

# Transitions Talking Points

---

Use these talking points to guide your conversation with your VISTAs as they near the end of their service and begin to plan for the future.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, and it is not necessary to follow every point in order. Use it as a guide to having deep and ongoing conversations with your transitioning VISTAs about the range of challenges and opportunities they will face. These conversations can be one-on-one with individual VISTAs, or in a group setting to align efforts and share experiences.

In addition, you'll find points here to help your VISTA(s) transition their work to assure continuity of their projects.

## Reflection

### Personal Growth

- In what ways has your service changed you as a person?
- What new interests and attitudes have you developed?
- What does *diversity* mean to you now? Compare it to what it meant when you started your service.
- How has your ability to work with diverse teams changed?
- Is your learning style different now from what it was before? How?
- How have you been appreciated and included in new ways?
- What were some personal challenges that you were able to overcome? What skills or strategies did you learn in doing so?

### Professional Development

- How will your formal training help you in the future?
- Did you discover new professional interests and possible career paths?
- In what areas would you now call yourself an expert?
- What other professional skills have you developed? Computer skills? Organizational skills? Facilitation skills? Writing skills? How can you frame these new skills for other employment/career opportunities?
- Has your communication style changed? How?
- In what ways have you been a leader? Specifically discuss how you've demonstrated leadership.
- What specific projects did you help design? Implement? Evaluate?
- Are you able to more effectively speak to groups of people? In what ways?
- Are your listening skills more developed compared to when you started?

## Short-Term Plans

- What options have you considered for your immediate post-service plan?
  - Back to school/graduate school (use your Education Award)
  - Find a job
  - Travel
  - Serve again with VISTA/AmeriCorps or another service organization
- How have you prepared to talk about your year of service with your family and friends?
- What have you done to set general goals for your long-term plan?
- In what ways have you consciously and deliberately considered how your service will affect your transition to what you do next? What challenges/opportunities do you anticipate?

## Long-Term Plans

- Do you have long-term career goals? Have you mapped out a plan to achieve them?
- Who/what resources have you discovered during service that you might rely on for your future plans?
- Have you considered taking advantage of the [non-competitive eligibility](#) for federal employment offered to VISTAs? (*Non-Competitive Eligibility* lasts for one year starting from the end-date of service.)
- Have you considered careers in which your skills developed through service might naturally transfer? Options might include:
  - Education
  - Social work
  - Environmental stewardship
  - Public-sector work (government and NGOs)
  - Nonprofit work
  - Community organizing
- How do you plan to maintain and grow the personal/professional network you've built during your service?
- How will your lifestyle have changed when you return home (or arrive at your next residence)? How has your service equipped you to make forward-thinking choices?

## Applying VISTA Skills and Experience to New Situations

- How will you talk about your service in future professional situations?
  - Skills and competencies
  - Personal communication skills (speaking, listening, etc.)
  - Overcoming challenges
  - Innovation and ingenuity to solve difficult problems
  - Perseverance
  - Leadership
- Think about your ability to discuss how you've acquired, developed, and/or enhanced the following skills through service in concrete ways:
  - Critical-thinking skills
  - Communication skills
  - Administrative skills
  - Leadership ability
  - Personal motivation
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Organizational capacity
  - Computer and technical skills

## Alumni Opportunities and Responsibilities

- In what ways will you carry forward the VISTA mission?
- What is/are the most important things you wish a VISTA alum had told you before you began your service? How might you be able to share that with future (and candidate) VISTAs?
- How have VISTA alumni helped you during your service?
- How can the community of VISTA alumni help you? And you help them?