

**Starting Off Strong:  
Professional Workplace Success**

**VISTA**  
Volunteers In Service To America

Dial: 877-853-5257  
Webinar ID: 975-6311-1263

Department of  
**NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE**

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**Today's Speakers**

Dial: 877-853-5257  
ID: 975-6311-1263

**Chris Hawkes**  
AmeriCorps VISTA  
Training Specialist

**Vivica Brooks**  
Workforce Development  
Trainer

**Madelyn Carlson**  
AmeriCorps VISTA Leader  
Cities of Service

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**Today's Goals**

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By the end of the webinar, you will be able to:

- Establish shared communication practices with your supervisor
- Apply best practices for in-person, phone, video and email communications
- Identify next steps to build and maintain your professional network

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## Today's Agenda

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- Working Together to Bring About Change**
  - Cultivating a successful supervisor relationship
- Presenting Your Best Self Online**
  - Email, Social Media, Video Calls
- Building Your Professional Network**

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## Working Together to Bring About Change

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What communication practices have you established with your supervisor?

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## Discuss with Your Supervisor

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Establishing communication norms:

| How?                                     | When?   | Where?   | What?  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Email, phone, video conference, texting? | Standing meeting vs. when needed?<br><br>Preferred time of day? | Preferred location/format?<br><br>Calendar invite setup? | Agenda structure? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Discuss issues with examples</li><li>Ask for specific feedback</li></ul> |

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## Managing Up

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**Myth:** Managing up is telling my supervisor how to do their job.

**Reality Check:** Managing up is about...

- Communicating, asking questions, and clarifying expectations
- Creating a shared understanding of project tasks and roles

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## Steps to Managing Up Success

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Become a  
team builder

- 1 Become a "citizen of the organization" – contribute beyond your tasks
- 2 Develop self-confidence based on knowledge of work and goals
- 3 Learn your manager's style and preferences
- 4 Be aware of your manager's and your assumptions
- 5 Empathize with your manager
- 6 Use help-me-understand language
- 7 Be aware of how your story is conveyed
- 8 Use straight talk
- 9 Turn "no" into a problem-solving opportunity

Organizational  
Performance  
Group

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## Building a Trusting Relationship with a Supervisor

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**1. Understand who you are reporting to and what works for them**

- "How do you prefer for me to give you information?"
- "Is this how I should be asking questions?"

**2. "Measure twice, cut once"**

- "Is this all the information that you think should be captured?"

**3. Use the "7:1 Ratio"**

- For every minute of their time, spend seven minutes preparing.



Madelyn Carlson  
AmeriCorps VISTA Leader  
Cities of Service

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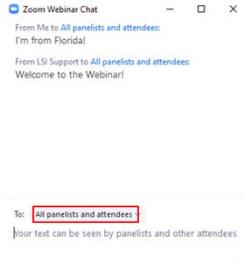
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## Chat Question

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*Have you learned about any online communication expectations at your organization?*



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## Presenting Your Best Self Online

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Learn about your VISTA site's expectations around:

- Email etiquette
- Conference and video calls
- Social media use

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## Email Etiquette

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- Addresses and personal names
- Subject lines
- Message length and format
- Greetings and replies
- Signatures
- Courtesy
- Emoticons and smiley faces



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## Subject Lines

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- Be clear and specific about the topic of the email. The subject line should be the main point of the email.
- Use logical keywords so the recipient can easily search for your email.
- Do not include a greeting, such as "hello" or "greetings."

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## Subject Line Examples

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|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Introduction</b>           | An introduction: Nicholas Barnaby-Catherine Anderson |
| <b>Meeting invitation</b>     | Management Consultants: Thursday 10:00 a.m.          |
| <b>Request for feedback</b>   | Feedback requested by COB 3/24                       |
| <b>Requesting information</b> | Inquiring about design services                      |



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## Length and Format

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Use a simple, easy-to-read font in your emails and avoid overuse of emoticons.



Use caps and abbreviations sparingly.

Check your grammar and punctuation.  
Use an active voice: Speak in the present tense, whenever possible.



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## Greetings and Closings

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### Greetings

For all formal email communication, use the appropriate **Greeting + Recipient's Title + Last name**

- Good morning/afternoon
- Hello
- Greetings

### Closings

Acceptable closings for business email:

- Best,
- Kind regards,
- Regards,
- Sincerely,

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## Considering Tone in Email

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| Email Statement        | Better option   |
|------------------------|---|
| What's the problem?    | Is everything OK? Can I help you?                             |
| I want to know why...  | I was wondering...  |
| Cancel my appointment. | Would it be possible to cancel my appointment?                |
| Explain it to me.      | I'm not sure I understood. Can we meet to discuss it further? |



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## Discussing Confidential or Controversial Topics by Email

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- Pay special attention to the types of things you discuss in workplace email.
- Imagine if you were to choose the wrong recipient and sent the email to your boss!



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## Before You Hit Send

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Double check that:

- The recipient's name is spelled correctly
- You didn't hit "Reply All" when you should have hit "Reply"
- You haven't used text abbreviations or shortened things like "going to" to "gonna"



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## Email Example

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Job opening

Inbox x

Frank Jacobs <chr.mliteracy@gmail.com> 10:39 AM (0 minutes ago) ☆ ↩

to me

Hello Staff members,

We have a new recent opening on site for a volunteer management specialist. Attached is the job description, go ahead and pass it on to your networks:

*If you're interested in making a difference by working on literacy-related causes in your community, consider applying for a Minnesota Literacy Council VISTA position!*

**What are the requirements?**

*VISTA members must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. Some college experience is preferred, and you should have a desire to fight poverty with passion! VISTAs commit to a full year of service (August-August), typically serve 40 hours per week, and are not allowed to hold other jobs or attend school full time while serving.*

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## Signature Line

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**Vivica Brooks**

**AmeriCorps VISTA Service-Learning Coordinator  
Spingarn High School**



202.555.2765 | www.yourwebsite.com  
123 Street St. | City, State Zip

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## What You Post Lives Forever

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### Please Do

- Review your organization's social media policy
- Review how your organization utilizes various platforms
- Use social media to spread the word

### Please Don't

- Engage rude, divisive or combative "posters"
- Post harmful images or messages
- Overshare/overuse hashtags

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## Hosting A Video Call

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- Before the meeting
  - Test your tech
  - Provide participants with an agenda and any presentation materials
- Reduce background noise
  - Turn cellphone to vibrate
  - Close windows, doors
  - Mute all participants upon entry
- Adjust your lighting



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## Hosting a Video Call

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- Use introductions
- Maintain eye contact
- Keep body movements to a minimum
- Use Chat or Instant Messaging
- Allow time to wrap-up the meeting



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## Participating on a Video Call

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### When you are a participant

- Test your tech
- Add your photo
- Stay engaged
- Be on time
- Camera on or off
- Mute yourself when not speaking
- Remember to pause
- Display professional attire and environment

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## Building Your Professional Network

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- Keep track of your projects
- Network
- Set up at least one informational interview
- Brag about YOUR work!
  - Create a digital portfolio



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## Your Next Steps

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1. Establish regular check-ins with your supervisor
2. Create a professional signature line
3. Perfect a professional conference call background (headshot)
4. Set up one informational interview
5. Start a digital portfolio

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## Webinar Evaluation

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- How can we improve this presentation?
- Please take a few moments to complete a brief evaluation survey once we log off today.
- Find the survey link in the Chat on your screen.
- Thank you for your feedback!

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*What questions do you have?*



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## Upcoming Webinar

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### Resiliency and Service Wellness

Thursday, September 24, 2020  
3-4:00 p.m. ET / 12-1:00 p.m. PT

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