

Build Strong VISTA Assignment Descriptions

Tip:

When creating multiple VADs for VISTA members performing similar service, you can save time by copying and pasting some elements of the text into those VADs.

Tip:

Copy and paste the goal of the project directly from the goal statement in your project plan (part of the project application).

Tip:

Check that your member activities align with your goal statement and that you've included a completion date.

Tips for member activities:

- Start with the performance milestones in the action plan section of your VISTA project application and edit into appropriate member activities.
- Start sentences with active verbs.
- Be clear and specific.
- Avoid too much detail.
- Be realistic and delineate activities for the full year of the VISTA's service.

Prohibited Activities

What should not be in a VAD:

- Direct Service
- Displacing employed workers and supplanting staff
- Political activities, including but not limited to:
 - Attempting to influence legislation by lobbying
 - Voter registration activities
 - Lobbying
 - Being involved with political contributions for election activities
 - Advocacy pertaining to political candidates or proposed legislation
- Religious instruction or worship

VISTA Assignment Description Example 1

This example is for training purposes; the information below does not reflect an actual VISTA project.

TITLE	Mentor Recruitment and Management Systems Designer
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	Waketa Community Services (WCS)
PROJECT NAME	MentorCorps
PROJECT NUMBER	12ABCD345
PROJECT PERIOD	08/20/2017 - 08/19/2018
SITE NAME	If applicable
FOCUS AREA(S)	Education (Primary)
NOTE	CNCS State Office Notes: None
PROJECT GOAL	<i>To help ensure that children of incarcerated parents receive the educational, social, and emotional support they need to break the cycle of poverty, the MentorCorps VISTA project will build the capacity of WCS by developing a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management system for its mentoring program.</i>
OBJECTIVE	By December 20, 2017, assess the current state of WCS's efforts in reaching, selecting, and supporting volunteer mentors, and create or revise policies, procedures, and documents to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentor recruitment and matching system.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research the history of volunteer programs at WCS. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and become familiar with internal policies, procedures, and documents related to the mentor recruitment and matching system by September 20, 2017. Identify the current program's strengths and challenges. b. In collaboration with WCS leadership, develop a written plan for improvement by October 20, 2017. 2. Refine or develop systems for screening and matching mentors. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop or revise documents related to internal policies and procedures regarding mentor recruitment and matching by November 20, 2017. b. If needed, participate in online training on how to build a database in Excel by November 20, 2017. c. Create WCS Excel database to track mentor screening and matching by December 20, 2017.

VISTA Assignment Description Example 2

This example is for training purposes; the information below does not reflect an actual VISTA project.

TITLE	Employment and Housing Services Coordinator
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	Veterans Assistance Network (VAN)
PROJECT NAME	VAN Leaders
PROJECT NUMBER	67EEFGH890
PROJECT PERIOD	12/10/2019 - 12/09/2020
SITE NAME	Community Services Center
FOCUS AREA(S)	Economic Opportunity (Primary)
NOTE	CNCS State Office Notes: None
PROJECT GOAL	<i>To support programs that help veterans find secure housing and adequate employment so they have the resources to support their families and be productive and healthy members of the community. The VAN Leaders AmeriCorps VISTA project will expand resources and internal systems and materials to support the growth of the Veterans Assistance Network across the county and double the number of veterans served in three years. In our county, there are currently 9,000 veterans, and over 80% of them live below the poverty line.</i>
OBJECTIVE	By March 31, 2020, design a plan to expand the employment network and housing resources available to VAN clients, and lead the development of new partnerships in target areas of the county.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	<p>Research the current agency and VAN Leaders resources and partnerships; design a development plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and become familiar with all VAN Leaders internal policies, procedures, and documents related to veterans' housing and employment services by January 31, 2020. In collaboration with VAN leadership, develop a written plan for resource and partnership development by February 28, 2020. Pilot test the first phase of outreach; with VAN leadership, refine and finalize the development plan.
OBJECTIVE	By July 31, 2020, implement a full outreach strategy to acquire agency partners to support VAN Leaders' clients.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	<p>Build relationships with local companies willing to hire veteran participants in the VAN Leaders job readiness program.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Design outreach materials. Schedule, attend/lead when appropriate, and document meetings with local companies. Follow up on all requests for information or resources. Write a grant to acquire outreach supplies for local job fairs. <p>Design a guide for veterans seeking affordable housing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research existing materials in the agency and in outside organizations. Attend homeless resource committee meetings to meet all service providers in the county and promote the VAN Leaders project.

What is great about this VAD?

How could this VAD be improved?

<p>OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>By August 19, 2018, set up outreach systems and build partnerships with community organizations—and then develop targeted marketing materials—to spread the word about the mentor program.</p>
<p>MEMBER ACTIVITIES</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan for outreach and recruitment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify the skills, abilities, and experiences sought in volunteer mentors by January 30, 2018. b. Write volunteer task descriptions that include qualifications, activities, benefits, the time commitment, and other expectations by February 28, 2018. c. Attend 10 community events, as well as identify and develop partnerships with 10 community organizations whose members are possible mentors or who can otherwise support the organization, by March 30, 2018. Continue to update the internal database to track mentor screening and matching. 2. Market the program to targeted audiences. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop community organization-specific marketing emails by May 15, 2018. b. Design marketing materials to post on five social media sites by May 31, 2018. c. Create WCS marketing binder/electronic folder with updated marketing materials by June 30, 2018.

What is great about this VAD?

How could this VAD be improved?