

VISTA EXPERIENCE – FEEDBACK FROM VISTA ALUMNI

Dear VISTA Alum,

We are collecting information from former VISTA members to better understand the VISTA training and service experience, and to help the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) improve support to VISTA members and sponsor organizations.

This survey is being conducted by an independent research firm, JBS International. Your responses will be seen only by the JBS research team. Your individual responses will not be shared with the CNCS, AmeriCorps VISTA, or anyone else. In addition to contacting alumni like yourself, we are contacting current members and sponsor organizations to get their feedback.

We hope you can help us by providing some information about your VISTA experience. This survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. If you have questions about this survey, please contact: Craig Kinnear at ckinnear@cns.gov

Thank you so much for your time and feedback.

A. Please tell us what you did before joining VISTA.

NOTE: If you have served with VISTA more than once, please respond to the questions in this survey about your most recent term of service as a VISTA member.

1. BEFORE you joined VISTA, had you done any of the following for 6 months or more?

Please check the column in each row that best describes your experience:

For at least 6 Months, I...	NO	YES
a) Worked/volunteered in a small non-profit organization (e.g. with 50 people or less)		
b) Worked in a for-profit company		
c) Worked in developing and managing people		
d) Worked in an issue area directly related to my VISTA service		
e) Worked or lived in another community <u>very</u> much like the one(s) I served with VISTA		
f) Served with other CNCS programs, such as AmeriCorps, or another VISTA program		
g) Regularly found resources from the internet for work or school		
h) Worked/volunteered with community leaders to develop strategies to solve or address community issues		
i) Volunteered in my own community or elsewhere in the U.S.		
j) Volunteered outside the U.S.		

B. Please tell us how you got involved with VISTA.

2. How were you recruited for VISTA?

- I was recruited locally, from within the sponsor organization.
- I was recruited locally, from elsewhere in the community.
- I was recruited from a neighboring community.
- I was recruited nationally.
- Other (please specify): _____

C. Please tell us about your VISTA assignment.

3. Which of the following applied to your VISTA assignment?

- I was the only VISTA member serving at my location.
- There were other VISTA members serving at my location.

4. Describe the location where you served as a VISTA member.

- I served in a rural area.
- I served in a small town.
- I served in an urban area.

5. Which of the following tasks were significant parts of your assignment during your term of service?

	YES, this was a significant part of my assignment.
a) Planning, coordinating, managing events	
b) Facilitating meetings: Presenting to groups <u>inside</u> my sponsor organization	
c) Facilitating meetings: Presenting to groups <u>outside</u> my sponsor organization	
d) Writing manuals or guides	
e) Creating or updating web pages	
f) Developing electronic spreadsheets or databases	
g) Creating print materials (e.g., flyers, brochures)	
h) Developing training or education curricula	
i) Planning, coordinating, managing events	
j) Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers	
k) Raising funds through grant writing	
l) Soliciting funds or in-kind resources from the community	
m) Building and maintaining community partnerships	
n) Developing new programs/services, or enhancing existing programs/services	
o) Increasing community awareness about the organization and its activities	
p) Assessing the needs of the community or evaluating project activities	
q) Other (please specify)	

D. Please tell us about the training and support you received during your term of service.

6. Please tell us if you participated in the following trainings or used the following resources?

Additional questions shown if respondent marks YES to the

	Did you participate in this training?	previous question:		
		Was the training important for your success in VISTA?	Was the training personally useful to you?	Were you satisfied with the quality of the training?
Pre-service orientation (PSO)	Yes No Don't remember	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure
Onsite orientation and training (OSOT)	Yes No Don't remember	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure
VISTA Campus	Yes No Don't remember	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure
On-line VISTA forums	Yes No Don't remember	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure	Yes No Not sure

7. Was there anything missing from PSO that would have helped you be more successful in VISTA?

No Yes - Please comment: _____

8. Was there anything missing from onsite training and orientation (OSOT) that would have helped you be more successful in VISTA?

No Yes - Please comment: _____

9. Was there any training content that was particularly valuable for your VISTA service?

No Yes (please describe): _____
 Not sure

10. Do you feel that your supervisor knew enough about VISTA to help you with your work?

No Yes - Please comment: _____

11. How much did you use the VISTA Campus after PSO?

- Not at all
- Very little
- Some
- A lot

**11a. [If you check "NOT AT ALL" or "VERY LITTLE" for previous question:]
 Is there a reason why you did not use the VISTA campus, or used it very little?
 (Check all that apply.)**

- Most of the information on the VISTA Campus was not useful to my work.
- Our organization had just about everything I needed.
- I forgot about the VISTA Campus.
 Limited internet access

No particular reason

12. During your time with VISTA, how often did you meet with the following people to discuss your work?

	Less than once a month	About once or twice a month	More than twice a month	I don't remember
a. I met with my supervisor <u>alone</u> , in-person or on the phone.				
b. I met with my supervisor <u>along with other</u> VISTA members or staff, in-person or on the phone.				
c. I met with other VISTA members, in-person or on the phone, without my supervisor.				

13. Do you feel that your supervisor knew enough about VISTA to help you succeed?

- No (please explain): _____
- Yes
- Not sure

E. Please tell us about the skills you needed for your VISTA assignment.

For the questions below, check the skills that were VERY IMPORTANT for your VISTA assignment. Think about your VAD and the organization in which you served, and how important these skills were to conduct VISTA activities, build capacity, and make positive changes in the community.

	Which, if any, of the following were <u>very important</u> for your VISTA assignment? (check all that apply)	[For skills marked as very important:] How did you do in these areas?
14. Interpersonal Skills		
a. Working well with diverse people and respecting individuals with different backgrounds and interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
b. Supervising people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
c. Helping others work effectively by managing priorities and resolving conflicts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
e. Networking and collaborating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor

14. Interpersonal Skills	Which, if any, of the following were <u>very important</u> for your VISTA assignment? (check all that apply)	[For skills marked as very important:] How did you do in these areas?
f. Actively learning from others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor

15. Managing Organizational Workload	Which, if any, of the following were <u>important</u> to the work you did? (check all that apply)	[For skills marked as important:] How did you do in these areas?
a. Setting reasonable objectives by balancing competing priorities in the face of limited resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
b. Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
c. Working independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
d. Leveraging contacts by acquiring needed information from persons in the organization and the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
e. Adapting by modifying one's personal style and work activities in response to changing situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
f. Assessing progress by accurately evaluating the efforts of oneself and others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor

	Which, if any, of the following were <u>important</u> to the work you did? (check all that apply)	[For skills marked as important:] How did you do in these areas?
16. Managing Information and Using It to Solve Problems		
a. Figuring out which information you need to work effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
b. Securing the information you need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
c. Evaluating and organizing information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
d. Understanding and using mathematical information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
e. Deploying general or theoretical information to help oneself and others better do their work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
f. Sharing information effectively by summarizing it so that others will listen and understand		

	Which, if any, of the following were <u>important</u> to the work you did? (check all that apply)	[For skills marked as important:] How did you do in these areas?
17. Leadership, Management, and Collaboration Skills		
a. Listening actively, accurately and respectfully to a wide range of opinions and suggestions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
b. Demonstrating integrity by being accountable and by dependably fulfill obligations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
c. Persuading by convincing others to join in advancing toward his or her objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
d. Negotiating to resolve conflicts between competing objectives and groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good

		<input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
e. Expressing oneself by helping audiences understand ideas that he or she wants to convey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
f. Explaining by conveying ideas and work objectives to a range of individuals, groups, and organizations		

18. Specific Skills for Working in the VISTA Project	Which, if any, of the following were <u>important</u> to the work you did? (check all that apply)	[For skills marked as important:] How did you do in these areas?
a. Teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
b. Mobilizing resources through proposal-writing, advocacy with funders or potential partnering organizations, or through presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
c. Navigating the organization by working within a framework of policies, rules and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
d. Reporting as required by CNCS and your organization in ways that convey what the member has done and what he or she needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
e. Working across the spectrum by understanding the “big picture” and helping to make initiatives, organizations, and services sustainable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Other —There may be other kinds of skills you think were VERY IMPORTANT for your VISTA assignment. Please list up to 3 additional skill areas below and tell us how you did in each of these skill areas.		
		How did you do in these areas?
a. Other Skill 1— <i>please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	
b. Other Skill 2— <i>please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor	

c. Other Skill 3— <i>please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
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19. Please rate yourself in each of the following skill areas at the beginning and at the end of your VISTA service.

	At the beginning of your VISTA service	At the end of your VISTA service
a. Work independently	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
b. Meet deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
c. Set priorities for multiple tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
d. Communicate with people <u>inside</u> my sponsor organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
e. Communicate with people <u>outside</u> my sponsor organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
f. Adapt to new situations and respond to unexpected challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
g. Meet and work with people different from myself	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

F. Please tell us about the impact of VISTA service on your life.

20. Are there aspects of your VISTA training that have stuck with you and been useful after VISTA service?

- No
- Yes (please describe): _____

21. Did your VISTA experience help you in getting to do what you are presently doing for work?

- No, not at all
- Yes, a little bit
- Yes, somewhat
- Yes, a great deal

22. Did your VISTA experience help you in getting to do what you are presently doing in other aspects of your life?

- No, not at all
- Yes, a little bit
- Yes, somewhat
- Yes, a great deal

21a/22a. [If you answered YES to either question 20 or 21] Please tell us in what ways VISTA helped you- Please check all that apply to you:

VISTA helped me with:

- Understanding how to work in organizations
- Understanding how to manage volunteers
- Understanding how to do fundraising
- Understanding how to build partnerships
- Understanding how to work in diverse communities
- Improving leadership skills
- Acquiring technical or professional skills
- Furthering my education
- Getting a job
- Other (specify): _____

G. Tell us about your satisfaction with VISTA service.

23. In general, how do you feel about your VISTA experience?

	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
a. How well PSO prepared you for your term of service					
b. How well networking connections you made at PSO supported you during your term of service					
c. How well onsite supervision supported you during your term of service					
d. How well the information and resources on the VISTA Campus supported you during your term of service					
e. How well your term of service prepared you for life after VISTA					

H. Finally, please tell us a little about yourself (Answers to Questions 29 -31 are entirely optional and are for statistical purposes only).

24. Please check the HIGHEST level of education you completed? Please check the one which best applies to you:

- High school degree (HS Diploma or GED)
- Some college
- 2-year college degree (AA)
- 4-year college degree (BA, BS)
- Some graduate school
- Technical or vocational degree or certificate

Graduate degree (MA, MS, Ph.D., etc.)

Other (specify): _____

25. What are you doing now?

Working in a not-for profit organization

Working in a for-profit organization

Working in government or politics

Making plans to attend school

Attending school to complete a degree

Attending technical or vocational school to complete a degree or certificate

Volunteering

Other (specify): _____

26. How many times have you served with VISTA?

Once More than once

27. Have you ever served as a VISTA leader?

No Yes

28. Have you ever served with any of the following programs?

AmeriCorps State and National

AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)

Senior Corps (Foster Grandparents, RSVP, Senior Companions)

Peace Corps

29. What is your age (optional)? _____ years old

30. What is your gender (optional)? _____

31. How do you identify yourself in terms of ethnicity/race (optional)? Please check the one which best applies to you:

African American

American Indian/Alaskan Native

Asian/Pacific Islander

Caucasian/White

Hispanic/Latino

Multi-racial (specify): _____

Other (specify): _____

32. Please use the space below if you would like to make any additional comments.

Please enter today's date

Date (Month/Day/Year): _____.

Thanks so much for taking the time to complete this survey!