Fight Poverty with PASSION

VISTA

Site Supervisor Training

June 10, 2015

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CNCS Montana Field Office

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Who's on the webinar?

- Host Site Supervisors
- Montana VISTA Project Supervisors and VISTA Leaders
- CNCS – Montana State Office

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Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Agenda

- Overview of National Service
- Overview of AmeriCorps VISTA
- Montana VISTA Programs
- VISTA Host Site Supervisor Responsibilities
- Terms, Conditions, and Benefits of Service
- VISTA Reporting Requirements
- Resources and Information
- Successful Host Site Supervisor

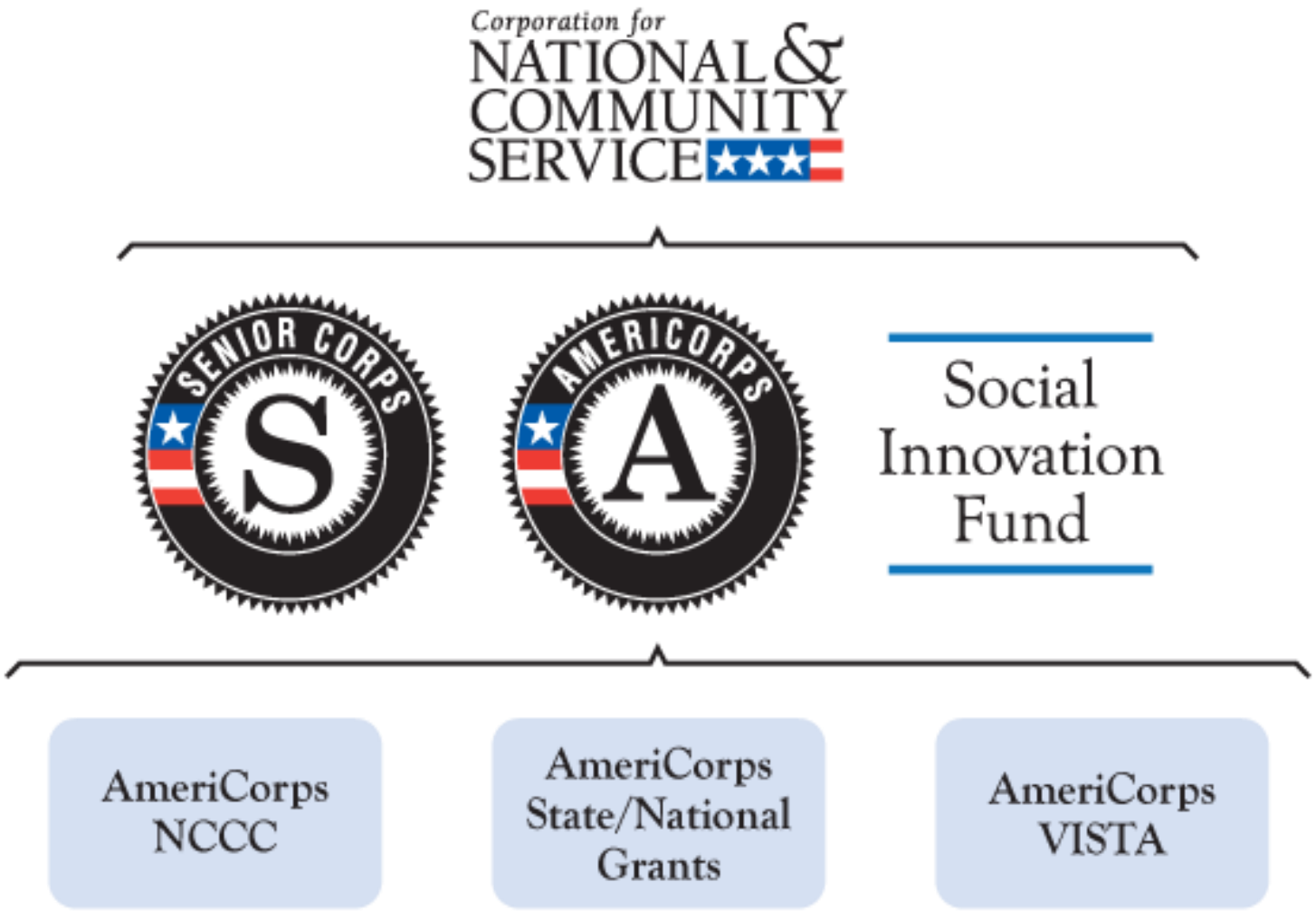
Corporation for National and Community Service

A federal agency that:

- was created to connect Americans of all ages backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation.
- is the nation's largest grantmaker supporting service and volunteering.
- engages more than 1.5 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service each year through AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps State and Senior Corps.
- Through programs and grants, the Corporation for National and Community Service provides **human capital—people power**—to help address emerging needs in communities not just in Montana but all across the country.

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

National Service Network



CNCS PROGRAMS

- **Senior Corps**: Senior Corps offers a network of programs that tap the rich experience, skills and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges.
  - RSVP - 13 projects
  - FGP (Foster Grandparent Program) - 5
  - SCP (Senior Companion Program) - 3

CNCS Strategic Focus Areas

- Education
- Veterans
- Healthy Futures
- Economic Opportunity
- Environmental Stewardship
- Disaster Preparedness

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Role of CNCS Staff - MT Field Office

Overall – Overseeing AmeriCorps VISTA, Senior Corps and supporting other CNCS National Service programs in Montana

- State Office staff develop, manage and monitor VISTA programs in their states.
- Approve VISTA Grants, Projects and Host-site applications.
- Approve VISTA Applicants selected for service.
- Provide technical assistance and enforce administrative policies and regulations.
- Conduct compliance monitoring with grantees, host sites and members.
- Support your supervision of the VISTAs and intervene in emergencies or difficult situations.
- Staff are also responsible for connecting you to the resources most appropriate to meet your needs.

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

OVERVIEW OF VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA

- Authorized in 1964 and founded in 1965 as Volunteers in Service to America, the program was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993.
- VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for 50 years.
- AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a national service program dedicated to ending poverty by building the capacity of nonprofit organizations and public agencies.
- VISTA attracts more than 7,000 Americans a year to engage in anti-poverty activities in communities throughout the nation.

VISTA
50 years
Volunteers In Service To America

VISTA Overview and Mission

- VISTA's mission is to strengthen and supplement efforts in low-income communities to eliminate and alleviate poverty by engaging volunteers from all walks of life, all geographical areas, and all age groups in a year of full-time service.

- VISTA aims to **build capacity** in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to help them more effectively **generate the commitment of private sector resources**, to **encourage volunteer service** at the local level, and **empower** individuals and communities to raise their standards of living.

Key Principles

- **Anti-Poverty Focus**
- **Community Empowerment**
- **Sustainable Solutions**
- **Capacity Building**

Capacity Building vs. Direct Service

- **<u>Direct Service</u>: The act of providing services to the organization, identified recipients or clients of a program.**
  - VISTA members may not provide direct service unless it is for a short period of time to familiarize them with the agency, activities or programs. This service must be relative to your VISTA project plan. For example, VISTAs are not allowed to support annual events.

- **<u>Capacity Building</u>: A set of activities that expand the *scale, reach, efficiency,* or *effectiveness* of programs and organizations. Activities may also *leverage resources* for programs and/or organizations. For example, capacity building activities may expand services, enhance delivery of services, or generate additional resources. These activities achieve *lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations* served by CNCS-supported organizations.**
  - These tasks and activities include the transfer of skills, products and relationships

VISTA ≠ Direct Service

Capacity building activities must be the VISTA members' main focus and built into their VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

VISTA Basics

- **Every VISTA member serves with a host site through a project sponsor.**
- **12-month, full-time commitment. Not a 9-to-5 job.**
- **Host Site and VISTA Project Sponsor work together to develop project, conduct recruitment**
- **Host Site provides day-to-day supervision, provides supplies & equipment.**
- **Corporation provides project oversight, develops programs, conducts PSO, provides funds through Sponsors and/or pays living allowance, education award or cash stipend, health and child care, and may provide member in-service transportation.**

What you need to know before developing a VISTA project

- What community issue is your organization trying to resolve?
- Why is it important that the issue be resolved?
- What changes must be made in order to achieve success in resolving this issue?
- When the issue is resolved, what do you want the end result to look like?
- How will resolving this issue move those being served out of poverty?

VISTA IN MONTANA

VISTA
Montana Style

- Currently there are 4 Intermediary VISTA Projects in Montana.
- Members are placed in over 70 different VISTA Host Sites (community organizations and government agencies) throughout Montana.
- The VISTA Host Sites are continually changing depending on community needs. Host Sites are eligible to receive VISTA Resources for up to 3 years.
- Members are placed in host sites two times during the year, in January and July.

VISTA Project Intermediaries/Sponsors

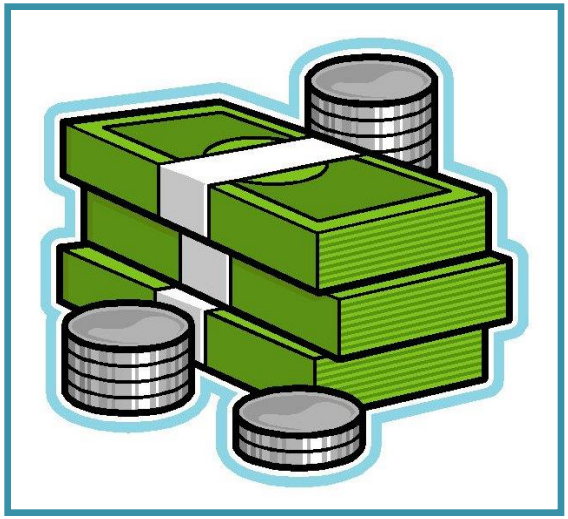
- Submit full federal project application to CNCS Montana Field Office
- Recruit and approve host sites and member applicants
- Ensure Host Site Supervisors and Members know the requirements of VISTA
- Provide Supervision, Orientation and Training
- Help to develop VADs
- Submit required reports to MT Field Office
- Monitor Host Sites
- Provide Emergency funds
- Submit stories to MT State Office

What does it take to become a VISTA Host Site

- There are
  - Costs
  - Eligibility
  - Responsibilities
- Must apply for Montana VISTA resources through a VISTA Intermediary

- In 2014, Montana VISTA Members generated over $1,000,000 in cash and in-kind resources

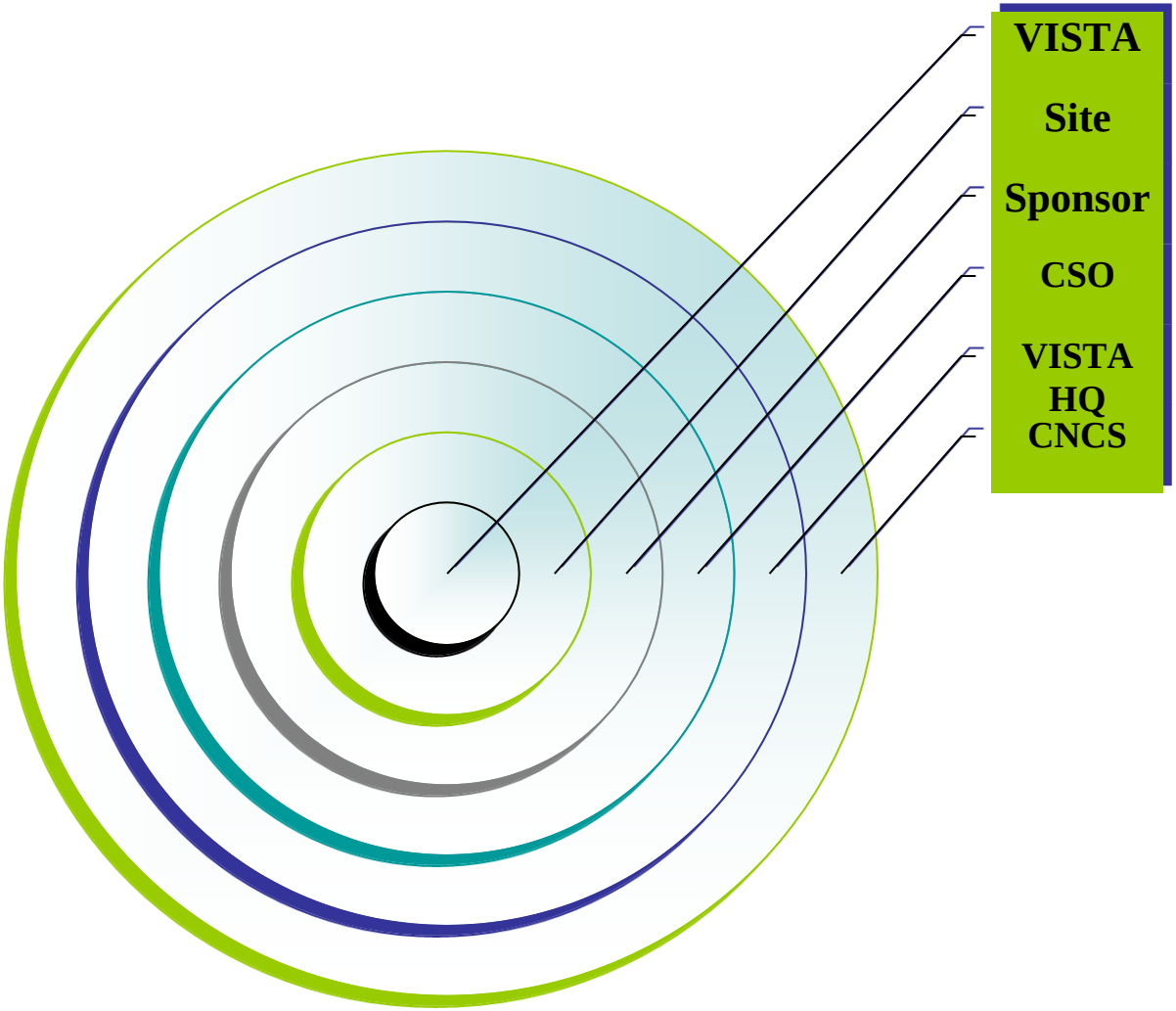
- They recruited and trained over 4,417 community volunteers that contributed 18,882 hours of service



VISTAs make things happen

The Value of VISTA

Montana VISTA Relationship Map



MONTANA PROJECTS

MONTANA PROJECTS

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project** (B-MVP)
  All Outcomes including Veterans, in Billings and surrounding areas (all roads lead to a home) – Regional project

- **Montana Campus Compact** (MTCC)
  Post Secondary Success, K-12 Success (goal of increasing enrollment in secondary education) and Veterans - Statewide project

- **Prevention Resource Center** (PRC)
  K-12 Success (reduce school drop-out rates), School Readiness, Food Security, Access to Health Care (Mental Health/Suicide Prevention) and Veterans - Statewide project

- **Rural Dynamics, Inc.** (MEO)
  Economic Opportunity and Veterans – Statewide project

ALLIGNMENT WITH END OUTCOMES

- **Economic Opportunity**
  - **Financial Literacy**
  - **Housing**
  - **Employment**
- **Education**
  - **School Readiness**
  - **K-12 Success**
  - **Post-Secondary Success**
- **Healthy Futures**
  - **Obesity and Food (Food Security)**
  - **Access to Health Care**
- **Veterans and Military Families**
  - **Veterans served under Economic Opportunity, Education and Healthy Futures**

Questions?

PREPARING FOR THE VISTA MEMBER/PROJECT

HOST SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

Host Site Responsibilities

- The Basics
- Develop VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)
- On-site Orientation
- Recruit Member(s)

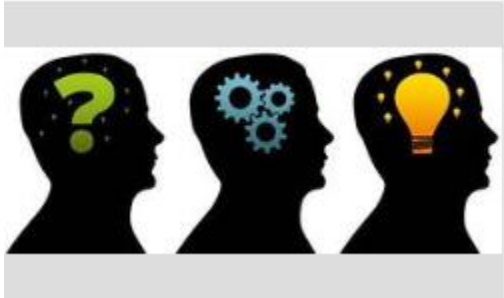
Host Site Responsibilities

The Basics:

- Map out member workspace, track down equipment, and supplies
- Map out time to meet with your VISTA member
- Meet with staff of your organization. Review the overall goal of the VISTA Project and the roles of the VISTA Member, Host Site Supervisor and Staff. Review VISTA Terms and Conditions with staff – remind them that a VISTA member is not an employee of the organization.
- Each Host Site MUST have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Project Sponsor that describes the responsibilities of each party. **The MOU must be signed before the member can begin service at the site.**

Host Site Responsibilities

VISTA
Member
Assignment
Description
(VAD)



VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) SAMPLE

VISTA Project:
Aaron Community Services (ACS)

VISTA Member Name:
Sam Smith

Site Name:
Brownville

Assignment Area:
Fund Development

Date:
November 10, 2006

VISTA Member Activities and Steps Checklist	Planned Period of Work
Goal (from VISTA Project Plan): *Goal 1: The ACS VISTA project will develop and implement systems for fund development and community volunteer recruitment and management in order to support and expand quality services to clients with developmental disabilities*	
Activity 1: Work with Fund Development Director to establish a work group to advise and assist with the fundraising goals to support the job skill training program. **Step 1:** Research and invite key individuals from ACS (staff, volunteers) and partner agencies to participate in work group. **Step 2:** Conduct an initial meeting and at least one additional work group meeting to solicit input on strategies, timelines, tasks, roles and staff support. **Step 3:** Draft preliminary report for work group and present final Fund Development Plan to board for approval.	Nov. 06-Jan. 07
Activity 1 Comments/Summary of Accomplishments:	**Activity 1 Completed (date):**
Activity 2: Develop resources to support fundraising efforts with assistance of the work group **Step 1:** Develop Donor Contacts list. Identify possible foundation support. **Step 2:** Develop written materials (Donation solicitation letters, thank you letters, boiler-plate language for proposals, contact letters). **Step 3:** Work with another VISTA member to develop specifications for record keeping system (database) to track contacts and donations. **Step 4:** Develop materials for face-to-face meetings, presentations to foundations, etc. **Step 5:** Develop key fundraising event concepts and schedule.	Feb.-June 07

What is the purpose of the VAD?

A VAD can make or break the VISTA Project:

- It charts a course of action for the member's service year.
- A clear understanding of the VAD helps avoid confusion over what's expected of your VISTA. Use it at the beginning of the term to see what the year ahead should look like. Go back to it every few months to develop short-term plans.
- If used right, the VAD provides direction for the member and allows supervisors to talk about what's working and what's not.

While developing the VAD – keep in mind…

- Develop a clear project Goal
- Be realistic; be careful not to overwhelm the member
- Include tasks that allow your member to conduct research on best practices and **evidenced-based programming**.
- Include tasks that develop systems for **tracking data for required Performance Measures**

VAD Goal Statement

Must include the overall goal of the project and the capacity that will be built

Sample of simple goal statements:

- **Goal of the Project:** To improve academic performance in literacy and/or math in K-12 schools by developing a mentoring program to help students reach success, and a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management system that will utilize community and student volunteers to mentor low-income and at-risk students.

Does the perfect VAD exist?

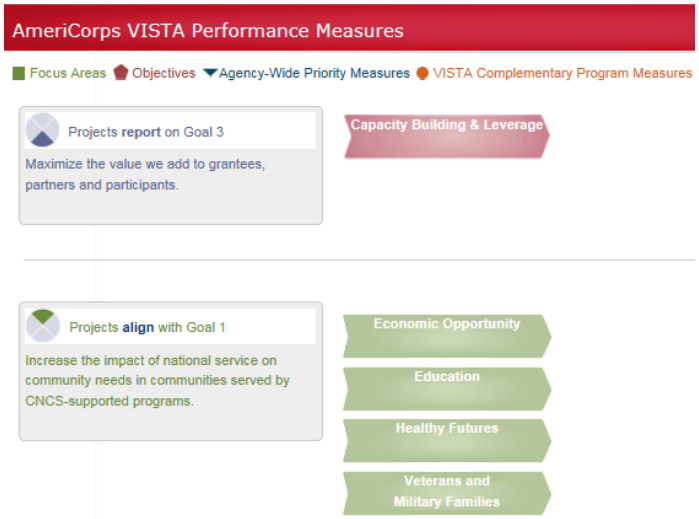
Probably not...

- Site supervisors and members must be willing to adjust the VAD to the ever changing environment.
- Always talk to your VISTA Project Sponsor before making changes

A note on Performance Measures

All Host Sites are required to select Performance Measures (PMs) during the application process.

Performance Measure: A value or characteristic that measures progress toward goals, and also used to improve progress, reduced risks, or improve cost-effectiveness.



- http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/vista

Host Site Responsibilities

On-site Orientation

- Submit OSOT plan well before the VISTA's arrival
- Implement when the VISTA arrives on-site
- The more support and more comprehensive the OSO, the shorter the learning curve
- Sets the tone for the VISTA service year

Host Site Responsibilities

Recruiting VISTA Members

- VISTA Members should have the skill-set to accomplish tasks outlined in VAD
- VISTAs are ALL ages
  - Recent College Graduates
  - People changing careers
  - Coming out of retirement

Active Role in RECRUITMENT

- Use your networks, including your Facebook page, to advertise the VISTA position. Everyone remotely involved with your organization should know that you are recruiting a VISTA member
- Interview applicants in a timely fashion
- Keep in mind that there is a great deal of competition for VISTA resources
- Applicants with questions about travel should be directed to contact their VISTA Project Sponsor

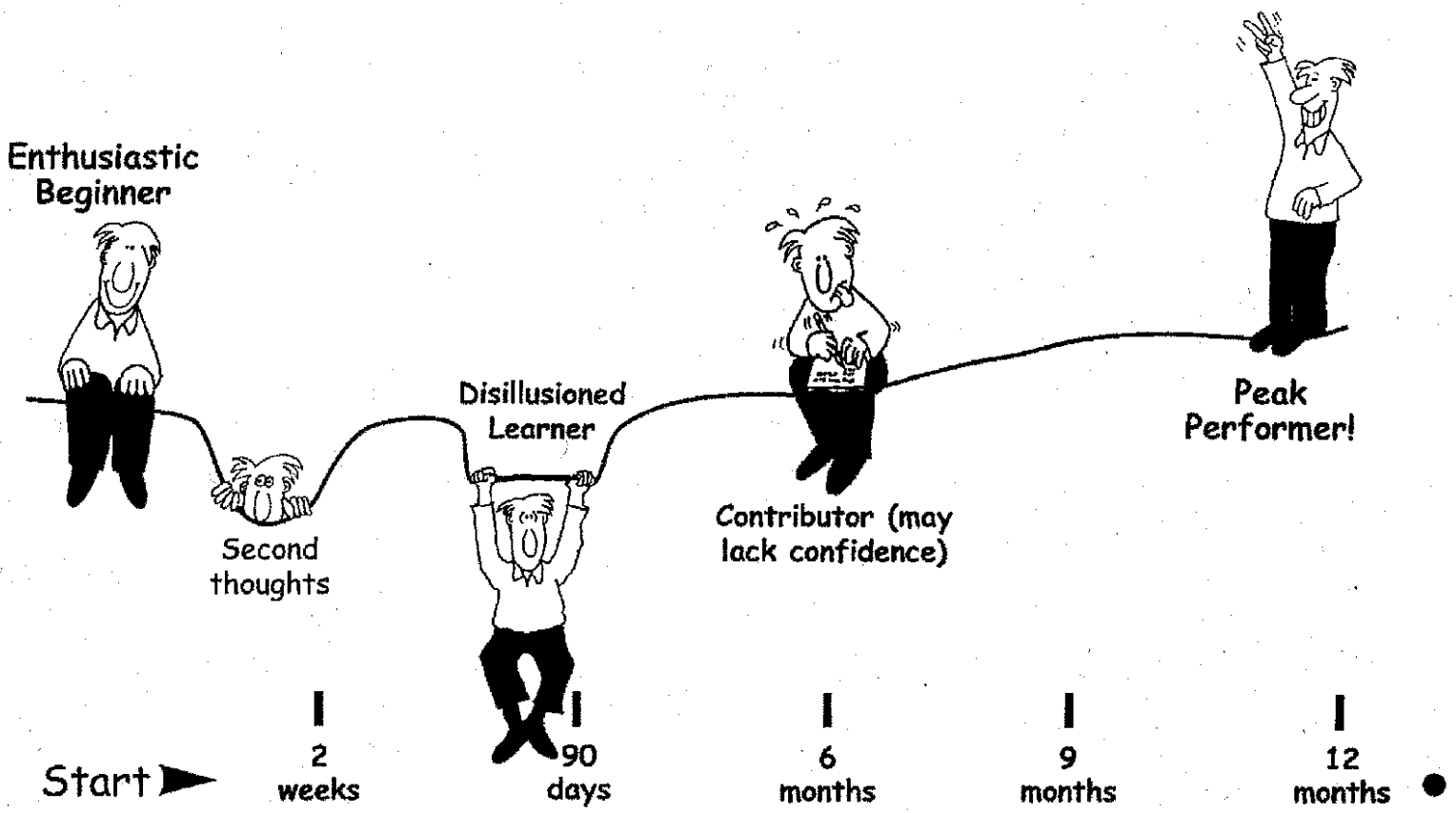
Questions

PREPARING TO MANAGE THE VISTA MEMBER

ROLE OF THE SITE SUPERVISOR

Member Service Year Timeline

A Common VISTA
Cycle of Service



Role of Host Site Supervisor

Supervisors are responsible for managing VISTA resources and providing the support necessary to achieve project goals.

Includes:

- Ensuring that VISTA resources are used in accordance with federal requirements and the project plan
- Supervising VISTA(s) at your site
- Mentoring VISTAs to promote professional growth

YOU PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Role of Host Site Supervisor

As you oversee the VISTAs work and give structure to the VISTA's assignment consider:

- Day-to-Day tasks
- Relationships of these tasks to the work of your organization's staff members
- Staff's understanding of the VISTA's role
- Resources, facilities, and supplies needed for the VISTA to successfully complete his or her assignment
- The VAD approved by the Corporation State Office

Helping your VISTA member

What can you do as a VISTA sponsor to support your VISTA member?

- Housing (free??)
- Food/gifts (no cash or gift cards)
- Clothing (agency logo apparel)
- Promotional items
- Provide recognition

Helping your VISTA member

Financial or in-kind support for VISTA members may be provided under the following conditions:

- Support is offered and available equally to all VISTA members at a site.
- Cash or checks (unless for reimbursable expenses) are not given directly to the VISTA member.
- Support offered does not violate VISTA's legislation that mandates VISTAs must, to the maximum extent practicable, make a commitment to live among and at the economic level of the people served.

Role of Host Site Supervisor

Project Management:

- Monitor progress and collect data in relation to your performance measures
- Report as required - This is a joint responsibility of the site supervisor and the member
- Manage progress towards VISTA Member Assignment Description

Host Site Responsibilities

Member Management:

- Orientation and Training
- Supervision (guidance, support, coaching, evaluation)
- Monitor attendance and use of leave days (keep time sheets)
- Support Service-related transportation (not commuting)

Host Site Responsibilities

Recognize members as VISTAs and AmeriCorps VISTA as a funder/supporter on:

- your website, blogs and social media
- in print and broadcast publicity
- on member business cards
- at public meetings and conferences

End of Service

- Host Site Supervisors are required to evaluate members at the end of their service.
- The Project Sponsor will instruct you on the process.
- Member End of Service Benefits – Education Award or Stipend

Host Site Responsibilities

When to call…

or not to call…

But before you call…

- If there is a problem:
  - Talk to your member
  - Make sure that your member knows that it is OK to talk to you

Always call the Sponsor and/or CNCS State Office

- When there are issues that can not be resolved at the site level
- When the member
  - does not show up for service
  - is hospitalized
  - is arrested
  - dies during service

A member should call the Sponsor and/or CNCS State Office Immediately

When:

- They have not been able to resolve issues at the site level
- They feel they were discriminated against
- They had a family emergency and need to get to their home of record
- They were arrested
- They have a work related injury

Terms, Conditions, and Benefits of Service

Acceptable/Unacceptable Terms

Acceptable Terms	Unacceptable Terms
Member	Employee, Worker
Position, Slot	Job
Service, Serves with	Employment, Works for
Living Allowance	Wage, Salary, Pay

General Terms of Service

- VISTA Members are not allowed to serve in direct service roles, or to serve as staff

- VISTA Members are not allowed to have staff titles:

  ≠Volunteer Coordinator

  ≠Marketing and Outreach Coordinator

  ≠Director of Resource Development

General Terms of Service

ONE-YEAR COMMITTENT
for both
Member and Host Site

- 12 months, 365 days, excluding PSO training.
- Technically, serving 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Member is expected to serve within the work hours of the sponsoring agency with some flexibility and some exceptions (holiday leave). If a member serves extra time in one week due to a heavy workload, it is expected that they will receive time off to compensate.

Entering Requirements

- Approved by the CNCS Montana State Office Staff
- Must be a US Citizen, National or Legal Resident
- Criminal Background Check:
  - Fingerprinting will be completed at Pre-Service Orientation (PSO).
  - VISTA Project Staff completes a national Sex Offender Registry Check on each applicant before accepting them.
  - Applicants must disclose (in their application) convictions of any criminal offenses and/or if they are facing any pending charges or on probation/parole. If a member does not disclose convictions, pending charges or probation/parole they will be removed from service.
- Complete forms and training prior to attending Pre-Service Orientation on July 14-16, 2015
- Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) occurs just prior to the time a VISTA begins service. It is an orientation for candidates to the VISTA program—its mission, programming initiatives, conditions and benefits of service. Candidates also complete administrative in-processing and are introduced to key skill areas and effective practices.

Prohibitions

- **Outside Employment is allowed only with pre-approval by sponsor.** Employment cannot interfere with your service duties as determined by your supervisor.
  - Outside Employment Policy

- **Educational Courses**
  - Full-time enrollment prohibited.
  - Part-time enrollment in school is permitted with approval from the Project Sponsor and as long as it doesn't interfere with the VISTA assignment. The course should support the Member's assignment.

Laws and Policies

- AmeriCorps*VISTAs **are prohibited from providing religious instruction or proselytizing as part of their duties.**
- AmeriCorps*VISTAs **and project sponsors are prohibited from requesting or receiving any compensation for the services of members.**
  - **If an agency or member of the community would like to help a VISTA with housing, food, or other items, it must be done by paying for the rent or mortgage directly, or by purchasing needed items for the VISTA member. It cannot be done by giving cash to the VISTA. Gift cards are considered cash.**

Additional Laws and Policies

- AmeriCorps*VISTAs **may not participate in** political campaigns or voter registration drives, provide transportation to the polls, lobby, engage in pro- or anti-labor organizing, or take any action with respect to partisan or nonpartisan political activity while on duty or perceived to be on duty as an AmeriCorps member. This falls under the Hatch Act.
  - This includes answering questions on the phone, preparing packets, etc.

- The VISTA member handbook contains a description of the Basic Laws and Federal Regulations.

Leave

- Personal and Medical Leave
  - 10 work days personal leave and 10 work days sick leave per service year. Additional 5 sick days with State Program Director (SPD) approval.
  - Leave must be approved by project supervisor.
  - Host Site Holiday Leave (not allowed)
- Emergency Leave
  - One week for death or critical illness in immediate family; additional time requires SPD approval.
  - Corporation will pay for round trip transportation.
- National Holidays - Only those followed by sponsor staff

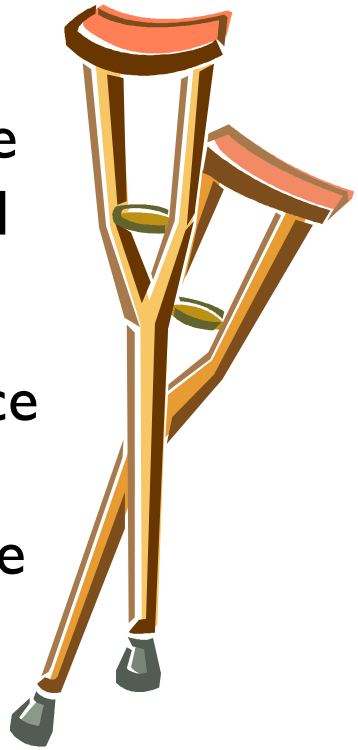
You must maintain a signed time sheet/log for your VISTA Member

Health Benefits Information

VISTA Members and Host Site Supervisors should consult Chapter 8 of the Member Handbook and the "AmeriCorps VISTA Healthcare FAQs" and other documents located on the VISTA Campus under "VISTA Healthcare Options"

Injury While Performing Service

- If member is injured or experiences an emergency illness related to the assignment, the project supervisor and the Corporation State Office must be notified immediately.
- To protect right to apply to OWCP (Office of Workers' Compensation Program) for compensation, member needs to complete the form (CA-1 or CA-2). See Chapter 8 of member handbook for details.
- The VISTA can use their health plan for immediate care.



Termination

- *Only* the Corporation State Office can terminate or suspend a VISTA. Host Site Supervisors can request that a VISTA be removed from their project for grounds listed in your Member Handbook.

- Requests for removal will be made in writing by you and your VISTA Project Sponsor to the State Program Director. Please document in detail the reasons for your request.

- Termination Appeal procedure is in Member Handbook. (Procedures for de-selection of trainees are also in Member Handbook.)

Be sure to keep your Sponsor and State Office informed if you are having problems or issues with your VISTA members' performance

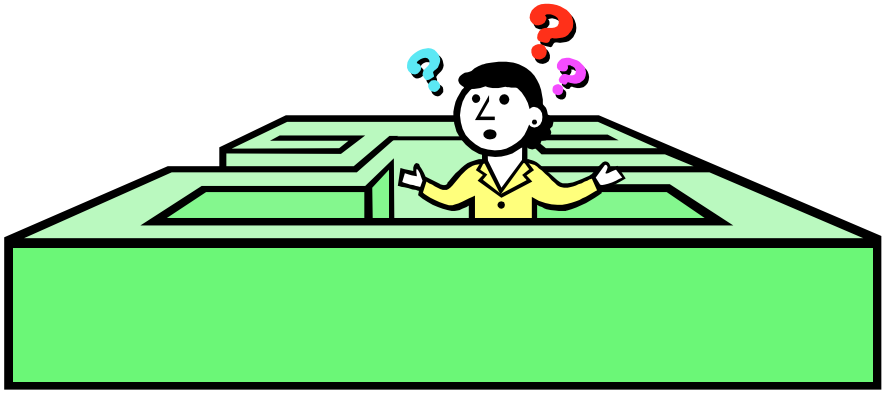
AmeriCorps VISTA Member Rights

- VISTAs have a **right** not to be subjected to discrimination or harassment by:
  - the Corporation; or
  - any Sponsoring Organization.

For the Record…

- VISTAs are not federal employees (except for limited purposes).
- VISTAs are not employees of your sponsoring organization, project, or site (for any purpose).
- VISTAs are not federal employees for civil rights purposes. VISTAs are *beneficiaries* of federal financial assistance for civil rights purposes, and this gives them certain nondiscrimination protections and obligations.

Questions?



VISTA Reporting Requirements

HOST SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting Requirements

- Submit required paperwork to the sponsor, including:
  - Member Impact Reports (details and due dates will be provided)
  - Accomplishment Write-up
  - Data to support Project Progress Reports and Performance Measures
  - Success Stories (as they happen)

This is a joint responsibility of the site supervisor and the member!!!

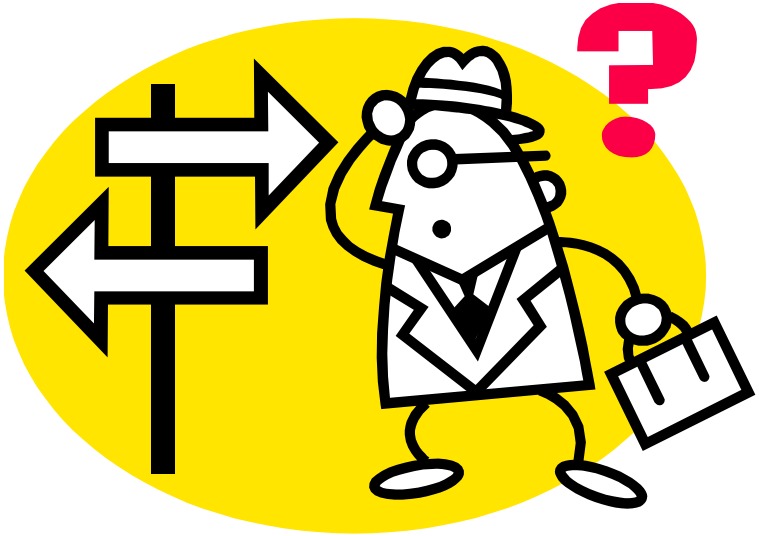
Why Track Data and Information??

- It is Required.
- Allows CNCS to report measurable and meaningful outcomes to Congress.

Congress funds VISTA through CNCS!

- Allows CNCS, VISTA Project Sponsors, Host Sites and Members to share measurable and meaningful outcomes with other stakeholders, funders, media, board of directors, and for members - potential employers.

Questions?



Resources and Information

VISTA Campus

http://vistacampus.org/

- Go to the Campus and open an account
- Information for VISTA members, Alumni Host Site Supervisors, and VISTA Project Sponsors
- A "One Stop Shop" for all things VISTA - **Member and Supervisor Handbook**, best practices, Webinars, etc.

National Service Websites

- www.americorps.gov/VISTA
- www.nationalservice.gov

Training Opportunities

- VISTA Candidate Call – June 25, 2015
- Pre-Service Orientation – July 14-16, 2015
- Community Building Institute Webinar Series TBA.
- VISTA Campus Webinars and tutorials - Ongoing
- Pre-Service Orientation – January 2016

Days of Service and Events

- VISTA 50th Anniversary – 2015
- 9/11 – September 2015
- MLK Day – January 2016
- AmeriCorps Week – March 2016
- Mayors/County Day of Recognition of National Service – 2016

Members are required to participate in days of service in their community, or assist other community groups in organizing events for these service days.

So you want to be a

SUCCESSFUL

VISTA Host Site Supervisor…

VISTA Retention

- 12% of VISTAs leave before the end of service.
  - Why?
  - What can be done?

Host Site Supervisors play a critical role in the success of the project!!

The Five Key Factors

- Recruit the right person
- Create a solid foundation
- Inspire: Connect VAD with larger vision
- Establish and maintain communication with our VISTA on a regular basis
- Troubleshoot problems as they arise

VISTA Member Living Allowance

- The Living Allowance is not a wage, it only allows the member to serve full time
- Living Allowance amount:
  - $973.00/month
- Its important that you, your staff, board and partners keep this in mind throughout the service year.

Support VISTA

- By sharing the VISTA story
  - Community/Regional/Statewide publications
  - Board of Directors meetings
  - Conferences
  - Networks/Facebook/Newsletters
  - VISTA Sponsor
  - Nominate the VISTA member for an award
  - Educate others about VISTA

Don't keep VISTA a Secret

How can you ensure that your project will be successful?

- Be available
- Be supportive
- Be a mentor
- Be a coach
- Be a supervisor
- Develop a great VAD
- Make personal and professional growth fun
- Submit a super Member Impact Statement
- Introduce your member to every "Mover and Shaker" in the community

Additional Questions or concerns?

To confirm your participation on this webinar you must e-mail the phrase below to your VISTA Project Sponsor

“ _____ ”