

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) Checklist and Tip Sheet



TITLE

- Includes the word "VISTA"
- Describes the VISTA member's role (i.e. Development Coordinator) and NOT the project title

DETAILS: SPONSORING ORGANIZATION, PROJECT NAME, PROJECT NUMBER, PROJECT PERIOD

- All project information is completed

SITE NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

FOCUS AREA(S):

- Selected at least one primary focus area

GOAL OF THE PROJECT:

- Describes the population that will be served by VISTA efforts
- Describes what the VISTA will do using appropriate verbs (develop, implement)
- Describes how poverty is addressed by VISTA efforts (breaking the cycle of poverty by..)
- Describes the extent to which capacity is built (VISTA will build capacity by...)
- States the specific product or service resulting from VISTA efforts (volunteer system, partnerships, funding)
- Covers the entire project period
- Describes how resources will be used (VISTA will write grants to support...) (*If applicable*)
- Clearly aligns with the project outcomes in the application

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

- Includes the period of performance/completion dates for each objective
- Forms a bridge between the goal statement and the VISTA's activities
- Describes a measurable outcome of a set of VISTA activities in 1-3 sentences

MEMBER ACTIVITIES:

- Describes clear and specific tasks the VISTA will complete to achieve the objective
- Each activity begins with active verbs
- Does not include staff duties, prohibited activities, or unallowable direct service
- Avoids the words: advocate, lobby, assist, help, manage, support, and maintain
- Uses the words: develop, implement, evaluate (in addition to other active verbs)
- Describes how the VISTA will build capacity at the organization or in the community
- Mentions partnerships and working with focus groups, special interest groups, community associations, etc.
- Includes activities in which the VISTA trains and partners with others to build capacity to replicate activities in the future (if needed) once the VISTA is gone.
- Develops guides/ tools/etc. in which to support others to do these activities in the future.

Tip Sheet

Title: This is the VISTA member's title and should include the word "VISTA" and describe the VISTA member's role. The title should be engaging since this is the first thing that a potential candidate sees when reviewing opportunities. It should be simple and should not include acronyms. (Example of appropriate Titles: VISTA Youth Program Coordinator; VISTA Leader Outreach and Engagement)

Sponsoring Organization: The sponsoring organization's full legal name. Does not include acronyms.

Project Name: The name of the specific project. This name is different from the sponsoring organization's name and the VISTA member title. It should match what was indicated in the concept paper and application. It should not include acronyms.

Project Number: The number that was assigned in eGrants

Project Period: Includes the dates from eGrants

Site Name (if applicable): If the VISTA project is a multi-site project, this should be the name of the site where the VISTA is located if their location is in a different place than the sponsoring organization. It should not include acronyms.

Focus Area(s): (Select at least one focus area) **Primary and/or Secondary**

VISTA Assignment Goals, Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: An observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe. The goal should:

- Describe who will be served by VISTA efforts
- Describe what the VISTA will do (use active verbs: develop, implement, evaluate, etc.)
- Describe how poverty is addressed by VISTA efforts (breaking the cycle of poverty by X; moving people out of poverty by X)
- Describe the extent to which capacity is built (VISTA will build capacity by X)
- State the specific product or service resulting from VISTA efforts (volunteer management system, partnerships, funding, etc.)
- Describe how financial/in-kind resources will be used (VISTA will write grants to support X)
- Align the goal with the project outcomes indicated in the application

Objective of the Assignment: An objective is something that one's efforts or actions are intended to attain or accomplish. It can be also be described as a purpose, goal or milestone. The objectives should be written in a SMART format. The acronym SMART stands for:

- **Specific:** concrete, detailed, well-defined
- **Measurable:** numbers, quantity, comparison
- **Achievable:** feasible, actionable
- **Realistic:** considering resources
- **Time-Bound:** a defined time line

- Coincides with the dates of service
- Describes a specific milestone the VISTA will accomplish to meet the overall goal
- Highlights specific deliverables to be achieved in the 3rd or 4th quarter of the VISTAs term that connects back to the project goal

Member Activity: Describes the specific tasks that the VISTA member will complete to achieve the stated objective.

- Aligns the activities with the stated objective
- Activities do not include staff duties and prohibited activities
- Uses consistent formatting when writing member activities. An example is below.

Member Activity Example: Develop a marketing and promotions plan for volunteers to recruit community members to participate in events and service-related activities.

- Meet with sponsor staff to review the current marketing plan and/or discuss the development of a new plan.
- Identify needs and make improvements to the existing marketing and promotions plan (if applicable)
- Develop a draft marketing and development plan and share with staff
- Finalize the marketing and development plan
- Convene volunteers to review the plan and begin implementation

* Please note that a VAD must be completed for each VISTA member that you are recruiting.

* Example of VAD progression:

First year VADs may focus on activities that support research & design.

Second year VADs focus on implementation

Third year VADS focus on refinements or evaluation

* The VADs should change and show progression in the project over time. For example, the activities being conducted in year two of the project are typically different from those in year one.