groups for volunteer-management professionals. If you are a LinkedIn member (or if you are willing to sign up to become one), search for the groups Volunteer Coordinators, Volunteer Management Group, and Volunteer Management Best Practices Network.
www.linkedin.com

+ National Service Knowledge Networks

Repository of over 8,000 nodes of training tools, publications, and effective practices to support volunteer programs, nonprofits, and people involved with the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps family of programs.
www.nationalservice.gov/resources

+ Online Discussion Group for Volunteer Managers

groups.yahoo.com/group/cybervpm/

+ Serve.gov

A comprehensive clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities. Americans who are interested in volunteering can use this tool to locate opportunities to serve across the country and around the world. Be sure to register your project!
www.serve.gov

+ Volunteer Match

A leader in the nonprofit world dedicated to helping everyone find a great place to volunteer. Post your volunteer opportunities. www.volunteermatch.org

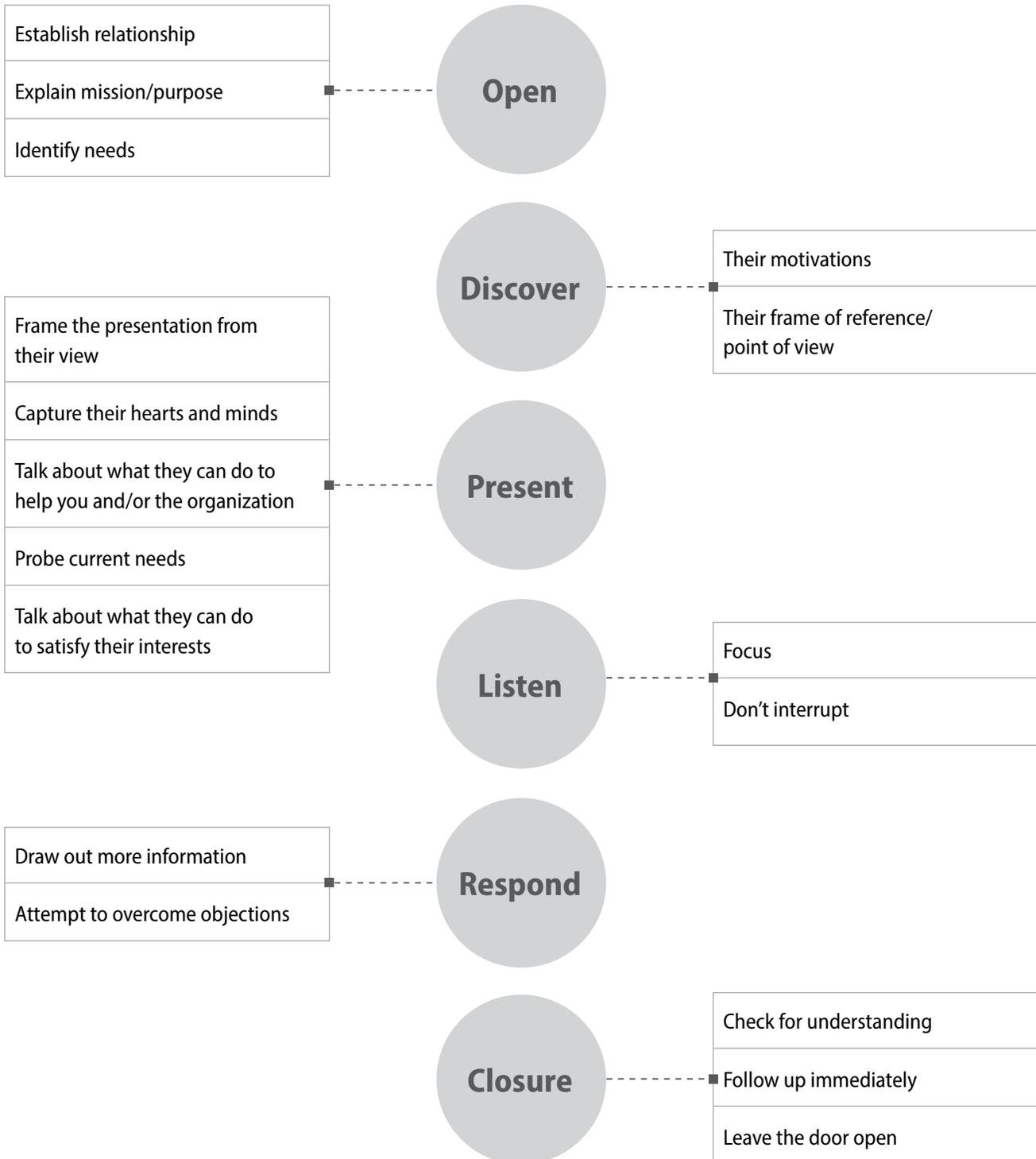
+ Volunteer Spot

Free on-line tool enables anyone to quickly mobilize and coordinate volunteers in their community, congregation, and social network. www.volunteerspot.com

+ Volunteering In America

Provides access to volunteering trends, statistics, tools, resources, and information for the nation, U.S. regions, states, and major cities. www.volunteeringinamerica.gov

The Stages of an Ask



Learn More About Resource Development



On the VISTA Campus

The Work: Fundraising.

Tools, tutorials, and readings that will help you plan and implement resource-development initiatives, including individual giving campaigns, fundraising events, and grant writing.

Go to vistacampus.gov, click “The Work,” and then explore resources in the “Fundraising” section.

Online Course: Resource Development, Fundraising & Grant Writing.

This self-paced online course was designed specifically for VISTAs working in resource development. It uses a simulation-based approach to teach you best practices in fundraising, grant writing, and event planning. Earn three undergraduate credit recommendations and network with other VISTAs as you deepen your knowledge and skills in resource development. Learn more about the course’s content, availability, and requirements by going to vistacampus.gov/onlinecourses.

Planning

“*Discover Total Resources: A Guide for Nonprofits*” by the Mellon Financial Corporation. Provides a descriptive checklist and can be used as an organizational assessment of assets and growth areas related to fundraising and resource development. learning.rxassist.org/sites/default/files/Non-Profit%20Resource%20Guide.pdf

“*How to Develop a Fund Raising Plan*” by the Stonehill Consulting Group, LLC. Includes a visual framework to help organizations determine fundraising strategies and a sample development planning flow chart. www.serviceleader.org/sites/default/files/file/How%20to%20Develop%20a%20Fundraising%20Plan%20%28Stonehill%20Consulting%29.pdf

Communications

“*Social Media Guidelines: Ethical, Safe, and Effective Practical Standards*” by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). Provides organizations with guidance on social media and covers the conduct and expectations of the public when participating in an organization’s social media or social networking platforms. www.afpnet.org/About/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4626

“*Communications Toolkit*” by Hershey Cause Communications. Provides an overview of researching, planning, and implementing a variety of communication strategies. Sections on media relations, events, storytelling, and the case for support relate directly to fundraising and resource development. www.hersheycause.com/pdf/cc_toolkit.pdf

“*Online Outreach Tools Guide*” by Hershey Cause Communications. Outlines the strengths of specific web tools in relation to communications strategies, as well as categorizes and rates different social media platforms by type. www.hersheycause.com/pdf/online-outreach-tools-guide.pdf

“*10 Mistakes Nonprofits Make When Creating Communication Materials (or 10 Simple Things You Can Do To Improve Your Marketing Program)*” from Mission Minded. Identifies some of the most common mistakes made by nonprofits and outlines solutions to avoid them. This document is directed toward organizations that want to become more effective in their marketing communications. mission-minded.com/wp-content/uploads/MM_10_Mistakes_4-15.pdf



Resource Development Organizations & Websites

The following resources provide additional resource-development information and tools:

+ Association of Fundraising Professionals

Helps its members find education opportunities and become certified. www.afpnet.org

+ BBB Wise Giving Alliance

Profiles U.S. charities in order to enhance the decisions of givers and monitors the standards of charitable organizations. www.give.org

+ Benevon

A consulting firm that coaches and trains nonprofits in sustainable fundraising. The archive provides articles and tip sheets on many aspects of resource mobilization. www.benevon.com

+ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Research institute analyzes government policies and programs, particularly those affecting low- and middle-income people. www.cbpp.org

+ Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University

An academic center devoted to increasing the understanding of philanthropy in the US. www.philanthropy.iupui.edu

+ The Giving Institute

Professional organization of fundraisers that prides itself on having high ethical standards. www.givinginstitute.org

+ Giving USA

An initiative of the Giving Institute that publishes statistics on charitable giving across the United States each year to advance the research, education and public understanding of philanthropy. givingusa.org

+ GuideStar

A database of nonprofit organizations and charities that includes financial details for each group and a profile of their purpose and programs. www.guidestar.org

+ Independent Sector

A coalition of nonprofits, foundations, and corporations that assist in strengthening not-for-profit initiatives, philanthropy, and citizen action. Offers news, programs, and facts. www.independentsector.org

+ JustGive.Org

A guide to charitable giving offering details on a variety of nonprofit organizations and providing instructional tips for making donations. www.justgive.org

+ Network for Good

An online fundraising platform for charities and non-profit organizations. www.networkforgood.org

+ Nonprofit Finance Fund

Provides loans to nonprofits and advocates for fundamental improvements in how money is given and used in the nonprofit sector. Also hosts a site that includes resources such as "A Guide to Navigating Changing Times" and annual nonprofit surveys. www.nonprofitfinancefund.org

+ Nonprofit Times

Covers issues of concern to nonprofits and reports on news and developments regarding such organizations. www.nptimes.com

Grant Writing Organizations & Websites



The following resources provide information and tools for seeking and applying for grants:

+ Foundation Center

Offers information on private philanthropy in the US. This site does have a membership fee.

www.foundationcenter.org

+ Grants.gov

Helps organizations find and apply for federal grants.

www.grants.gov

+ Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training

A multiracial organization that promotes the connection between fundraising and social justice.

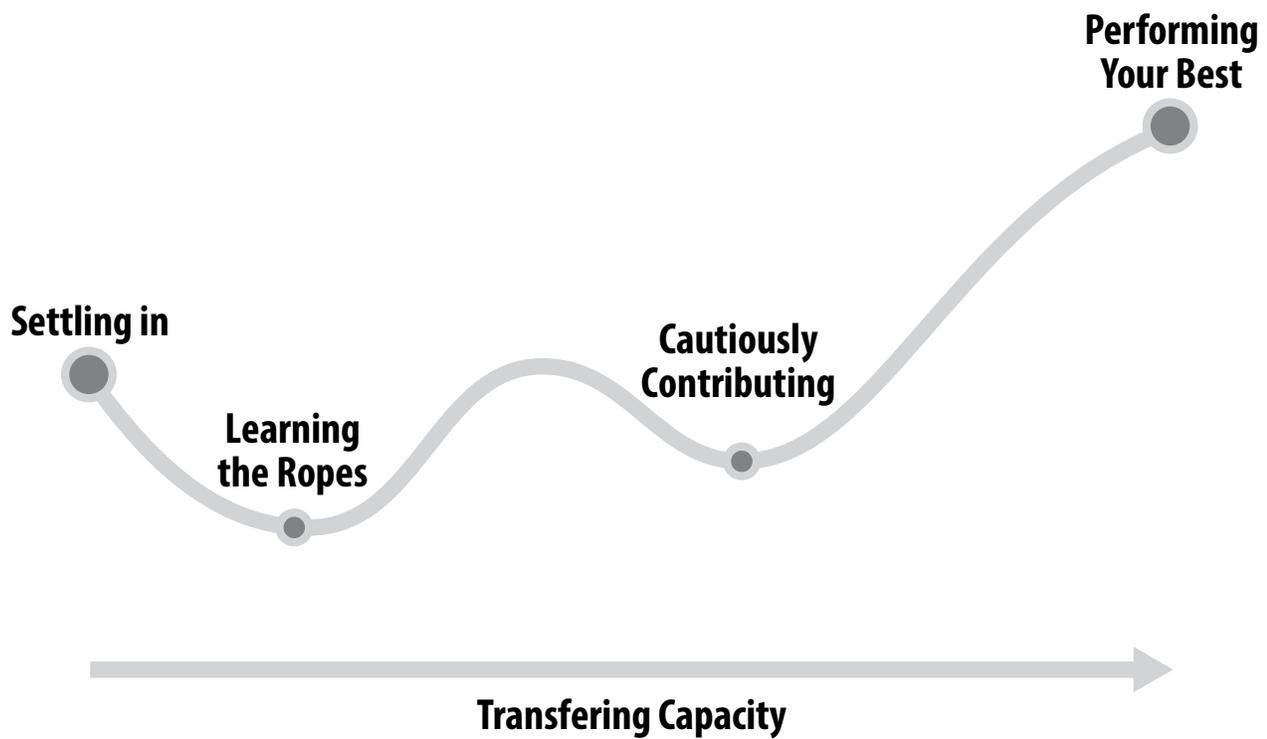
www.grassrootsfundraising.org

Local Resources

There are also many local resources that you can access in your community:

- Libraries often have a funder database that is updated monthly.
- Seek out your nearest community foundation.
- Community colleges and libraries also have local fundraising resources and may offer free or discounted grant writing courses.
- Most states have a nonprofit association that might provide grant-finding assistance.
- Some states also have local area grant guides, such as the Colorado Grants www.coloradogrants.org/resources/colorado-resources.php.

Cycle of Service



What kind of support are you looking for?

Check off all that you are thinking about. Use the blank rows to add other needs.

What I'm looking for	Where to find it
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to keep up on my student loans.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm looking for childcare for my children.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm serving in a cold climate and could use help with my utility bills.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm concerned about keeping my public assistance (SNAP, SSDI, etc).	
<input type="checkbox"/> I might need help with health care coverage.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like more skills training to carry out my job (assignment).	
<input type="checkbox"/> How do I find other VISTAs who are serving near me?	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be changing banks and want to be sure I get paid.	
<input type="checkbox"/> How does a VISTA live on the living allowance?	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure where to go on my first day of service.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Navigating Your Year of Service

Terms & Conditions of Service

Terms

VISTA is a 12-month, full-time commitment.

VISTA is not a 9-to-5 job.

You may serve up to five terms of AmeriCorps VISTA service.

Need a Refresher?

Review the *Terms & Conditions Course*, the *Benefits page*, and the *Member Handbook* at www.vistacampus.gov.

Conditions

You may not solicit funds for a partisan candidate nor run for partisan office.

You may not engage in any political activity while on duty or perceived to be on duty. This includes social media.

You may not proselytize while on duty or perceived to be on duty.

You may not serve based on the results of the criminal history check if you:

- *appear on the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR)*
- *have committed any crime against a minor*
- *are facing charges or on probation or parole (unless otherwise justified)*
- *failed to accurately disclose your criminal history (unless otherwise justified)*

You must submit your fingerprints to AmeriCorps VISTA as instructed by the deadline given.

You may have part-time outside employment—but certain restrictions apply, and you must get approval from your VISTA supervisor.

Navigating Your Year of Service, cont.

Summary of Benefits

Healthcare Coverage

AmeriCorps VISTA offers healthcare benefits to VISTA members based on whether they have health insurance and whether they are required to have health insurance by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

If you have health insurance ...

VISTA members who maintain health insurance during their service term may opt into the **AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare Allowance**. The allowance covers up to **\$7,350** (in 2018) of out-of-pocket costs associated with healthcare, such as:

- your annual deductible or coinsurance
- copayments for office visits
- prescriptions
- the cost of limited vision and dental services
- other charges for qualified medical expenses

In addition, you have access to telehealth services (access to physicians, psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors 24/7/365 via phone or video chat) at no cost. The allowance cannot be used for insurance premiums or for charges for anyone but you.

If you don't have health insurance ...

Research your options at www.healthcare.gov.

As an AmeriCorps VISTA, you can buy insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace within 60 days of your service start date. Call 800-318-2596 to buy insurance during this period.

If you ignore the legal requirement to have health insurance, you will be responsible for your own healthcare costs. You may be subject to removal from the VISTA program and may face a penalty under the ACA.

If you are not required to have health insurance ...

VISTA members who are legally exempt from maintaining health insurance coverage during their term of service are eligible to enroll in the **AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefit Plan**.

The plan serves as a healthcare safety net, covering routine doctor visits, emergency care, most prescription drugs, and limited dental and vision care. In addition, you have access to telehealth services (access to physicians, psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors 24/7/365 via phone or video chat) at no cost. The plan does not cover pre-existing conditions or dependents.

To find out if you are exempt, visit www.healthcare.gov/exemptions.

How to enroll

Once you have started your VISTA term, you'll need to complete a **Member Enrollment Form** to enroll in the benefit that applies to you. The form can be completed online by creating a "My IMGVISTA" account at americorpsvista.imglobal.com and then completing the enrollment form online. You must complete enrollment within 60 days of your service start date.

For details, visit americorpsvista.imglobal.com.

Navigating Your Year of Service, cont.

Summary of Benefits, cont.

Living Allowance

The living allowance schedule is on page _____ of this workbook.

Your first payment will be on _____.

Federal income taxes are withheld from your living allowance. State income taxes are not.

Living allowance statements can be accessed on My.AmeriCorps.gov.

Your living allowance does not qualify you for unemployment after your service.

You can expect your travel reimbursement eight weeks after PSO.

Child Care Benefit

Eligibility:

- *Children younger than 13 who live with you*
- *Based on household income*
- *Not receiving subsidy from another source*

Administered by Gap Solutions, Inc.
www.americorpschildcare.com
855-886-0687.

Income Disregard

Benefits remain the same for government assistance or services in place prior to VISTA enrollment.

Your VISTA living allowance will count toward eligibility for SNAP, unless you are currently receiving SNAP benefits; other public assistance remains the same.

When applying for assistance, print letters defining these terms from My.AmeriCorps.gov.

Non-Competitive Eligibility

Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) is designed to streamline the process for finding work with the federal government after service.

Allows you to be considered for employment without going through the standard recruitment process.

Valid for a minimum of one year following successful completion of your VISTA term.

End-of-Service Benefit

Upon successfully completing your service term, you are eligible to receive either the **Segal AmeriCorps Education Award** (\$5,920) OR **end-of-service cash stipend** (\$1,800).

If you select the education award, you can switch to the stipend option up until the end of the 10th month of your VISTA service.

If you select the cash stipend, you cannot change to the education award.

These benefits are subject to federal and state taxes.

For details, visit www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward.

Loan Forbearance/Deferment

If you select the education award, you can submit a **loan forbearance** request.

- *Temporary postponement of principal payments on federally backed loan*
- *Interest accrues, but National Service Trust pays it at the completion of your term, per your request*
- *Submit forbearance at My.AmeriCorps.gov*

If you select the **cash stipend**, you can apply for **loan deferment**.

- *Temporary postponement of monthly loan payments*
- *Set up directly with lender*

For details, visit www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward.

Navigating Your Year of Service, cont.

Finding Support and Resources

CNCS State Office

Your state office is responsible for and assists with:

- *Programmatic issues*
- *Supervision concerns*
- *Emergency situations*
- *Administrative leave*

My.AmeriCorps.gov

Once activated as a VISTA, you can access these features:

Living Allowance Statements. Get your statement online every two weeks.

Tax Statements. Available around January 31 for the previous year.

Education Award. Verify your selection has been recorded.

Forbearance Requests. Submit and view the status of requests.

Service Letters. Print letters that explain your status as a VISTA member.

Other Online Resources

Corporation for National & Community Service
www.nationalservice.gov

National Service Knowledge Networks
www.nationalservice.gov/resources

HealthCare.gov local help
localhelp.healthcare.gov

AmeriCorps Alums
www.americorpsalums.org

VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU)

Contact VMSU for questions about relocation, your living allowance, the education award, forbearance requests, etc.

To reach VMSU, contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677.

Submit questions online at questions.nationalservice.gov.

VISTA Campus

Visit www.vistacampus.gov for these three sections:

Life as a VISTA. Resources on living on the living allowance, using the education award, and the Member Handbook.

The Work. Resources on poverty, volunteer management, fundraising, PSO materials, etc.

Connect & Learn. Discussion forums, VISTA Map, social media.

When you get home:

- *Update your Campus profile with your current location, project type, etc.*
- *Add your pin to the VISTA map*
- *Create a professional development plan*
- *Participate in monthly webinars*
- *Respond to quarterly surveys*

CNCS Office of Inspector General

If you encounter issues with your project, address them with your supervisor and—if necessary—your state office. If the issues are not resolved (or if you want to remain anonymous), contact the CNCS Office of Inspector General.

Phone: 800-452-8210

Email: hotline@cncsoig.gov

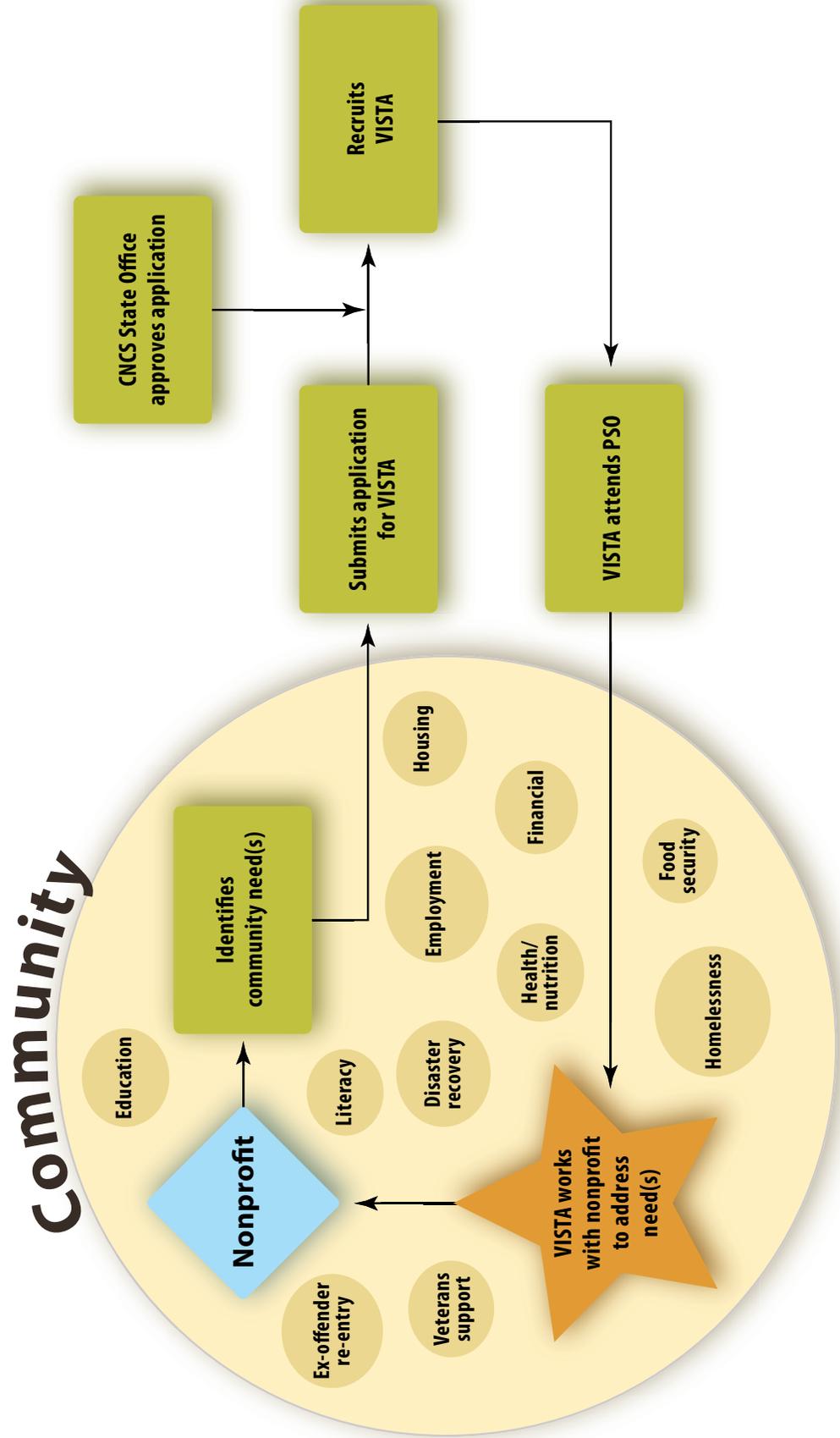
Website: www.cncsoig.gov

Summary of AmeriCorps Programs

	State/National (Over 500 programs)	VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)	NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)
Program Focus	Members serve both in teams and individually through national and community-based private and public organizations. Members help solve community problems through service in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, health, veterans' services, and economic opportunity.	Members serve through local government agencies and nonprofit organizations, addressing issues related to poverty—such as public health, education, the environment, public safety, and employment—by building capacity to create long-term benefits at a community level.	Members live in a campus environment and serve in teams to complete service projects with local communities to address pressing needs. Members often travel to projects throughout their region.
Eligibility	Applicants must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident. The maximum age limit varies among programs.	Applicants must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident. There is no maximum age limit.	Members must be 18 to 24 years old while they serve and a U.S. citizen, national, or legal permanent resident.
Skill Requirements	All skill levels are needed.	A bachelor's degree or three years of related volunteer/job experience is preferred.	All skill levels are needed.
Terms of Service	Full time for one year. (Some part-time service opportunities are available.)	Full time for one year. (No part-time service opportunities are available.)	Full time for 10 months. (No part-time service opportunities are available.)
Living Allowance	A modest living allowance is paid every two weeks.	A modest living allowance is paid every two weeks.	A modest living allowance is paid every two weeks.
Room & Board	In most cases, members are responsible for using their living allowance to cover their own housing and meals.	Members are responsible for using their living allowance to cover their own housing and meals.	Members are provided housing and meals and live in dormitory-style housing on one of five campuses.
Education Award/ Stipend	Upon completion of service, members receive a \$5,920 education award in the form of a voucher.	Upon completion of service, members have a choice of a \$5,920 education award in the form of a voucher or a \$1,800 cash stipend.	Upon completion of service, members receive a \$5,920 education award in the form of a voucher.

Additional information on these AmeriCorps programs can be found at www.americorps.gov.

How an Organization Gets a VISTA



Summary of Key Terms, Conditions & Benefits of VISTA Service

VISTAs must be **at least 18 years old**; be **U.S. citizens, nationals, or legal residents**; and successfully complete a **criminal background check**, which entails a search of the National Sex Offenders Registry and an FBI criminal history check.

VISTA is a 12-month, **full-time commitment**. VISTAs are required to serve full time as defined at their sponsoring organization, but may serve in excess of that amount focusing on capacity-building activities. They usually serve during the work hours of their sponsoring organizations but are expected to be available evenings and weekends to meet the needs of the project and community. A person may **serve up to five terms of AmeriCorps VISTA service**.

VISTAs receive a **living allowance** (directly deposited every two weeks), **health coverage**, and **10 personal and 10 sick days**. Additionally, all VISTAs receive **training and development opportunities**, including a Pre-Service Orientation provided by the Corporation for National & Community Service and an on-site orientation provided by their sponsoring organization.

Based on the circumstances and/or wishes of the individual, a VISTA may receive some additional benefits, including a **settling-in allowance** of \$550 for moving expenses and a **child care allotment** based on household income and state of residence. VISTAs are covered by **workers' compensation** for service-related injuries. Some VISTAs will also benefit from **income exclusion** to continue public assistance they were receiving before joining VISTA. Finally, some VISTAs may be eligible for **tax benefits** such as the earned income tax credit.

VISTAs can choose to receive either the **education award (\$5,920)** or a **cash stipend (\$1,800)** at the end of their VISTA service. VISTAs cannot switch from the stipend to the education award, but they can switch from the education award to the stipend before the end of their 10th month of service.

If a VISTA selects the **education award**, eligible student loans can be put into **forbearance**, and the National Service Trust will pay the interest that accrued during the service year after the completion of service. The VISTA is responsible for the accrued interest and must submit the **Interest Accrual Form** to the National Service Trust to have the interest paid.

A percentage of Perkins Loan debt can be forgiven if the **cash stipend** is selected. **Deferment** may be granted by the lender based on economic hardship. Accrued interest is the responsibility of the VISTA.

When VISTAs satisfactorily complete one full year of service, they earn one year of **non-competitive eligibility (NCE)** status. NCE allows a federal agency to hire AmeriCorps VISTA alumni who meet the minimum qualifications for a federal job without going through all the formalities of the competitive process.

VISTAs are allowed to have **part-time outside employment**. However, under no circumstances may VISTA members be an employee of or contractor for the sponsor or project to which they are assigned to serve. Outside employment **must not conflict with project** service or service hours—nor conflict with any applicable law or VISTA program requirements or policies. A VISTA must submit the Outside Employment Request Form, and the supervisor must agree that the outside work will not interfere with VISTA service. If work does interfere, the VISTA may be asked to either end employment or end VISTA service. For more information, visit www.vistacampus.gov/employment.

VISTAs **are allowed to attend class(es)**. However, their studies **must not interfere with VISTA responsibilities**. VISTAs must discuss taking class(es) with their supervisor before enrolling. The supervisor needs to agree that studies will not interfere with the VISTA project. If classes do interfere, the VISTA may be asked to either withdraw from the course within one week or end VISTA service.

Any political advocacy, organizing, promotion, or demonstration while on VISTA duty—or while PERCEIVED to be on duty—is prohibited. This includes registering people to vote or driving people to voting polls, engaging in any pro- or anti-labor organizing activities, lobbying, or taking any action with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification of the VISTA program with the activity.

VISTA members may **not conduct religious instruction** or engage in proselytizing or other religious activities **as part of their duties**.

Hatch Act Limitations on VISTA Political Activities

Prohibitions on Political & Lobbying Activities

Updated 6/28/05. Chapter 14: Basic Laws and Federal Regulations in your Member Handbook

No appropriated funds of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) shall be used to finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of an election to federal, state, or local office or a voter registration activity, or pay the salary of a CNCS employee who engages in such activity.

In addition, VISTA programs are prohibited from using funds or personnel in a matter supporting or resulting in the identification of such programs with partisan or nonpartisan election activities, in voter registration activities, and in providing transportation to the polls. Additionally, no VISTA member or employee of a sponsoring organization may take any action with respect to a partisan or nonpartisan political activity that would result in the identification or apparent identification of the AmeriCorps VISTA program with such activity (see 42 U.S.C. § 5043 for additional restrictions and prohibitions).

VISTA programs also are prohibited from any activity intended to influence the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition (see 42 U.S.C. § 5043 (c) for additional restrictions and prohibitions).

You may participate in political activities allowed under the Hatch Act. The Domestic Volunteer Service Act at 42 U.S.C. § 5055 applies the restrictions of the Hatch Act, Title V, United States Code, Chapter 73, to VISTA members. The Hatch Act applies to you at all times during your service, including off duty hours. Permissible activities under the Hatch Act apply to VISTA members unless these activities are prohibited by other statutory authority when the members are on authorized leave or are not perceived to be performing as a VISTA member (e.g., while not engaged in performing service, or on service time).

You have the right to register and vote as you choose, express opinions about candidates and issues in a nonpublic context, contribute money to political organizations, and attend political meetings. You also may join and be a member of a political party or club, and sign nominating petitions if you do not identify these activities with VISTA or your sponsoring organization.

CNCS regulations that prohibit electoral and lobbying activities are contained in 45 CFR Part 1226 (see Appendix C). The approach of the regulations is twofold: 1) Restrictions on the assignment of VISTA members to, or restrictions on the receipt of CNCS funds by, certain organizations because of the nature of the organizations or their activities; and 2) Restrictions on member assignments and activities.

The organizational restrictions are based on the premise that the assignment of members or the receipt of CNCS funds by certain organizations (regardless of the proposed assignment or activity of the member) is precluded because of the organization's stated purpose or the nature of its activities.

The restrictions on member assignments and activities contain four basic areas of prohibited activities:

1) Electoral; 2) Voter registration, except that programs assisted under this Act may make voter registration information available to the public on the premises of such programs; 3) Voter transportation to the polls; and 4) Efforts of influence legislation. The prohibitions are directed to the use of CNCS funds, the assignments of members, and any other activities supported by CNCS funds.

The Domestic Volunteer Service Act provides two exceptions to the prohibitions on efforts to influence legislation: 1) At the request of a legislative body, committee, or member of a legislative body, and 2) Regarding an authorization or appropriation measure directly affecting the operation of the project or program.

The regulation, found at 45 CFR Part 1226, describes the conditions under which activities pursuant to these exceptions were once undertaken. The regulation also describes the applicability of the restrictions to sponsoring organization employees and the obligations of sponsoring organizations to ensure observance of the regulation. Appropriation laws have restricted these exceptions and activities permitted in 45 CFR Part 1226. Consequently, **you must contact your CNCS State Office before you engage in any political or lobbying activity.**

Your Civil Rights & Responsibilities

You are protected by VISTA and the Corporation for National and Community Service from being subjected to discrimination or harassment. You also have an obligation as a VISTA to make sure you do not subject anyone to discrimination or harassment. This applies to everyone you come into contact with, including other VISTAs, clients, volunteers, and employees at your service site.

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination is treating people differently because of who they are, where they come from, or the groups they belong to. Discrimination in a VISTA service setting is **illegal** when it targets a person or group based on such **non-merit factors** as race, gender, or religion, also known as **protected classes**.

Protected Classes

The Corporation for National and Community Service defines protected classes as the following:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Sex/gender
- Disability (physical or mental)
- Age
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity and expression
- Sexual orientation

Illegal Discrimination

- Targets a person or group because of a difference AND singles them out for different treatment
- May be a one-time occurrence or part of an ongoing pattern
- Can happen to anyone

What is Harassment?

Illegal harassment in a VISTA service setting is **severe and/or pervasive** verbal or non-verbal communication relating to an individual's gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other **non-merit factor** that interferes with a VISTA's performance and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive service environment. Harassment can consist of spoken or written words, images, or actions and can happen to anyone. It includes but is not limited to:

- Explicit or implicit demands for sexual favors
- Pressure for one's company
- Unwelcome, persistent letters, phone calls, emails, or other media
- Distribution or display of offensive material
- Offensive looks or gestures, physical encroachment, or threatening behavior

Illegal Harassment

- Includes—but is not limited to—sexual harassment
- Can be spoken words or unspoken actions
- Is more than just annoying or uncomfortable behavior
- Generally happens over a period of time
- Creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive service environment
- Prevents a VISTA from serving effectively
- Can happen to anyone

Your Civil Rights & Responsibilities, cont.

What Should I Do?

If you experience or witness discrimination or harassment, and if you feel safe and comfortable doing so, you can directly approach and talk to the person you suspect of engaging in harassing or discriminating behavior. If that doesn't work, or if you do not feel safe and comfortable doing so, you can talk to your VISTA supervisor.

If you cannot go to your supervisor, or you do and the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact your state office (see the link to the list of state office contacts below). Finally, you can contact the CNCS Equal Opportunity Office (see contact information below). If you and/or your VISTA supervisor or state office contact chooses to contact the Equal Opportunity Office, note that claims must be made within 45 days of the incident.

Useful Questions/Suggestions

If you think you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment, these questions and suggestions may be useful:

- Have I (Can I) talk to the person involved?
- What assumptions might I be making? How can I check out these assumptions?
- Assume positive intent. Communicate to clarify.
- Use statements such as, "It appears to me that ..."
- Speak with a supervisor (if you can).
- Is there something I can learn from this?

Where Can I Go for More Information?

The Corporation for National and Community Service takes discrimination and harassment very seriously and makes the following resources available to you:

Corporation State Office Contacts A list of state offices can be found at www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-offices.

A complete list of the CNCS's official policies on discrimination and harassment can be found in the online VISTA Member Handbook at www.vistacampus.gov/lessons/vista-member-handbook

Contact Information

Equal Opportunity Office
250 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20525

202-606-7503 **HOTLINE**
202-606-3472 **TTY**
202-606-3465 **FAX**
eo@cns.gov **EMAIL**

VISTA Leaders

VISTA leaders serve in large VISTA projects or by region where there is a minimum of six VISTAs per leader. The aim of VISTA leader is to expand and build the capacity of the VISTAs they leads in coordination with the projects in which they serve. VISTA leaders serve as role models and trainers who strengthen the leadership capacity of VISTAs, VISTA projects, and community members. They also provide resources to members.

1. Responsibilities of a VISTA Leader

VISTA leaders focus on increasing the effectiveness of both the VISTAs and the project they serve. Leaders help recruit, screen, and train VISTA members. They search for ways to further develop a VISTA's skill set, providing opportunities for growth and making sure each VISTA is successful and prepared for life after service. Leaders promote information sharing, create a VISTA support net, develop in-service training workshops, and create model programs. Many leaders assist their VISTAs in the writing of grants, fundraising, and conducting broad-based public awareness campaigns. In general, they set an example of leadership for VISTAs; ensure positive relations; facilitate idea sharing; and help in mediating issues among the community, supervisors, and VISTAs.

2. Requesting a VISTA Leader

CNCS State Offices (CSOs) discuss with project sponsors the opportunity to place a VISTA leader on larger VISTA projects or a group of smaller regionally located projects. Coordination and planning should begin as the project is being developed or renewed for another year. Sponsors must officially request a leader by including a Volunteer Leader Assignment Description (VLAD) in their project application to the state office. If the need for a leader develops after the project application has been approved, the VLAD should be submitted to the CSO for approval, and the project application should be amended accordingly. The VLAD may also serve as a tool for recruiting.

3. Application Process

In the same manner that someone applies through MyAmeriCorps to be a VISTA, a VISTA must apply for an open leader position in MyAmeriCorps and go through the application and enrollment process. The exception to this requirement is VISTAs who are currently serving at a project and want to become a VISTA leader at the

project once their first year of service is completed. If the CSO, supervisor, and VISTA agree that the VISTA has the capacity to serve as a VISTA leader, the VISTA may skip the application process and go on to the enrollment process.

4. Selection of a Leader

VISTA leader positions are open to former VISTAs, AmeriCorps members, and Peace Corps volunteers.

VISTAs are eligible to serve as leaders if they have completed at least one year of VISTA service and have strong recommendations from their last VISTA project supervisor, a record of outstanding performance, and a demonstrated leadership ability. A VISTA is not entitled to a leader position but must apply to an open leader position and go through the application and enrollment process.

Each leader position is full time and subject to the same terms and conditions of service that apply to VISTAs (in regard to outside employment, school, the Hatch Act, etc.). Leaders may not perform the duties of a VISTA in addition to their functions as leaders.

5. Training

VISTA leaders participate in a leaders training scheduled at various times throughout the year. The training provides leaders with an introduction to their role and equips them with a set of skills to help recruit and assist VISTAs and ensure their projects are sustainable.

6. Length of Service

The total amount of years an individual may serve in VISTA is five. VISTA leaders may serve additional years if they did an outstanding job as a leader and the project sponsor and the state office director or program specialist agree it would benefit the project to extend their service term.

VISTA Living Allowance Schedule 2018

Period	Start Date	End Date	Direct Deposit Date	Period	Start Date	End Date	Direct Deposit Date
201801	12/24/2017	1/6/2018	1/12/2018	201814	6/24/2018	7/7/2018	7/13/2018
201802	1/7/2018	1/20/2018	1/26/2018	201815	7/8/2018	7/21/2018	7/27/2018
201803	1/21/2018	2/3/2018	2/9/2018	201816	7/22/2018	8/4/2018	8/10/2018
201804	2/4/2018	2/17/2018	2/23/2018	201817	8/5/2018	8/18/2018	8/24/2018
201805	2/18/2018	3/3/2018	3/9/2018	201818	8/19/2018	9/1/2018	9/7/2018
201806	3/4/2018	3/17/2018	3/23/2018	201819	9/2/2018	9/15/2018	9/21/2018
201807	3/18/2018	3/31/2018	4/6/2018	201820	9/16/2018	9/29/2018	10/5/2018
201808	4/1/2018	4/14/2018	4/20/2018	201821	9/30/2018	10/13/2018	10/19/2018
201809	4/15/2018	4/28/2018	5/4/2018	201822	10/14/2018	10/27/2018	11/2/2018
201810	4/29/2018	5/12/2018	5/18/2018	201823	10/28/2018	11/10/2018	11/16/2018
201811	5/13/2018	5/26/2018	6/1/2018	201824	11/11/2018	11/24/2018	11/30/2018
201812	5/27/2018	6/9/2018	6/15/2018	201825	11/25/2018	12/8/2018	12/14/2018
201813	6/10/2018	6/23/2018	6/29/2018	201826	12/9/2018	12/22/2018	12/28/2018

Deposit dates may differ if your disbursement is from a grant given to your sponsoring organization.

Living allowances received by U.S. Treasury checks will arrive about five days after the direct deposit date. Unless pre-approved by your state office, you must receive your living allowance through direct deposit. To set up direct deposit, go to my.americorps.gov. If your direct deposited living allowance payment does not arrive by the date listed, contact the VISTA Member Support Unit at the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677.

For more information about your VISTA living allowance, visit www.vistacampus.gov/in-service/benefits-service and click on the Resources tab in the Living Allowance section.

VISTA Living Allowance Rates

The Corporation for National and Community Service determines your living allowance rate based on the cost of living in the county where you serve. This chart is a summary of the rates offered. For specific information on the living allowance rate for the county where you serve, refer to the “Living Allowance Rates by County” chart at www.vistacampus.gov/resources/living-allowance-rates-county-1.

Approximate Monthly Amount (\$)	Official Daily Rate (\$)	Approximate Amount per Pay Period (\$)	Approximate Yearly Amount (\$)
1,026	33.73	472	12,311
1,069	35.14	492	12,826
1,108	36.42	510	13,293
1,178	38.73	542	14,136
1,222	40.18	563	14,666
1,276	41.95	587	15,312
1,333	43.82	613	15,994
1,393	45.80	641	16,717
1,466	48.19	675	17,589
1,515	49.80	697	18,177
1,720	56.55	792	20,641
1,802	59.24	829	21,623
2,010	66.08	925	24,119

NOTES:

- The VISTA living allowance is calculated using the official daily rate for each pay tier. Each VISTA pay period is 14 days.
- The monthly, per pay period, and annual amounts listed above will be different from what you see in your paycheck because the above rates are pre-tax amounts. The actual pay may vary due to variations in the number of days served in a month or a pay period.

Direct Deposit

The U.S. Treasury requires that federal payments be made by direct electronic deposit, except when this would cause an unusual hardship on the payee due to a physical or mental disability or a geographic, language, or literacy barrier—or would impose a financial hardship. If you experience such hardship, a U.S. Treasury check can be mailed to you or to the project address closest to your assignment.

If you believe that receiving your living allowance by direct deposit would cause you hardship, please put this in writing and submit it to your CNCS State Office, and your living allowance may be made by check.

A direct deposit form can be completed online at my.americorps.gov.

Successful Volunteer Programs

Answer Key

The Answer Key to the Successful Volunteer Programs Puzzle Activity completed in the Volunteer Development breakout group.

1. Plan

Research resources and current trends in the use of volunteers.

Research your organization's past and current use of volunteers.

Recruit stakeholders to advise and contribute to the volunteer effort.

Building on past and current practice, plan how volunteers will serve the project.

Develop or refine volunteer policies and procedures.

Develop or refine processes for how volunteers will be guided, evaluated, and recognized.

2. Outreach & Recruit

Identify specific volunteer needs. What skills, abilities, and background experiences are you seeking in volunteers?

Develop volunteer task descriptions that spell out qualifications, activities, benefits, time commitment, and other expectations.

Develop a targeted recruitment plan: Where are the people with the qualities you are seeking?

Develop a plan for marketing the program.

Market your volunteer opportunities in places where you'll find your target volunteers.

3. Screen & Match

Ensure appropriate screening methods are in place. Secure background checks if needed.

Intake and review applications.

Interview prospective volunteers. Check references.

Match volunteers with appropriate opportunities.

4. Train & Support

Identify resources and implement plan for volunteer training.

Implement plan to train staff on how to effectively work with volunteers.

Orient volunteers to the organization and their task.

Ensure that volunteers have ongoing guidance and support.

Create ways to recognize volunteer efforts and volunteer-staff partnerships.

5. Monitor & Evaluate

Implement record-keeping and communication systems to assess how things are going.

Ensure that there is a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments, and perceptions from volunteers.

Gather input on volunteer performance and outcomes.

Use information to give volunteers feedback on their performance and to inform needed changes in the program.

Report volunteer outcomes to key stakeholders.

6. Sustain

Research funding and internal/external resources to support volunteer effort.

Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and secure staff or volunteer resources to continue the program.

Revise and document all processes, policies, procedures, communication systems, and evaluation data.

Oath of Service

I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend
the Constitution of the United States
against all enemies, foreign and domestic;
That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;
That I take this obligation freely,
without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion;
And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties
of the office on which I am about to enter.
So help me God.



Note: The phrase “So help me God” in the oath may be stricken, and the word “swear” where it appears above may be changed to “affirm” rather than swear to the affidavits. These are the only legal changes that can be made to the oath. The oath is for all federal government employees.

AmeriCorps Pledge

I will get things done for America —
to make our people safer,
smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy,
I will take action.

Faced with conflict,
I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity,
I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment
with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member,
and I will get things done.

Note: The pledge is only for AmeriCorps members.

VISTA Webinars



VISTA webinars are offered regularly and recordings are available on demand.

Learning Opportunities for Service and Beyond

- Offered periodically to help VISTAs develop a plan for ongoing learning
- Explore learning opportunities
- Connect with the VISTA program and your fellow VISTAs

Sample Topics

Life as a VISTA

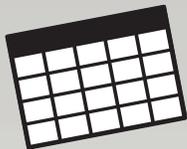
- Improve communication with your supervisor
- Manage student loans
- How to use your education award
- Networking and career planning

The Work

- Conduct a community needs assessment
- Meeting facilitation
- Volunteer recognition and retention
- Communication techniques

vistacampus.gov/webinars

Online Courses



AmeriCorps VISTA offers **10-week online courses** designed to enhance your capacity to serve as a VISTA and to help you build a professional skill set.

As a student, you will:

- Receive individual support and connect with other VISTAs
- Apply course activities and materials for carrying out your VAD
- Earn three transferable undergraduate college credit recommendations

Online courses are offered three times a year and are available to eligible VISTAs at no cost. Check the Online Courses page of the VISTA Campus for more information.

Courses

Volunteer Mobilization

- Design volunteer position descriptions
- Develop effective volunteer recruitment strategies
- Conduct volunteer interviews
- Develop volunteer screening practices
- Create engaging and useful volunteer orientations and trainings

Resource Development

- Raise funds and write grants ethically
- Identify and communicate with donors
- Plan and develop fundraising events
- Research and write letters of inquiry for grants

vistacampus.gov/onlinecourses



facebook.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA



youtube.com/nationalservice



linkedin.com/company/americorps-vista



instagram.com/nationalservice



twitter.com/AmeriCorpsVISTA