

Stone Soup Sustainability:



A Supervisor's Guide to Developing Americorps*VISTA Workplans





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Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525
(202) 606-5000
<www.nationalservice.org>

Corporation for National Service

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National Service Fellowship Program

The National Service Fellowship Program, launched by the Corporation for National Service in September 1997, involves a team of individual researchers who develop and promote models of quality service responsive to the needs of communities. The goal of the program is to strengthen national service through continuous learning, new models, strong networks, and professional growth.



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The Story of Stone Soup

A hungry peddler comes upon a town in famine. While looking for a place to have dinner the peddler meets up with the town blacksmith. When the peddler asks where he might partake in a meal, the blacksmith said "You'll find no food here, all the townspeople have hoarded their food and will not share with one another, especially not a stranger." To this the peddler declared that he had all the ingredients for a wonderful meal and that he would cook for the famine-ridden town. The peddler asked if he could borrow a kettle from the blacksmith and began to build a fire. When the blacksmith returned with the kettle they filled it with water and waited for it to boil. When the water began to boil the peddler reached deep into his coat pocket and pulled out a simple stone. He dropped the stone into the kettle of boiling water and leaned over the kettle and sniffed the air, licked his lips and declared that this was to be one of the best batches of stone soup he ever made. The townspeople began to gather around the kettle to see what this peddler was cooking up. Curiosity and hunger broke the silence of one townsman who said, "Stone soup is good, but it's even better with potatoes." Another villager shouted out, "What you really needed are quality carrots." And with that the villagers went to their respective homes, brought out the best food in their cabinets and dropped it in the pot. After all of the villagers had eaten the marvelous stone soup, they offered to purchase the stone. The peddler replied that he couldn't take money for the stone and left it for the townspeople. Years after the famine had passed, villagers could still be heard bragging about how wonderful their community's stone soup was.

~Old Russian Folk Tale



Welcome

The story of **Stone Soup** is a great illustration of a community development project that is sustainable. The peddler creates a curiosity among residents to work together to make a meal that will end their hunger. When the trust level is high enough among the villagers they are willing to share the best that their cupboard has to offer with their neighbors. What did the peddler contribute to this process...a stone. Similarly, AmeriCorps*VISTAs (VISTA) come to your community filled with optimism and a motivation to serve—it's their touchstone for their service year. As the organization who has invited VISTAs to work on challenging community issues you, your organization and your community will serve as the host to the VISTAs. How do you make this a good experience for both you and the VISTA? A well thought out workplan, or a recipe for project sustainability, will help you develop a meaningful project as well as help you guide VISTAs to becoming lifelong peddlers for social change.

The purpose of this guide is to help VISTA project supervisors learn how to build sustainable AmeriCorps projects. It is designed to follow an AmeriCorps*VISTA project from its beginning stages all the way through its final grant year. The guide is based on information gathered from interviews with current VISTAs, VISTA alumni, VISTA supervisors, Corporation for National Service staff and national service training providers. The Guide is a collection of wisdom and lessons learned from thirty-five years of community development experience in communities across the United States.

The Guide examines the three key elements of a successful, sustainable VISTA project: the host site, the project workplan and the VISTAs. The Guide uses the workplan to bridge the needs of the host site and community to the talents and interest of the VISTAs and provides supervisors with checklists, timelines and sample project material to help create, implement and sustain a VISTA project.

Before starting out, it's important to point out two principles the Guide supports. The first is that the Guide looks at sustainability both in terms of how to build a sustainable VISTA project (projects that last long after the VISTA grant is completed) and also how to develop sustainable VISTA members (people who have a life long commitment to service).

The other key philosophy the guide supports is that sustainability for a VISTA project is best defined by its host community. The guide outlines important programming questions to ask project stakeholders, illustrates how sustainability has been built in other projects and builds skills for VISTAs and VISTA supervisors to integrate sustainability into their workplans. Ultimately what a sustainable project looks like is based upon the host community's needs and desires.

Throughout the guide you'll see "resource reading" recommendations. All of the publications mentioned in the guide are available through National Service Resource Center (NSCR) administered by ETR Associates.

ETR Associates
P.O. Box 1830
Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830
Phone: 800-860-2684
Fax: 831-430-9471
<www.etr.org/NSRC>

The Guide is part of the **Stone Soup Sustainability Series** developed for the AmeriCorps*VISTA community. The two other pieces in the series are: a sustainability training manual, **Stone Soup: How to Sustain the AmeriCorps*VISTA Experience** and **Making Soup from a Stone: A Sustainability Workbook for AmeriCorps*VISTA Members**. The training manual is a compilation of activities designed to help the VISTA host community and organization increase their awareness of sustainability. The manual can be found at <www.nationalservice.org/jobs/fellowships/1999-00.html>, all of the training suggestions listed in the guide are located in the training manual. The workbook helps VISTAs collect and organize important project and community information so that it can be passed on to successors. The workbook can also be found at <www.nationalservice.org/jobs/fellowships/1999-00.html>.

I hope you find this Guide useful and that it helps you create sustainable community development projects. Good luck!

~Amy Bonn, National Service Fellow. VISTA Alum.





A Quick Overview of Sustainability and AmeriCorps*VISTA Projects

Sustainability for an AmeriCorps*VISTA project should be defined by the host organization and the state office. Sustainability looks different in every community – different needs and different resources depending on the issue the host site addresses. It's important for VISTA host sites and state offices to discuss sustainability early in the application process so there is a shared vision of what the project will look like when the AmeriCorps*VISTA grant is completed. "Always keep the end in mind" is the advice that Corporation staff member and VISTA alum John Vivian gives to all prospective VISTA project applicants. By emphasizing that a VISTA grant is a temporary resource and that the purpose of the VISTA's work is to mobilize community and host organization resources helps to ensure sustainability.

Suggested Host Site and CNS State Office Sustainability Discussion Topics

1. Describe the network your AmeriCorps*VISTA project will develop.
2. What are the objectives of the project?
3. What do you want the project to look like in three years without VISTA resources?
4. What are some local resources (nonprofit, government agencies, schools) that might be able to help establish a network to support this project?
5. What funding sources might support such a project?
6. How would the project's success and sustainability be evaluated?
7. What training is available to help the VISTAs develop the project?
8. What is the host organization's board's commitment to the project?

Sustainability is being able to maintain your presence and some of your activities after a VISTA grant is completed. I don't think it necessarily means that all of the activities that all of the VISTAs work on a project have to be kept in place or continued because in a lot of cases that may not be a good idea or the community may not buy in to it. To me there are basically three elements that have to be happening to make part of the project sustainable: funding has to be coming in, the project needs a strong volunteer base, and the program needs a strong presence in the community. This all stems from marketability and being able to explain and show to everybody what you are doing so everyone accepts you as a partner.
~Craig Warner, Nevada State Director

What Does a Sustainable AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Look Like?

Sustainability is different for every project. Each project has to develop its own set of criteria for what sustainability means. The five most typical ways VISTA projects are sustained are:

1. A funding source is found to support the project and the host organization hires staff (often a VISTA) to continue the work.
2. The problem the project was developed to address is eradicated.
3. The project is spun off to another organization.
4. The project becomes a community collaborative with several partners contributing funding and resources.
5. The project is folded into daily operations for the host organization and program responsibilities are taken over by a staff member.

Think about these five strategies and consider which one is most realistic for your project. The key questions to address are: What partnerships need to be formed early on in the process for sustainability to occur? and What resources need to be in place for the project to last beyond the VISTA grant?

Training Suggestion

“Two Tales of Sustainability” in **Stone Soup Training Module: Sustaining the AmeriCorps*VISTA Experience**, pages 16-27 in the Facilitator’s Guide. In this activity VISTAs, VISTA supervisors and community members learn about their roles in creating a sustainable project.

Resource Reading

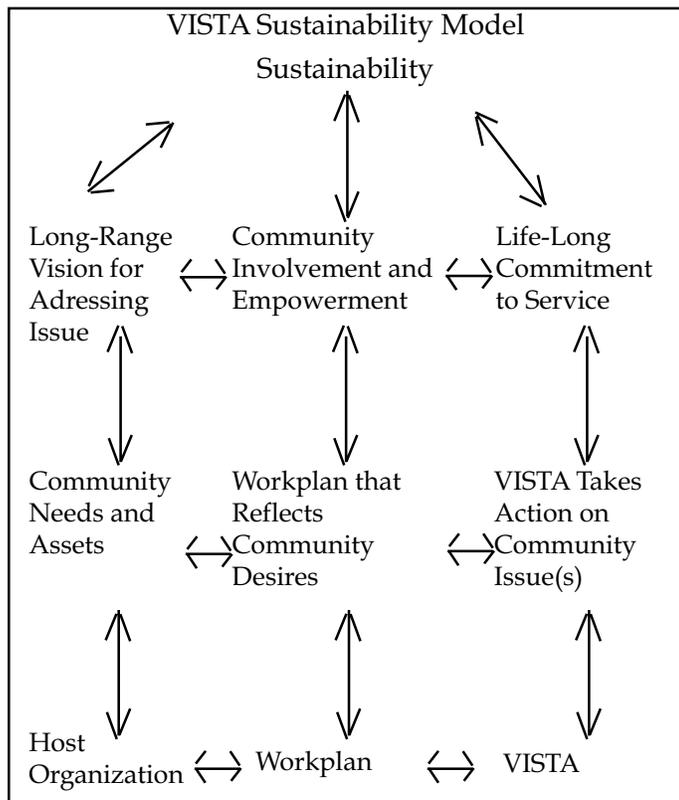
The Resource Connection Volume 4, Number 2 is about sustainability. Articles address issues such as program profiles, public/private partnerships and working with the media. The newsletter can be accessed online at: <www.etr.org/nsrc/rcv4n2/rcv4n2toc.htm>



Talking about Sustainability

While there is no magic formula that can be applied to a project to ensure its sustainability, the following model shows the relationship between the three core elements that work together to build sustainability; the host site and community; the workplan; and the VISTA. Each element depend on and builds off of the others' work to develop a project that reflects community needs and desires and has a network to sustain the work once the VISTA grant is completed. Additionally, the model illustrates how the service experience can foster a lifelong commitment to service for the VISTA.

Looking at the model from the bottom up, the community and host site are responsible for assessing the community's needs and



assets and developing a workplan that reflects these findings. The workplan serves as the bridge between the work of the host site and the VISTA. The workplan is the continuum that provides continuity between the different grant years as well as incorporating the unique talents and expectations of the different VISTAs who will serve in the program. The VISTA is charged with



building the capacity of the host organization as well as establishing a network within the community to make the workplan come to fruition.

The top tier of the model shows the host organization and community with a long-range vision of how to address the issue once the VISTAs grant is completed. The workplan, particularly during the final year, focuses on securing resources to support the program in these efforts. Finally, if sustainability is to occur for the VISTAs who serve on the project, time, training and thought must be given to develop a connection between the VISTA service experience and that person's post-service life. A sustainable VISTA member is an alum who continues to participate in service opportunities after the service year.

Sustainability for both a project and a member is contingent on the three core elements working together. Making sure element complement the other and reflects the other elements' desires and includes their ideas is key to making sustainability happen. With these connections in mind, you can start drafting the goals and objectives for the VISTA workplan.





It Takes a Village to Make Stone Soup: Serving as an AmeriCorps Host Organization and Community

Once the decision to apply for a VISTA grant has been made, it's important to think about a couple of questions as you develop your application:

1. What has been done on this issue before?
2. Have any community needs/asset assessments been conducted on this topic?
3. What organizations need to have buy-in for the project to be sustained?

Many VISTA host sites have found it helpful to form a planning group to assist with the application process. The role of the planning group is to review the VISTA application, help supply the host organization with statistics on the project topic and aid in building a community network to support the VISTA's work.

Here is a list of potential planning group members:

- ❖ Board members of the host organization
- ❖ Clients
- ❖ Civic groups (Elk's Club, Grange, Kiwanis, PTA, etc.)
- ❖ Former VISTA sponsor or VISTA alum
- ❖ Other nonprofit/government agencies working on similar issues
- ❖ Representative from media
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce representative
- ❖ Representative from local government
- ❖ Representative from a local foundation
- ❖ A staff member from the county planning office
- ❖ Members of other National Service programs (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, RSVP, NCCC)

The earlier a community network is developed and informed about the mission of a VISTA project, the greater the chances for sustainability.

*Make sure supervisors and staff knows what the impact of a VISTA grant is going to be on the organization and how to use VISTAs as a resource. Let people know what the expectations are for the VISTA's work. When you are setting up the grant it's important to let people know about the resource (VISTAs). In the beginning there is some trial and error of learning how to use a resource that isn't an employee. To the employees, VISTAs could have be threatening...to everyone it was a little threatening because the VISTAs come in and they are so energetic and they only have one program to focus on where other staff members have multiple tasks to do. It was an uphill climb getting staff to use VISTAs to the best advantage and make sure they understood the VISTAs were not replacing staff.
~Jeanne Bock, VISTA Supervisor, Panhandle Health, Idaho*

Advisory Boards and Mentors

Many state offices require the formation of an advisory board for a VISTA project. Advisory boards have worked with great success in some projects and have not been helpful to others. When successful, advisory boards have followed the VISTA project through the entire grant tenure and have served as a continuum for the project. The advisory board members typically meet four times a year to review the progress of the project and to ensure that project information is passed from grant year to grant year. Oftentimes the host site's board or a subset of that board serves as the VISTA advisory board. Whether or not to establish an advisory board is a discussion the site supervisor should have with the state office.

If an advisory board is not established consider a mentor for the VISTA. Mentors are community members willing to orient a VISTA to the community and provide project support throughout the service year. Many mentor pairs have been made based upon the career interests of the particular VISTA. For example, a VISTA who hopes to become a teacher after their service experience is paired with a local teacher, a VISTA interested in politics is paired with someone in the mayor's offices, etc. Mentors can provide valuable personal support to the VISTA during the challenging first few months of service as well as add another layer of sustainability for to the project.

Many of these suggestions are geared toward VISTAs who may be national recruits and/or whose VISTA experience may be their first job. If you have recruited senior members, people who have several years of work experience or long-time community residents, consider pairing them with an individual who is acquainted with parts of the community unfamiliar to the senior. For example, a senior VISTA working on a youth literacy project could be paired with a member

General Information to Share When Recruiting Advisory Boards and Mentors

Goal: The purpose of the advisory board/mentors is to help ensure the sustainability of our VISTA project by assisting with project development and assessment.

Role: The advisory board/mentor serves a support system for the VISTA both personally and professionally. The advisory board/mentors serve as local advocates for the work of the VISTAs by assisting with a community orientation for the VISTAs and identifying helpful community resources for their project. The advisory board/mentors also help with transitioning project material and responsibilities from one VISTA grant year to another.

Responsibilities: Advisory board members/mentors are asked to meet with the VISTAs on a quarterly basis to review the progress of the project and to assess if there are resources that are needed for the project. Advisory board members/mentors are also asked to assist VISTAs with post-service career development plans.



of the student council who could help the VISTA teen lingo as well as to orient the VISTA to the interworkings of the school system from the youth perspective. The key to a successful pairing is to find areas where the VISTA needs help meeting people and identifying resources and then finding a community member who has this background.

Creating Community and Organizational Buy-In

A VISTA grant is an unusual award. Human capital instead of a financial grant makes for an interesting resource. Many supervisors mention the importance of informing and involving the staff from the beginning of the application process. Below are key points that supervisors cited as key issues for the staff to know about before the VISTA arrives.

1. VISTAs are a temporary resource. Make sure employees know the length of the grant term.
2. VISTAs aren't coming to replace staff.
3. VISTAs have a very specific workplan that may be much more focused on a particular project than staff members who have responsibilities to multiple projects.
4. VISTAs have responsibilities and obligations to AmeriCorps that should be considered as important as their site work.

Community buy-in is equally as important to a VISTA's success. There's nothing more daunting to a VISTA as hearing, "VISTA? What's a VISTA?" during their first weeks of service. Working with the staff, the board and key community members to prepare for the VISTA's arrival can make an enormous difference in the comfort level and amount of cooperation a VISTA experiences during the service year.

Resource Reading

Individualized Mentoring Model: A Recipe for Success

by McCarthy, Nyla and Lynn Knox

Available through the National Service Resource Library: ETR Associates Phone: 800-860-2684 <www.etr.org/NSRC>

Training Suggestion

"Finding a Kettle That Works for You: Paradigms and Your Community Development Outlook" in **Stone Soup Training Module: Sustaining the AmeriCorps* VISTA Experience**, pages 37-40 in the Facilitator's Guide. This activity helps VISTAs and VISTA supervisors find creative solutions to community challenges.





The Recipe for Sustainability: Writing the Workplan

With the staff, board and key community members on board you can now get down to writing the workplan for the VISTA project. It's helpful to keep the following three questions in mind as you develop the workplan:

1. What specific project am I trying to sustain and what will it look like once the VISTAs are gone?
2. Who are the stakeholders for the project?
3. What resources does our organization and community have and need to make this project sustainable?

If you have an advisory board in place, or if you are writing up the workplan with staff, it's helpful to review these questions with them and to make sure that you in agreement about the objectives of the project.

Identifying Appropriate Projects for VISTAs

It's beneficial to spend time thinking about where VISTAs might be most effective within your organization. Because VISTAs are short-term employees who likely have a different employment history than your staff their role and projects may be very different from your traditional employee. Three areas where VISTAs tend to excel are mobilizing resources, volunteer development and communications. The chart below lists some of the roles where VISTAs have been able to merge their talents and experience with the host organizations needs.

Suggestions for Writing a Workplan from Current and Former VISTA Supervisors

- ❖ VISTAs are most helpful and productive when their projects build off of successful programs that your organization already has in place.
- ❖ Balance the short-term and long-term projects you lay out for the VISTAs. It's difficult for VISTAs to stay motivated when the majority of their work is focused on one event/project that is in the distant future.
- ❖ Always think of the VISTA's work as "What if the VISTAs weren't here tomorrow. How would we staff and support this project?" Reminding yourself that this is a temporary resource is essential to the success of the project.
- ❖ Pair your VISTAs with a staff member who knows the project and what work they are doing. This ensures that the organization knows the details of the project (who the contact people are, where the files are, what the challenges are, etc.).
- ❖ Keep the workplan flexible. Issues change, funding opportunities change, staffing changes, talents that your VISTA brings to your projects can be different; be open to new ideas and make sure your workplan reflects this flexibility because you can always go back and revise the workplan with your state office staff.

On the next page is a listing of examples of successful VISTA workplan activities.

Examples of VISTA Project Activities

Mobilize Resources	Volunteer Development	Communication
1. Identify grant sources and write proposals	1. Develop a volunteer program	1. Write a newsletter
2. Conduct community needs/asset assessments	2. Recruit volunteers	2. Develop organizational material (public service announcements, brochures, videos, annual reports)
3. Organize fundraisers	3. Establish a volunteer training program	3. Develop a web page
4. Develop community partnerships (corporate sponsorship, adopt-a-program)	4. Create and coordinate volunteer committees to work on issues such as fundraising and the media	4. Attend and speak at community events. Develop a speaker's bureau for the host organization.
5. Establish collaborations with other organizations who are working on similar issue(s)	5. Organize community service projects	5. Work with the local media to educate the community about the host organization's work.
6. Create a donations program	6. Establish a recognition program for volunteers	6. Develop material for an annual membership drive.



Stages of the Workplan

When developing the workplan it's helpful to look at the grant in three stages: building the foundation for the program, implementing the program and sustaining the program. The next section uses a three-year VISTA grant to outline what some typical VISTA activities are in each of the three stages.

Year One: The Foundation Stage

Year one activities focus on information gathering, relationship building and designing and refining program plans. During the foundation stage the workplan should address building community literacy, which can be done by the VISTA attending a variety of community events; learning community and organizational history; finding strategies on how to merge the workplan agenda with other local agencies' work; involving community stakeholders, building collaborations, involving the clients in the program planning stages and identifying helpful resource and technical assistance providers. Also during the first year emphasize working with the local media to involve and inform the community. During the first year the VISTAs should spend time establishing project infrastructure. This means the VISTAs work with the staff to develop an evaluation of the project as well as set up a record-keeping system for the project. Finally, identify and pursue resources (both staffing/ volunteer and financial).

Year Two: The Implementation Stage

Year two activities center around running the project and finding resources to support it. Project maintenance activities could include mass recruiting efforts, evaluation and modification of the program according to evaluation, or finding long-term funding for the project. During the implementation stage it's also important to develop a plan for what

We've seen a lot of projects terminated because the organization says, "We need help, we need help" only they can't articulate in tangible terms what that help would translate into when a human being shows up and wants to do it. They can't do that. Secondly, they are unable to explain what a difference it will make. As a result of our being here what may change? If the answer is it's going to be the same as when you left, you are going to have minimal impact.

~Mal Coles, Massachusetts State Office Director, VISTA alum



will happen when the VISTAs are no longer there. Determining a transition strategy and outlining sustainability activities for the third year is an important activity for this stage.

Year Three: The Sustaining Stage

While all three years activities should address sustainability, during the final year of the grant, in this case year three, activities should focus on securing staff, volunteer and partnership support as well as financial resources to continue the project. During the third year it's also important to assess the impact of the project in the community by developing reports that document the number of people the project has reached, amount of money raised, number of volunteer hours contributed, etc. Once this is completed a community celebration and recognition event honoring the work should be arranged to let the community know what the post-VISTA project will look like and what role residents can play in making a successful transition.

VISTA

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Assignment	Conduct community needs/asset assessment. Hold town meetings to identify community a. Work with media to inform the community about the issue the project will address. Develop long-range plan for issue based on findings from the town meetings and assessments.	Start program(s) identified during year one. Develop evaluation strategy for the project and conduct a mid-year review of project effectiveness and adjust project accordingly.	Evaluate program. Develop project management guide for the program. Train volunteers/staff who will take over program after the grant.
Community outreach			
Fundraiser	Develop long range funding plan for project. Identify potential local, regional and national funders and grants for the project. Create fundraising packet material for the project.	Organize a first annual fundraiser for the program. Establish a partnership program to encourage cross-sector participation and donations. Create a database of funders. Apply for grants identified in year one.	Continue grant writing. Organize second annual fundraising event. Write fundraising program guide for the organization. Identify sponsors for program. Create recognition program for funders.
Volunteer Coordinator	Work with staff to identify where volunteers are needed and create a long-range plan for volunteer involvement. Develop volunteer recruitment material. Create training curriculum for volunteers. Recruit volunteers. Pilot volunteer training.	Integrate volunteers into project(s). Organize a volunteer fair. Conduct a series of volunteer trainings. Organize a recognition event for volunteers. Establish volunteer committees to address issues such as publicity and fundraising. Create volunteer database.	Continue recruitment, training, volunteer fair and recognition event as described in year two. Write a volunteer management guide for the project. Train lead volunteer/staff member to take over project.



Developing Goals and Objectives for the Workplan

The keys to a successful workplan are clear goals and objectives that break down the goals into manageable projects. Effective workplans usually have five to ten goals, with four to six supporting objectives for each goal. It's helpful to have the objectives chronologically. If you have more than one VISTA at your site it's useful to identify by assignment title which member(s) will be addressing the objective.

A well-balanced workplan has goals that address funding, manpower, communication, evaluation and member development (skill building and post-service options). The following tried and true objectives address typical VISTA project goals:

- ❖ **Partnerships:** During the first quarter the VISTA will meet with each school principal in the district and attend at least four civic club meetings.
- ❖ **Skill building:** In the first quarter VISTAs will work with staff to identify what type of training is needed (computer, public speaking, fundraising, grant writing) to increase the capability of the VISTA to complete the workplan.
- ❖ **Evaluation:** During the first quarter the VISTAs will work the staff to develop an evaluation system for the project.
- ❖ **Resource mobilization:** During the second quarter VISTAs will identify and apply for three local funding sources and two national grants to support the program.
- ❖ **Communication:** During the third quarter, VISTAs will create a marketing tool kit to be used for fundraising efforts as well as for recruiting volunteers.
- ❖ **Post- Service:** During the third quarter VISTAs will meet with staff to discuss a post-service plan. Time will be allotted during this quarter for VISTAs to meet with career counselors and/or people in their field of interest.
- ❖ **Transitioning between grant years and VISTAs:** During the fourth quarter the VISTAs will develop a program guide that outlines how the program is managed, lists program contact people and identifies current and future funding sources.



Section III: AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Work Plan – Problem 1

<u>AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Goals and Objectives</u>	<u>Planned Period of Work</u>	<u>Summary of Accomplished Objectives (Please provide <i>quantifiable</i> information.)</u>
Goal 1: Support the economic independence of residents.		
Objective 1: Work with residents to update the needs assessment conducted during year two of this project.	1 st quarter	
Objective 2: Create economic independence committees at each site.	1 st quarter	
Objective 3: Facilitate on-site activities such as job clubs, workshops and a mentoring/apprenticeship program.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Objective 4: Facilitate the development of classes, programs and support groups that address related barriers towards reaching family self-sufficiency.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Empower residents and staff to continue working toward family self-sufficiency after the conclusion of this project.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Goal 2: Increase the social and academic development among at-risk youth.		
Objective 1: Recruit adult advisors to work with youth councils.	1 st quarter	
Objective 2: Organize community service opportunities for youth.	2 nd -4 th quarter.	
Objective 3: Develop after school, weekend, evening and summer activities for youth that focus on both academic and social development and involve parents.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Objective 4: Coordinate youth leadership training and development.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Facilitate youth council planning to sustain youth and adult involvement.		
Goal 3: Empower Resident Associations (RAs) to address problems in their communities.		
Objective 1: Assist with the creation of RAs at properties where they do not currently exist.	1 st quarter	
Objective 2: Train RA members on leadership and organization.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Objective 3: Assist RAs in developing priorities for their communities and implementing the appropriate programs.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Objective 4: Facilitate RAs involvement in the activities outlined in Goals 1 and 2.	2 nd -4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Train RAs to raise funds and develop resources needed to achieve their goals.	2 nd -4 th quarter	

Section III: AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Work Plan – Problem 2

AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Goals and Objectives	Planned Period of Work	Summary of Accomplished Objectives (Please provide <i>quantifiable</i> information.)
Goal 1: Youth Resource Development.		
Objective 1: Work with VISTAs to assess needs of youth in each community.	1 st quarter	
Objective 2: Research summer camp opportunities for youth at all sites.	1 st quarter	
Objective 3: Develop a resource directory of youth development programs.	2 nd quarter	
Objective 4: Contact existing youth agencies and create collaborations.	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Assist VISTAs in the start-up of on-site youth activities	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Objective 6: Write grants and organize fundraising for youth programs.	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Objective 7: Empower residents and staff to continue youth programs and agency contacts after the conclusion of this project.	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Goal 2: Promote Youth Leadership.		
Objective 1: Create a <i>how to form a youth leadership council</i> handbook.	2 nd quarter	
Objective 2: Meet with potential youth leaders at each site to determine goals of creating a youth council.	2 nd –3 rd quarter	
Objective 3: Recruit adult advisors to work with youth councils.	2 nd –3 rd quarter	
Objective 4: Coordinate youth leadership training and development.	3 rd –4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Facilitate youth council planning to sustain youth and adult involvement.	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Goal 3: Coordinate Volunteers for Youth Programs.		
Objective 1: Contact and create a list of volunteers for RCHC's onsite youth programs from schools, volunteer organizations, and community groups.	1 st quarter	
Objective 2: Coordinate volunteer recruitment, training, and ongoing support.	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Objective 3: Hold a volunteer recognition event twice a year.	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Objective 4: Put together a volunteer handbook	2 nd –4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Plan for RCHC staff to continue volunteer program after the conclusion of the project.	2 nd –4 th quarter	

Section III: AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Work Plan – Problem 3

AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Goals and Objectives	Planned Period of Work	Summary of Accomplished Objectives (Please provide <i>quantifiable</i> information.)
<p>Goal 1: Create collaborations with job training and placement agencies to increase access to job opportunities.</p> <p>Objective 1: Meet with residents, VISTAs and RCHC staff to identify needs.</p> <p>Objective 2: Identify and contact local agencies in Sacramento, Yuba and San Joaquin counties involved in job training and placement.</p> <p>Objective 3: Develop a formal collaboration with job training and placement organizations to provide services to residents as appropriate.</p> <p>Objective 4: Work with site-based VISTAs to implement programs on-site.</p> <p>Objective 5: Develop a manual of job training and placement organizations in Sacramento, Yuba and San Joaquin counties.</p>	<p>1st quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p>	
<p>Goal 2: Identify and collaborate with agencies that can assist with small business development.</p> <p>Objective 1: Meet with VISTAs and RCHC staff to identify residents interested in small business development.</p> <p>Objective 2: Identify and contact local agencies in Sacramento, Yuba and San Joaquin counties that provide assistance to small business, train entrepreneurs, and/or provide micro enterprise loans.</p> <p>Objective 3: Develop a formal collaboration with economic development organizations that provide services to residents interested in starting small businesses.</p> <p>Objective 4: Work with site-based VISTAs to implement programs on-site.</p>	<p>1st quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p>	
<p>Goal 3: Raise funds, generate resources for economic development projects at RCHC housing.</p> <p>Objective 1: Work with staff to identify programmatic and funding needs.</p> <p>Objective 2: Research potential funding sources.</p> <p>Objective 3: Write at least four grant proposals.</p> <p>Objective 4: Research new program areas related to economic development.</p> <p>Objective 5: Develop a volunteer pool of professionals to serve as mentors for residents.</p>	<p>1st quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p>	

Section III: AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Work Plan – Problem 4

AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Goals and Objectives	Planned Period of Work	Summary of Accomplished Objectives (Please provide <i>quantifiable</i> information.)
<p>Goal 1: Help the newly formed resident association (for renters and homeowners) develop a leadership role in the community.</p> <p>Objective 1: Assist in updating the inventory of community leadership</p> <p>Objective 2: Strengthen the Residents Council created last year by helping members to access training and technical assistance</p> <p>Objective 3: Help the newly formed Residents Council raise funds and access other resources needed to meet their goals.</p>	<p>1st quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter-</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p>	
<p>Goal 2: Facilitate the Consolidation of HOAs.</p> <p>Objective 1: Continue to facilitate stakeholders meeting of the HOA membership, residents and other support groups.</p> <p>Objective 2: Work with HOAs in the development of a consolidated HOA.</p> <p>Objective 3: Help the consolidated HOA raise funds and access other resources needed to meet their goals.</p>	<p>1st-4th quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p>	
<p>Goal 3: Mobilize service providers and programs to help FV residents transition off welfare assistance.</p> <p>Objective 1: Recruit welfare-to-work training services to locate in FV.</p> <p>Objective 2: Assist with the development of youth programs at FV.</p> <p>Objective 3: Support the development of daycare providers in FV.</p>	<p>1st-4th quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p>	

Section III: AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Work Plan – Problem 5

AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Goals and Objectives	Planned Period of Work	Summary of Accomplished Objectives (Please provide <i>quantifiable</i> information.)
<p>Goal 1: Facilitate the creation of neighborhood associations for self-help housing participants and support their efforts with technical assistance.</p> <p>Objective 1: Conduct an assessment of community issues and needs in existing self-help subdivisions.</p> <p>Objective 2: Train neighborhood leaders to increase the families' participation in the associations.</p> <p>Objective 3: Assist with the development of an organizational structure.</p> <p>Objective 4: Develop linkages with local organizations.</p> <p>Objective 5: Act as a resource to neighborhood leaders.</p>	<p>1st quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-3rd quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p>	
<p>Goal 2: Implement the homeowners' education program that was developed last year.</p> <p>Objective 1: Identify and procure any additional resources needed to complete the homeowner education program.</p> <p>Objective 2: Expand current educational program to include information and resources.</p> <p>Objective 3: Coordinate the implementation of this training program for new homeowners.</p> <p>Objective 4: Coordinate with neighborhood associations to organize homeowner training.</p> <p>Objective 5: Develop a volunteer pool that assist with this project.</p>	<p>1st quarter</p> <p>1st-2nd quarter</p> <p>2nd-4th quarter</p> <p>3rd quarter</p> <p>1st-4th quarter</p>	

Section III: AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Work Plan – VISTA Leader

<u>AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Goals and Objectives</u>	<u>Planned Period of Work</u>	<u>Summary of Accomplished Objectives</u> (Please provide <i>quantifiable</i> information.)
Goal 1: Assist with the coordination of meetings and training activities for VISTA Members.		
Objective 1: Develop a calendar of training and activities for VISTA Members.	1 st quarter	
Objective 2: Coordinate schedules of the VISTA Members, VISTA Supervisor and Site Coordinators.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 3: Coordinate training and activities with other local agencies that have VISTA Members.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 4: Prepare agendas and travel plans for meetings and training.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 5: Coordinate activities, meetings and training sessions	1 st -4 th quarter	
Goal 2: Facilitate internal and external communications related to the VISTA project.		
Objective 1: Serve as a liaison to the VISTA Advisory Committee overseeing the VISTA project for RCHC.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 2: Coordinate public relations efforts for the VISTA project directed at the media and local officials.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 3: Assist with reporting requirements for the VISTA project.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Goal 3: Support the VISTA members and their work by conducting research, acting as ombudsperson and conducting site visits.		
Objective 1: Act as ombudsperson and conduct site visits as needed.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 2: Conduct research to support the activities of the VISTA Members.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Goal 4: Help ensure the sustainability of the VISTA project after the program has ended.		
Objective 1: Prepare a report detailing the successes and failures of the VISTA project to date and making suggestions for the future.	1 st -2 nd quarter	
Objective 2: Help develop a sustainability action plan.	1 st -4 th quarter	
Objective 3: Assist with the final program evaluation.	3 rd -4 th quarter	



Evaluating the Impact of the Workplan

The more specific the workplan objectives are, the easier it will be to communicate the goals of the project to others as well as evaluate the impact of the program. Below is an activity that David Gurr from the Corporation for National Service developed to help programs he works with write clear, specific, easy to evaluate goals and objectives.

Means-Ends Test

The Means-Ends test is a easy method for developing a plan of action. The Means-Ends test is one of a number of Management By Objectives (MBO) techniques for identifying and revolving problems. An action plan must include sufficient detail to periodically measuring progress in project implementation.

The process begins by first determining the “ends” to be achieved. A specific problem statement is made. The question “why” is a problem is asked. Each answer to the question “why” is, in turn, asked “why”, until the answer becomes clear. Of course, the stated solution must be within the organization’s capacity to address.

Once an realistic solution has been developed, it needs to be converted into one or more statements of objectives. An objective statement must meet three criteria:

1. A change in a condition or behavior,
2. It is quantifiable, and
3. There is a timeline for achievement.

Most objectives cannot be achieved in one year. Therefore, intermediate or short-term objectives

The workplan is only as useful as the individual who completes it sees it as a tool. How seriously supervisors think through a project to the end is important...if that doesn't happen the workplan is just another piece of paper.

~Brenda Takeshore, VISTA Supervisor, Bureau of Land Management, Alaska

Training Suggestion

“Setting the Table: Sustainability Workplan Exercise” in **Stone Soup Training Module: Sustaining the Americorps * VISTA Experience**, Facilitor’s Guide pages 41-46. During this activity participants develop a long-range sustainability plan for their project.

Resource Material

Program Director’s Handbook by the Corporation for National Service available at <http://www.etr.org/nsrc/online_docs.html>



or milestones need to be developed for each objective which can be achieved in a year or even in a quarter.

Each objective statement serves as the starting point for defining the activities or “means” necessary for achieving them. The means for accomplishing objectives are specified by asking the question “how” for each stated objective. The question “how” is asked of each subsequent answer to each question until all of the activities necessary to achieve each objective is given. In addition, other resources, and training and technical assistance need to be stated.

The identified objectives and activities can then be put in a work plan format along with the dates for accomplishing each activity. Finally, a budget can be drawn up that supports each activity.

Periodic evaluations must be conducted to determine 1) if the activities are being implemented and 2) if they are accomplishing each objective. The Project Progress Report form is completed quarterly by AmeriCorps*VISTA project sponsors to measure actual accomplishments. Required changes need to be made to work plan objectives and activities that reflect evaluation findings. In the case of an AmeriCorps*VISTA project sponsor, these modifications are submitted to the CNS State Program Office for approval.

Writing the Assignment Description

After the workplan is complete you can create assignment descriptions for each VISTAs you’ll have on site. The assignment description should be a summary of the goals and objectives from the workplan. You may be using the assignment description to recruit VISTAs, so it will likely be fairly general. Here are a couple of tips of what to include when writing your descriptions.

- The basics: mission of the host organization, location of the host organization, contact information of the host organization.
- Description of the VISTA program
- Description of the project that the VISTA will be working on. Be sure to include short-term and long-term projects.
- Outline of skills needed to accomplish the project as well as what skills will be built through participating in the VISTA project.
- Include a statement the project is open to the interests, talents and experiences that the VISTA will bring to the project.
- Outline of the training, relocation and mentoring support the project will provide to the VISTA. Be sure to include the pre-service orientation and early service training offered by your cluster.

The National Service Resource Library has a series of online documents including assignment descriptions, mission statements, policies and press releases. This material can be accessed through their website at <http://www.etr.org/nsrc/forms/index.html>





The Peddler: The VISTA and their Service Year

The VISTA Service Year

The VISTA service year can be thought of in much the same way as the workplan – a sort of bell curve of activity. During the first few months a VISTA needs time to acclimate to the community. A helpful way of approaching the service year is to break it down into four stages: orientation; months one-three, acclimation; months three-nine, production and implementation; and the sustaining stage; months nine-twelve.

A solid orientation program is the cornerstone of a successful VISTA project. Orientations gives VISTAs the resources and contacts needed to address the workplan as well as provide an opportunity for the host organization to learn what talents and experience the VISTA brings to the host site. During months three through nine VISTAs are in their production and implementation stage, where the bulk of the work is accomplished. The focus of months nine through twelve should be on documenting and sustaining the work completed during the prior nine months. The following series of suggestions will help supervisors address the needs of VISTAs during each stage of the service year.

On his VISTA supervisor Carla Hanson:

Carla gave us assignment titles and told us generally what we could work on but the specifics of each of our assignments was yet to be discovered. She gave suggestions and ideas, as well as resources, and expected us to fill in the blanks. She was great at motivation but really gave us a lot of room (EIGHT SQUARE MILES) to figure it out for ourselves. I began to meet people through my project that could help me with certain aspects of my assignment. The whole concept of VISTA to me at this point was empowerment of the people and I was experiencing this first hand. I had to discover the resources and I had to seek out help to accomplish goals and set new ones. I had to look busy when I wasn't and try to figure out what else I could be doing to do my job.

~Chris Krupa.

*Special education teacher,
New York. VISTA Alum.*

The Orientation Stage

Most supervisors will agree that investing time in developing a thorough orientation program pays off many times over during the service year. Taking the time to get acquainted with the VISTAs, helping the VISTAs acclimate to a new community and work environment make the VISTAs more effective and helps the host site use the VISTA's talents more effectively. The following orientation schedule was adapted from material developed by the Maine/New Hampshire/ Vermont Corporation state office and can be used by your organization to create an orientation program for your project.

Sample Orientation Schedule on the next page.

Training Suggestion

"The Right Ingredients: Wisdom from the Field," in **Stone Soup Training Module: Sustaining the AmeriCorps* VISTA Experience**, pages 28-36 in the Facilitator's Guide. In this activity participants see the connection between the host site, workplan and VISTA through lessons from VISTA alumni.

Resource Reading

Starting Strong: A Guide to Pre-Service Training
<http://www.etr.org/nsrc/online_docs.html>



Sample Orientation Schedule

Day 1: Orientation to the Community

- Review of what the VISTAs learned at their pre-service orientation and follow up on any questions they might have or clarification needed
- Review orientation schedule
- Tour of host community and service area
- Leave time to address housing, food, utility and banking needs

Day 2: Orientation to the Sponsoring Organization

- Purpose and goals of host organization
- Organizational chart
- Board structure and composition
- Volunteer involvement with host organization
- Supervision
- Role of VISTA within host organization
- Personnel policies
- Schedule meetings with department heads
- Staff members available to VISTAs
- Host organization resources available to VISTAs

Day 3: VISTA Workplan

- Assignment description
- Past accomplishments/challenges
- Specific problem(s) VISTAs will address
- Goals/objectives of VISTA's workplan
- Strategies/plans for VISTA's assignment
- Description of project balance between short-term and long-term goals
- Training needed to complete workplan and types of training available

Suggested Goals for a VISTA Orientation

1. Provide background, organization and overall purpose of the sponsoring organization.
2. Provide background of the community and identification of community needs.
3. Outline nature of the low-income population served by the VISTA project.
4. Identify potential resources (funds, materials, people).
5. Review supervisory and support structure for the volunteers.
6. Clarify individual volunteer workplans.

Other helpful meetings to schedule during the first two weeks:

- Host site's board
- Advisory board/mentors
- Clients served by the host organization
- National service members who are serving in the community
- VISTA project collaborators



The Acclimation Stage: Months One-Three

During the first three months time should be set aside for VISTAs to develop their workplan. Whether the VISTA is a long-time community members taking on a new role or whether the VISTA has relocated to serve, time to let them build an organizational and community understanding of the project.

The dropout rate for VISTAs is highest during the first three months of service. This attrition can often be prevented if the following four issues are addressed early on in the service year. These issues apply to both the VISTA and the VISTA supervisor.

1. What type of communication style do I have?
2. What type of supervisory style do you have/ need to be successful?
3. What is your motivation for hosting a VISTA/ becoming a VISTA?
4. What kinds of experience, talents and expectations do you bring to the VISTA project?

There are many different ways to address and train on each of these issues. Here are a few training suggestions that supervisors can use during the acclimation stage to address these concerns. The important thing to keep in mind is both the VISTA(s) and VISTA supervisor use the same assessment tool/training/ and participate in the same discussion on the topic. Many supervisors use findings from these assessments to be very useful when re-visioning the workplan and VISTA assignment descriptions.

Training Suggestions

1. **Communication Styles.** Keirseley Temperament Sorter
<www.keirseley.com>
2. **Supervisory Styles and Needs.** Leadership Compass, located in Nicole Trimble's **Preparing Our Nation's Leaders Through Service** at
<www.nationalservice.org/jobs/fellowships/1999-00.html>
3. **Service Motivation,** located in Nicole Trimble's **Preparing Our Nation's Leaders Through Service** at
<www.nationalservice.org/jobs/fellowships/1999-00.html>
4. **Experience, Talents and Expectation,** located in Nicole Trimble's **Preparing Our Nation's Leaders Through Service** at
<www.nationalservice.org/jobs/fellowships/1999-00.html>



The Production and Implementation Stage: Service Months Three-Nine

By the middle six months of service a VISTA understands the project and has the training and resources available to implement the workplan objectives. During this period it's helpful if the supervisor can conduct a midyear evaluation of the program as well as schedule a midservice evaluation of the VISTA. Following an evaluation of the project a re-visioning of the workplan and assignment descriptions can be done. Re-visioning a project entails making sure the original goals and objectives are still appropriate for the project as well as making sure the talents and experience a VISTA brings to a host organization are being used to the best advantage. If changes are made to the workplan, make sure to talk with state office staff to amend the official workplan. A midyear evaluation of the VISTA can take place when the second quarterly report is due. Here are some helpful topics to cover during a mid-year evaluation:

1. Are the goals and objectives of the project being met in a timely manner? If so, is the VISTA bored and are additional projects needed to work on? If not, what challenges is the VISTA encountering and what can be done to overcome these challenges?
2. How is the VISTA acclimating to the host organization and community? Does the VISTA need assistance making contacts with certain parts of the community? If so, who might be able to help with this?
3. Are there communication or supervisory issues that need to be addressed?

Supervising a VISTA is different from supervising a staff member. Not in the "Oh it's just a volunteer; you shouldn't give them as much responsibility" way. In our organization our VISTAs have been treated like staff in that they have taken on just as much responsibility as staff members have and have been given the freedom to do that and they've done incredible things because of that. I think when you have a VISTA you have to be more conscious of recognition and support because there are some situations where a VISTA will go out into the community and make a connection with someone, and sometimes when they say they are the VISTA volunteer, they need some staff backing to make things happen in the community because the community might be a little wary of this person who is a volunteer.

~Charise Milton, VISTA Supervisor, Rural California Housing Coalition. VISTA Alum



4. What areas of the project is the VISTA doing well and what areas (project and professional) could the VISTA focus efforts on in the coming six months?
5. What training and resource needs does the VISTA have for the coming six months?
6. What project or supervisory suggestions does the VISTA have for the supervisor or for the project?

Finally, during the implementation stage of the service year it's important for the supervisor to make sure the VISTAs are collecting and organizing project material in a way that will be useful and accessible to future VISTAs and staff members.

The Sustaining Stage: Service Months Nine-Twelve

During the final three months of the service year it's beneficial for a VISTA supervisor to help the VISTA bring closure to both the project and the service experience. As to the project, closure can be achieved by addressing activities discussed in the workplan chapter. For the VISTA, it's helpful to allot time for them to pursue post-service opportunities. As you start to write your third quarterly report, check with the VISTAs to see what their post-service plans are and find out what resources are needed.

VISTAs often think they can walk on water and they don't believe you until their feet are wet. Sometimes the risks work and sometimes they don't. This last group of VISTAs was able to get into a school district we were never able to get into. It's letting them try even though in common sense and historically it's not going to get you anywhere. It's overcoming the, "Well we've tried that before and it's never worked. Who knows, they might put a different spin on it and it might work!"

~Jeanne Bock, VISTA Supervisor,
Panhandle Health, Idaho

Resource Reading

Next Steps: Life after AmeriCorps by the Corporation for National Service

Available through the National Service Resource Library: ETR Associates
Phone: 800-860-2684
<www.etr.org/NSRC>



This list of VISTAbuses collected from discussions with VISTAs, VISTA supervisors and state office staff is intended as a “learn from my mistakes” reminder for future supervisors.

Top Ten Most Common VISTAbuses

1. Using the VISTA as an administrative assistant, answering phones, copying, preparing mailings etc.
2. Not having appropriate office space and computer and phone access.
3. Not providing the VISTAs with a clear idea of what the workplan is.
4. Not providing community or organizational orientation.
5. Switching or unclear VISTA supervision.
6. Continually pulling VISTAs into organizational crises.
7. Not having a conversation about the balance between the direct and indirect service portions of the workplan during the first few weeks of service.
8. Not including VISTAs in staff meetings or organizational planning sessions.
9. Assigning projects without providing appropriate orientation and training.
10. Not providing professional or skill development opportunities for the VISTA.

VISTAbuse

VISTAbuse is the inappropriate use of a VISTA’s time and talents and makes for frustrated VISTAs and challenged supervisors. Because the service term of a year is so short, acclimation to the project and the need for a sense of accomplishment can be more intense for a VISTA than for a traditional staff member. It’s easy to slip into many of these VISTAbuses when time is short and there are many important assignments to be done. What may seem to be small project or a minor change in the workplan can often become a major obstacle to a VISTA fulfilling their workplan.



Suggestions for Supervisors

On a more positive note, most former VISTA supervisors will tell you that working with VISTAs is stimulating, challenging, enlightening, frustrating, and, ultimately, a rewarding experience. When asked to define a sustainable project, many supervisors said, "It's when we can find the money to hire the VISTA at the end of the service term."

Provided with the right environment and resources, a VISTA can bring the energy, talent and commitment needed to address formidable community development projects. Below are some final pearls of wisdom from VISTA supervisors on how to take good care of your VISTAs.

- Be prepared to spend at least a quarter of your time during the first two months of the VISTA's arrival working on VISTA-related work. The time invested in the first few months pays off tenfold later on in the service term when the VISTAs can work autonomously and are able to tackle big projects.
- Find a supervisor for the VISTAs who can appreciate the need for flexibility and keeping the VISTAs "on a loose string."
- Identify programs that can help your VISTA with basic needs (food, housing, childcare, utility expenses). By helping address the VISTA's personal needs you will increase their project productivity and show sensitivity to the financial situation of the VISTAs that will be greatly appreciated.
- Take time to recognize work accomplished by a VISTA. For example, one VISTA project started a "Take a VISTA to Lunch" day where once a month a

Resource Reading

A Manager's Guide to Communication by the Corporation for National Service available at www.etr.org/nsrc/online_docs.html

Becoming a Better Supervisor: A Resource Guide for Community Service Supervisors by the Corporation for National Service available at www.etr.org/nsrc/online_docs.html

Practical Applications: Strategies for Supporting a Diverse Corps by the National Association for Conflict Mediation. Available through the National Service Resource Library:

ETR Associates
Phone: 800-860-2684
<www.etr.org/NSRC>



different staff member would buy the VISTA lunch and find out more about their work.

- Let others know the fine work that your VISTAs are doing. Whether it's a letter to the editor, a commendation from your board or a letter to the VISTA's family letting them know the impact their work is having on the community – share the successes with others.
- Keep in touch with your VISTAs after the end of the service year, put them on your mailing list, invite them to serve on a committee, etc. VISTA alumni are a great spokespeople and fundraisers for their programs.

Most of these are very simple gestures that go a long way to make the VISTA feel safe, productive and appreciated by their host site and community.

Here's my advice on supervising VISTAs: Feed 'em, love 'em and leave 'em alone – kind of the Dr. Spock approach to VISTA management. If you are doing it right the VISTAs need facilitation and guidance. You are responsible for painting them the big picture, firing them up and sending them out to do great work...but remember you do need to feed them, they are hungry ALL of the time.

~Virginia Lang, VISTA Supervisor, Communities in Schools. Oklahoma





Putting It All Together

With strong community and organizational commitment to the VISTA project, a clear workplan and VISTAs who have the training and resources to accomplish the project goals, a sustainable project is achievable and long-term social change a reality.

The path to a sustainable project is long and has many turns. The destination you originally chose for the project may be very different than where you wind up. A successful, sustainable project is going to shift to the changing needs of the service population it addresses, the funding environment and collaboration opportunities. Goals and objectives can be modified to accommodate these changes and a project will flourish when there is clear communication and a shared vision on the part of the VISTA, host site, the community and the state office. Hopefully the guide has provided you with helpful information about program development to create this vision and you now have a clearer sense of how to develop and implement a sustainable project. For more information about sustainability, managing a national service project or community development issues, please review the Resource Material section that follows.

Good luck with your project!

The VISTAs gave us new ideals and a new perspective; a bigger perspective and that was what we needed.

~Brenda Takeshore, VISTA
Supervisor, Bureau of Land
Management, Alaska

Resource Reading

Tool Kit: A User's Guide to Evaluation for National Service Program

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

ETR Associates

Phone: 800-860-2684

<<http://www.etr.org/NSRC>>



On Line Sustainability Resources

Sustainable Seattle: <www.scn.org/sustainable/susthome.html> Listing of policies, how Seattle has organized volunteers, 1998 Sustainable Community Indicators Report, and project descriptions (Neighborhood Network Team, Policy Group, and the Seattle Guide to Sustainable Living).

Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development: <www.sustainable.doe.gov/> Site has case studies, rural and urban specific sustainability information, funding opportunities and houses toolkits for the following topics: Land Use Planning, Green Buildings, Transportation Economics, Industry, Disaster Planning, Community Development

United States Environmental Protection Agency Funding Page: <<http://134.67.55.16:7777/DC/OSECWeb.nsf/Grants?OpenView>> Comprehensive listing of foundation and governmental funding opportunities for sustainable community development. Very helpful writing tutorial included in site.

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation: <www.wilder.org/pubs/pubcatlg.html> A series of community collaboration and community building, leadership development and marketing and fundraising publications available: A sampling of their titles: Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, Organizing for Social Change, Leadership, Management, and Planning: All the Way to the Bank: Smart Money Management for Tomorrow's Nonprofit, Consulting with Nonprofits: A Practitioner's Guide, Coping with Cutbacks: The Nonprofit Guide to Success When Times Are Tight, Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations Volume I: Develop the Plan, Wilder Nonprofit Field Guide to Conducting Successful Focus Groups, Wilder Nonprofit Field Guide to Getting Started on the Internet.

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University: <<http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html#AA>> Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Economic Capacities of Local Residents (1996), A Guide to Mapping Local Business Assets and Mobilizing Local Business Capacities (1996), A Guide to Mapping Consumer Expenditures and Mobilizing Consumer Expenditure Capacities (1996), A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents (1997), A Guide to Evaluating Asset-Based Community Development: Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities (1997), A Guide to Creating a Neighborhood Information Exchange: Building Communities by Connecting Local Skills, and Knowledge (1998), City-Sponsored Community Building: Savannah's Grants for Blocks Story (1998), Newspapers and Neighborhoods: Strategies for Achieving Responsible Coverage of Local Communities (1999).

Sustainable Communities Network: <www.sustainable.org> Site provides a listing of sustainable development funding sources, case studies, publications on the following topics: Smart Growth, Governing Sustainability, Civic Engagement, and Community Indicators.

Center for Livable Communities:<www.lgc.org/clc/> Hotline and Referral Help
1800-290-8202

Civic Practices Network: <www.cpn.org/index.html> Civic Practices Network (CPN) Center for Human Resources, Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare/Brandeis University/ 60 Turner Street/Waltham, MA 02154/ Phone: (617) 736-4890. *Community Manuals* (i.e.: Community Building in Public Housing: The Ties that Bind People and their Communities, Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide, The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Violence in Our Communities, Building Communities From The Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets, The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook)



Environmental Manuals, Networking Manuals, Family, Gender and Children's Manuals, Work and Empowerment Manuals, and Youth Education Manuals.

National Town Meeting for a Sustainable America: <www.sustainableusa.org/>
Some interesting best practices profiles on youth, environmental and housing programs.

Community Research network (Loka Institute): <www.loka.org/crn/index.htm>
Great linking page for a variety of social issues ranging from health to the environment to agricultural issues. Also, the site houses a comprehensive issue database and listing of funding sources.

Kellogg collection of community development resources: <www.unl.edu/kellogg/index.html> A comprehensive database of community development guidebooks, manuals, workshop materials, reports, books, and videos. Useful for rural, urban, and suburban topics.



National Service Resources

Because some of the training and technical assistance providers change over the years, it's helpful to consult the following site for an up-to-date listing of providers: at <www.etr.org/nsrc/resguide/rgtoc.html>

National Service Resource Center (NSRC)

ETR Associates

P.O. Box 1830

Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830

Phone 1 (800.)321-4407 (6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST).

Fax 1 (800) 435-8433

Website: <www.etr.org>

Disability Issues

United Cerebral Palsy Associations/ Access AmeriCorps

1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 410

Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: 202-785-3891

Fax: 202-296-0349

E-mail: <info@nonprofitrisk.org>

Website: <www.nonprofitrisk.org>

Evaluation Assistance

Aguirre International/Project STAR (Support and Training for Assessing Results)

480 East 4th Ave., Unit A

San Mateo, CA 94401

Telephone: 800-548-3656

Fax: 650-348-0261

E-mail: <star@aiweb.com>

Website: <www.projectstar.org>



Human Relations and Diversity

CHP International

1040 North Blvd., Suite 220

Oak Park, IL 60301

Telephone: 800-635-6675 or 708-848-9650

Fax: 708-848-3191

Website: <www.chpinternational.com/DIVERSE.html>

Leadership Training

National Service Leadership Institute

Bldg. 386, Moraga Ave.

P.O. Box 29995

Presidio of San Francisco, CA 94129

Telephone: 415-561-5950

Fax: 415-561-5955

Organizational Development and Program Management

United Way of America

701 North Fairfax Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-2045

Telephone: 703-836-7100, ext. 436

Fax: 703-549-9152

Website: <www.unitedway.org>

Supervisory Skill Training

National Crime Prevention Council

1700 K Street, NW, 2nd Floor

Washington, DC 20006-3817

Telephone: 800-355-1200 / 202-466-6272

Fax: 202-785-0698

Website: <www.ncpc.org/amicorps.htm>



Sustainability

Campaign Consultation

2817 St. Paul Street

Baltimore, MD 21218

Telephone: 410-243-7979

Fax: 410-243-1024

Website: <sustainability@campaignconsultation.com>

