



# Supporting Your VISTA Project & Region

Develop Resources, Connect Partners & Support Your Supervisor



Welcome to the final training video in the “Supporting Your VISTA Project & Region” topic area of the Virtual Leader Orientation.

In the previous training you began to learn more about why we collect Performance Measure data for AmeriCorps VISTA projects, and how you might support that process as a VISTA leader.

In this training we’ll be looking into how your leader role might also involve developing resources, connecting partners & supporting your supervisor. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Learning Objectives



- Developing Project/Region Resources
- Effective Project Partner Communication
- Creating a Productive Supervisor Partnership



By the end of this training you'll know more about:

- **[[Click]]** Possible avenues for developing new resources for your project or region,
- **[[Click]]** Communicating effectively with sub-sites and making the most of site visits, and
- **[[Click]]** Creating a productive working partnership with their Supervisor. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Action Items!



### Recommended Prep Work:

- Have a copy of your VISTA Leader Assignment Description (VLAD) ready for review.

Addressing these items before you move forward will help you get the most out of this Virtual Leader Orientation training!

If you've been working through the Virtual Leader Orientation trainings in order, you probably already have a copy of your VISTA Leader Assignment Description at the ready, but if you don't, now is a great time to pause the training and get a copy. **[[Click]]** We'll be using it a little later to gauge your involvement in Resource Development. **[[Next Slide]]**



## Developing Resources

Leverage Resources to Support your Projects & Members

Now that we've covered the areas of knowledge that usually present the greatest learning curve as you get ready to support your project and region – eGrants, VISTA Recruitment & Performance Measure data collection – let's move in to review some areas that are likely more familiar from your previous experiences with service.

First up for review is a look into how VISTA Leaders are uniquely placed to drive resource development success for their projects, regions, and VISTA members. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Resource Development Overview



### Leader Resource Development Activities

Direct Resource Development

Project Outreach & Promotion

Supporting Member Resource Development

We're back to the Six VISTA Leaders Roles you learned in this first training video – The Ambassador, The Mentor, The Recruiter, The Educator or Facilitator, The Liaison & The Resource Generator.

In this section, what three roles do you think will be front and center?

**[[Click]]** The Resource Generator; since you'll be developing new resources for your project – cash, in-kind, or otherwise – this role is at the top of the list.

**[[Click]]** The Ambassador; because successfully acquiring and leveraging resources for your project will require you to effectively tell the story of your VISTA members' impact on the local community or wider region, and

**[[Click]]** The Educator/Facilitator; because as a VISTA Leader you won't always be directly seeking and leveraging resources yourself, you'll also be providing guidance to your VISTA members as they pursue their own resource development projects.

The skills you develop as a Resource Generator, Ambassador & Educator/Facilitator will help you effectively:

- Develop new resources directly for the benefit of your project, region & members,
- Perform impactful and meaningful project outreach & promotion to increase your project's visibility with potential supporters, and
- Support your VISTA members with guidance and tools to facilitate their own resource development initiatives. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Action Item: Identifying Resource Activities



- Review your VLAD, talk to your Supervisor & answer these questions!
  - Are you coordinating any events?
  - Do you need to gather in-kind donations?
  - Are you trying to get additional community support for your members?
    - Examples: Discounts, lower cost housing, transit assistance, etc.
  - Are you responsible for identifying funding opportunities to support your VISTA member's VAD activities?
  - Are you responsible for finding speakers for your VISTA trainings?

Before we get into best practices and tools for resource development – let's see what kind of resource-related activities you might be assigned as a Leader. Remember! Resources aren't just monetary donations and grant awards!

Answer these questions to get you started:

- **[[Click]]** Are you coordinating, improving, or creating any events?
- **[[Click]]** Do you need to gather in-kind donations?
- **[[Click]]** Are you tasked with securing additional community support for your members?
- **[[Click]]** If your VISTA members have resource development goals – are you responsible for identifying funding opportunities?
- **[[Click]]** If your VISTA project or region holds professional development meetings for your members; are you responsible for identifying and securing speakers or trainers?

Take a look at your VLAD. If you have the time, pause this training & bring your supervisor into this discussion. Once you have a better idea of what your Resource Development assignments look like, return to the video. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Leader Resource Development: Direct



Leaders engage in direct development activities when they seek out, identify and make the “ask” for specific resources.

- Applying for grants to support your VISTA project.
- Performing outreach to secure low cost or free professional development opportunities.
- Solicit in-kind donations to support VISTA project events such as National Days of Service.
- Reaching out to local businesses or agencies who might provide low or no-cost resources to your VISTA members
  - Ex: low-cost housing, fitness memberships, discounts, etc.

As was mentioned earlier, some Resource Development activities that Leaders can undertake in support of their projects are very direct in nature; where you are personally seeking out, identifying & making the “ask” for specific resources to benefit your VISTA project.

Some examples of the more direct types of Resource Development that VISTA Leaders may engage in are:

- **[[Click]]** Applying for grants to support your VISTA project.
- **[[Click]]** Performing outreach to secure low cost or free professional development opportunities for your VISTA members.
- **[[Click]]** Soliciting in-kind donations to support VISTA project events such as National Days of Service.
- **[[Click]]** Reaching out to local businesses or agencies who might provide low or no-cost resources to your VISTA members **[[Next Slide]]**

## Leader Resource Development: Indirect



Project Promotion & Outreach	Supporting Member Resource Development
Create & maintain outreach materials showcasing project success.	Research grant opportunities & resources for VISTA members tasked with writing grants.
Create and/or update your project's social media presence.	Review VISTA member grant applications or fundraising campaign materials.
Attend local volunteer engagement, or non-profit events.	Develop a resource development database for your VISTA members to track in-kind donation sources.



VISTA Leaders may also participate in project or regional support activities that involve developing resources more indirectly. This indirect resource development can be divided into two areas: Project promotion or outreach, and supporting member resource development.

Project promotion & outreach resource development activities might include:

- Creating & maintaining outreach materials showcasing successful programs and human impact stories. The resources can be used by VISTA members or the project as a whole to increase community awareness.
- Create and/or update your project's social media presence. Having consistent, positive engagement on social media might bring your project to the attention of potential sponsors or donors.
- Attend local volunteer engagement, or non-profit events. These might include events to recruit or recognize volunteers, non-profit focused conferences, or other venues where you can increase the visibility of your project's accomplishments.

VISTA Leaders can also support the resource development activities of their members by:

- Researching grant opportunities & resources for VISTA members assigned to write grants.
- Providing review and feedback on grant applications or fundraising campaign materials written by VISTA members.
- Developing a resource development list or database for your VISTA members to include local businesses that might provide in-kind or cash donations. This database could also track how many times businesses or individuals have been asked to donate to avoid your project or region from overtaxing certain donors.

**[[Click]]** Explore the resources & tools linked below this video under “Resource Development” to learn more about how the VISTA Campus can help you succeed in increasing resource generation for your project and region. **[[Next Slide]]**



## Project Partners

Keeping Your Project or Region Connected

Another area for brief review includes the activities VISTA Leaders may participate in to keep your project partners, sub-sites, and VISTA members connected and well-informed.

## Project Partners Overview



### Leader Project Partnership Activities

Facilitating Partner Communication

VISTA Site Visits

Returning to the Six VISTA Leaders Roles; The Ambassador, The Mentor, The Recruiter, The Educator or Facilitator, The Liaison & The Resource Generator.

Which VISTA Roles will you use as you keep your project or region's stakeholders connected?

**[[Click]]** The Liaison; because ensuring that your project partners, sub-sites & VISTA members have a positive experience involves knowing and responding to the needs and circumstance of these key players, and

**[[Click]]** The Mentor; because project partner activities – including site visits and regular communication - provide a perfect opportunity to guide your VISTA members toward a more fulfilling service experience.

The skills you develop as a Liaison and a Mentor will help you effectively:

- Facilitate communication across your project partners and stakeholders, and
- Prepare for and support successful site visits. **[[Next Slide]]**



## 3 Types of Project Partner Communication



The first thing to understand regarding project partner communications is that there are a few different types of “project partners” that you may need to communicate with.

The first, are of course, your project’s VISTA members. **[[Click]]** All VISTA Leaders will be in frequent communication with their members who are, in a way, the primary “partners” involved in your VISTA project. Creating a system for effective and meaningful communication will be one of the key responsibilities of your VISTA year.

- This type of communication will be the focus of the next VLO training videos on “Supporting Your VISTA Members.”

The second type of project partner communication will be with your **[[Click]]** VISTA project’s sub-sites. Sub-sites are organizations, agencies, or offices where VISTA members are placed outside of your project’s main location.

- VISTA Leaders at single-site projects will not participate in this type of partner communication, but for VISTA Leaders assigned to Intermediary, and State-level or National-level VISTA projects, communicating with project sub-sites may be a key element of your Leader service year.

The third type of project partner communication applies only to Leaders who are supporting a geographic region – not a specific project. **[[Click]]** VISTA Leaders supporting a geographic region will have the unique opportunity and task of communicating across organizations and agencies that may be very different from one another.

- This type of Project Partner communication will require a clear and intentional approach in order to avoid confusion between regional project partners.

See the links to:

- “Resources for Working with Sub-Sites,” and the
- “Fostering Strong Intermediary and Sub-Site Relationships” Webinar

for approaches and ideas related to project partner communication. Leaders should keep in mind that these resources were initially intended with VISTA Supervisors and Project Directors in mind. Leaders should closely involve their supervisors in preparing their project partner communication strategy to ensure that the strategy appropriately divides tasks and responsibilities between the Leader and Supervisor. **[[Next Slide]]**

# VISTA Site Visits



## • Site Visit Opportunities

- See their work space
- Get a photo & a VISTA impact story to share on social media
- Be sure to discuss:
  - Progress on their VISTA Assignment
  - Upcoming training opportunities
  - Their working relationship with supervisor and colleagues.

### Key Site Visit Questions

How can the project provide additional support?

Are there any issues that need to be addressed?

As part of your Leader role your site may require you to accompany your Supervisor on visits to sites where your project's or region's VISTA members are serving. If this is the case, it's important not to waste this great opportunity to support your project by getting to know more about the VISTA member's experience at each site!

Site Visits are a great opportunity to:

- See your VISTA members' work space
- Get a photo and VISTA impact story to share on social media or other marketing materials – don't forget to bring some extra VISTA gear for your member!
- And be sure to discuss how they are progressing on their VISTA Assignment, any upcoming training or networking opportunities, and how their working relationship is with their Supervisor & colleagues.

Two Key Questions for any site visit are: **[[Click]]**

- How can I and our project support you more?
- Are you experiencing any issues that I can help you address?

If so, it's important to consider whether you can provide them with some guidance about how to approach the situation, or if it needs to be escalated to your supervisor.

Always remember that some issues that may come up at site visits will need to be escalated to your Supervisor.

The VISTA Campus has a comprehensive VISTA Leader webinar for “Designing and Conducting Effective Member Site Visits.” This webinar and other resources can be found linked below the video. **[[Next Slide]]**



## Supervisor Support Overview



### Leader Supervisor Support Activities

Develop a Communication Framework

Leader v. Supervisor Roles

Continued Relationship Building

You know the drill. Which of the Six VISTA Leaders Roles - The Ambassador, The Mentor, The Recruiter, The Educator or Facilitator, The Liaison, or The Resource Generator will you use to build a strong working relationship with your Supervisor?

**[[Click]]** The Liaison; because creating a positive working partnership will require you and your supervisor to maintain open lines of communication and be aware of and responsive to each others' changing needs, and

**[[Click]]** The Educator/Facilitator; because part of your role as a VISTA Leader is to keep your supervisor up to date about VISTA member accomplishments and struggles.

The skills you develop as a Liaison and an Educator/Facilitator will help you effectively:

- Develop a working communication framework with your Supervisor,
- Maintain a balance between the allowable roles of a Leader and the roles of a Supervisor, and to
- Continue building your working relationship with your Supervisor throughout your

Leader year. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Developing a Communication Framework



- Setting expectations.
  - What are your expectations of your supervisor?
  - What are your supervisor's expectations of you?
- How often will you have formal meetings?
- Are there opportunities for informal check-ins?
- What style of communication do you each prefer/works best for your project?

If you haven't already – arrange a meeting with your Supervisor to discuss your communication preferences. It's important to:

- Set expectations for your year of Leader service.
  - **[[Click]]** What are your expectations of your supervisor & **[[Click]]** what are your supervisor's expectations of you?
- Set days and times for formal supervisory meetings
- Discuss if there are opportunities for informal check-ins (especially if you and your Supervisor work in spaces close to one another).
- Take time to determine what types of communication work best for each of you.
  - For example, you may prefer to lay out detailed information in an e-mail, while your supervisor might prefer the collaborative nature of discussing things over the phone.

Setting this communication framework is an easy way to get a strong start to your working relationship with your Supervisor. Check out the webinar link below this video under "Supporting Your Supervisor Resources" to learn more about the concept of "Managing Up" in your Supervisory relationship. **[[Next**

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# Leader v. Supervisor Roles Quick Review



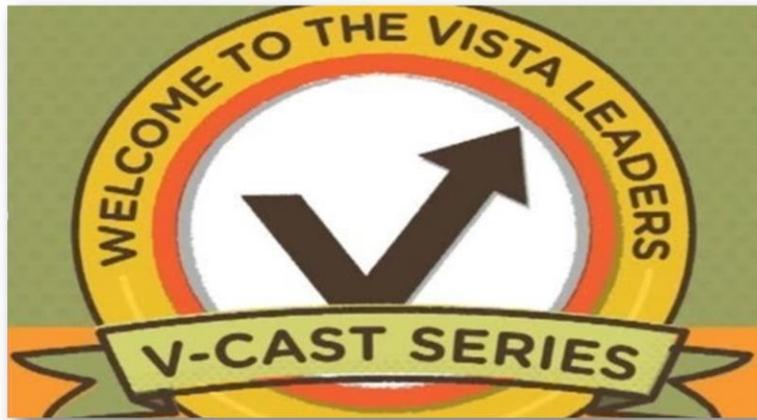
Scenario	Leader Support Role	Supervisor Role
<b>Facilitating a successful year of service for VISTAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make self available to VISTAs as a resource</li> <li>• Listen when VISTAs have problems/barriers</li> <li>• Assist VISTAs in identifying their options and creating their own solutions</li> <li>• Assist VISTAs in outlining their options for mediation, including informing supervisor</li> <li>• Involve supervisor if VISTAs cannot resolve issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ongoing scheduled supervision to VISTAs</li> <li>• Utilize problem-solving and coaching techniques to help VISTAs resolve problems and barriers</li> <li>• Assist VISTAs in identifying options and solutions</li> <li>• Develop protocol for addressing conflict</li> <li>• Schedule appropriate conference time with Leader for updates and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Recruiting and selecting new VISTAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote position announcement</li> <li>• Assist in screening applications</li> <li>• Assist in setting up interviews</li> <li>• Participate in interviews</li> <li>• Provide feedback to supervisor</li> <li>• Utilize recruiting and interview skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview top candidates</li> <li>• Nominate candidates for approval by State Office</li> <li>• Notify candidates of selection and approval</li> <li>• Ensure paperwork is completed</li> <li>• Accept/select candidates in eGrants/Portal</li> </ul>

In your role supporting your Supervisor there may be a fine line between activities that are appropriate and allowable for VISTA Leaders, and activities that are the responsibility of your Supervisor. We discussed these roles more closely in the VLO training video – “The Basics.”

Let’s review two common scenarios again – supporting VISTA members through a successful service year, and recruiting and selecting new VISTA members. As you read through the Leader and Supervisor roles, remember that most of the Leader activities fall within the realm of assisting, organizing, coordinating, and referring to the Supervisor when needed. While the Supervisor roles focus on making final decisions, providing supervision, submitting items, and ensuring compliance. Pause the video for a moment to read through these roles more closely.

A key piece of the Leader – Supervisor relationship should be checking in frequently to ensure that each of you is performing your intended roles in project and member support activities. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Building Relationships with your VISTA Supervisor



When you think about your working relationship with your Supervisor – don't consider it to be something that you can check off of your Leader Orientation to do list. Building and maintaining this critical project support partnership will require work over your entire year of service. Let's take a few minutes to watch one of the V-Cast Series videos on "Building Relationships with your VISTA Supervisor" to get you started. Pause the training here and scroll to the resources below to watch this quick 5 minute video. **[[Next Slide]]**

## Let's Review!



**if you're not  
part of the  
solution...**

**you're part  
of the  
problem.**

**JOIN  
VISTA**  
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Developing Project/Region Resources
- Effective Project Partner Communication
- Creating a Productive Supervisor Partnership

Let's review the project support topics we've covered in this training. You now have a better idea about:

- **[[Click]]** Possible avenues for developing new resources for your project or region,
- **[[Click]]** Communicating effectively with sub-sites and making the most of site visits, and
- **[[Click]]** Creating a productive working partnership with their Supervisor. **[[Next Slide]]**

Project support is a multi-step process and these new skills will help you to form your approach to supporting your project or region.

## Up Next: Supporting Your Members



Thanks for engaging with the VLO trainings on Supporting Your Project & Region! And don't forget to check out the resources that we mentioned linked below.

Up Next! Once you're ready to move on to the next topic scroll down to "Supporting Your Members" where you'll be introduced to the activities, skills & resources you'll need to get started as a supportive and effective Leader for your VISTA members.

Remember you can always come back to this video, reference the slides in the PDF version linked below, and use the other references in this training whenever you need guidance on supporting your VISTA project or region.