

Welcome VISTAs

Phone call logistics

- Dial-in by telephone to: 866.363.6079
 - Conference code: 741 690 1165
- Press * 6 to mute your line.
- Press * 6 again to unmute your line.
- Please answer the survey while we are waiting.

VISTA Leader

1. Tried out my green hand but I did have a cactus die on my watch
2. Wish that I was a talented drummer (on Rock Band)
3. Lefty and a vegetarian
4. Love to travel and explore cities specifically
5. Enjoy watching movies and visiting museums
6. Speak six different languages but I am not good at any of them
7. Rigorously advocate the benefits of committing to a year of service
8. Serious economics nerd and try to apply its logic to anything and everything. Recent theories include price speculation of strawberry market.



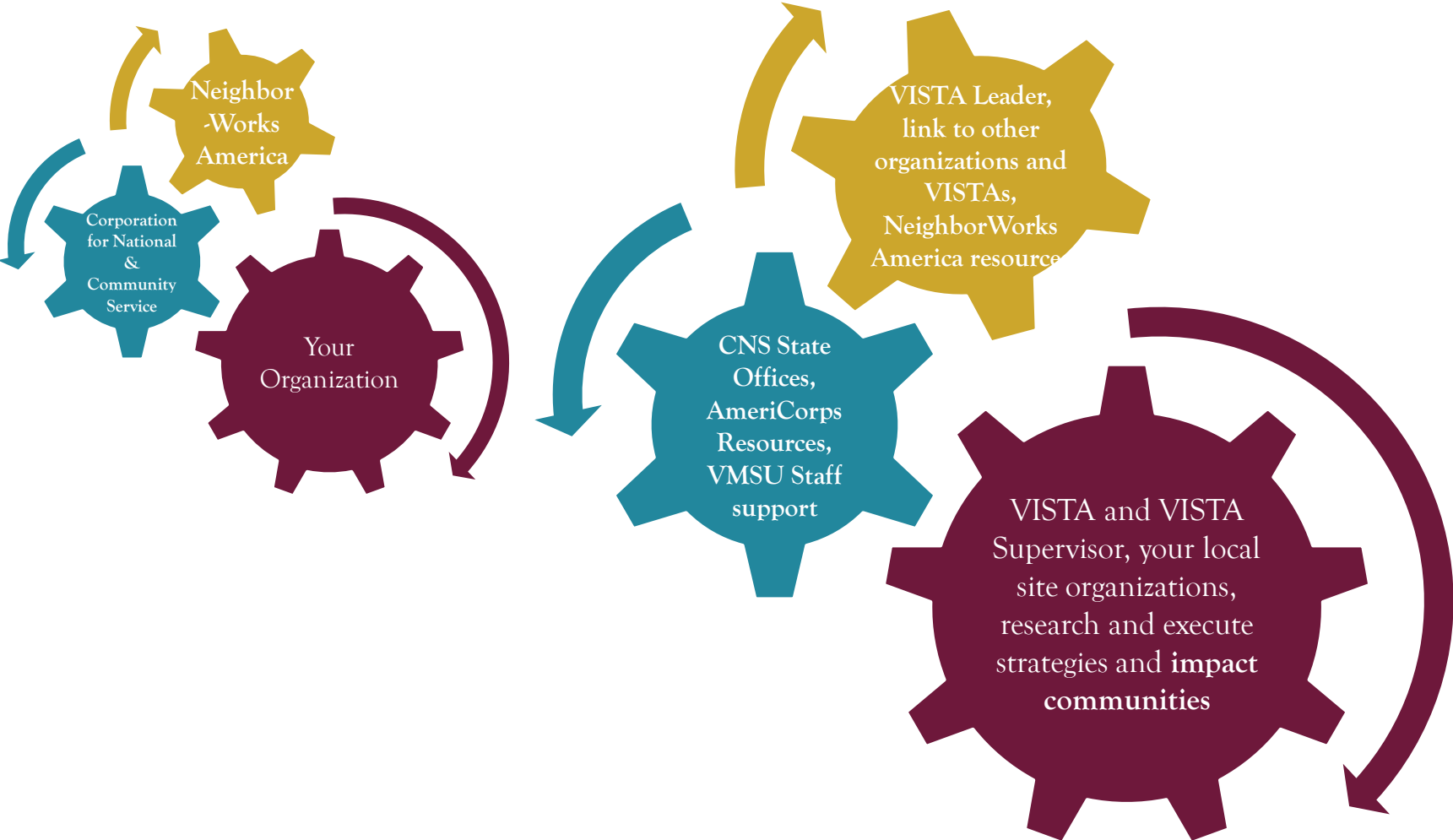
VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA ORIENTATION

NeighborWorks America VISTA Program

Agenda

- Introduction of Corporation of National and Community Service (CNCS), NeighborWorks America, VISTA Leader
- VISTA Resources
 - VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU)
 - VISTA Campus
 - Leaders for Communities
 - NeighborWorks VISTA Google Group
 - VISTA Land
 - VISTA Online Resource Guide
- Direct service versus capacity building
- Areas of focus for the first month
- Communication and Training

Introduction



Program Staff Introduction

- Corporation for National Community and Services' mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.
 - Contact your VISTA Leader or VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) and they can direct you to the right person.
- NeighborWorks America's mission is to create opportunities for people to live in affordable homes, improve their lives and strengthen their communities. NeighborWorks America serves over 4358 communities through its network of 238 nonprofit community development organizations and other nonprofit organizations.
 - About NeighborWorks America - [Link](#)
 - Contact information: VISTAprogram@nw.org
- **VISTA Leader:** Serve as a facilitator, resource generator, recruiter, liaison, and mentor. My goal is to expand and build the capacity of our VISTAs and their project sites.
 - Provide applicable resources in order to help you accomplish your service goals.
 - Contact Information: skarandikar@nw.org or 202-220-7074 or [Link](#)

VISTA Resources

- **VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) – Contact them about these following topics**
 - **Toll-free Office Number: 866.473.5733 & Fax: 512.916.7021**
 - **E-mail: VISTAMemberSupportUnit@cns.gov**
 - **Monday – Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time**
 - ☑ My AmeriCorps (VISTA portal - my.americorps.gov)
 - ☑ VISTA Living Allowance
 - ☑ End of Service (Stipend)
 - ☑ W-2 and 1099 forms (tax forms found on VISTA portal)
 - ☑ Education Award
 - ☑ Forbearance Requests
 - ☑ Required paperwork and forms W-4 & W-5
 - ☑ Direct Deposit
 - ☑ Life Insurance
 - ☑ Service Benefits
 - ☑ Child Care
 - ☑ Interest Accrual
 - ☑ Health Benefits Plan
 - ☑ Travel reimbursement
- **National Trust * - For specific questions related to the Education Award**
 - **Phone: 1.888.507.5962**
- **Seven Corners * - For questions regarding the member health benefits plan**
 - **Phone: 1.866.699.4186 & Fax: 1.317.575.2256**
- **NACCRRRA * - For questions regarding the member child care plan**
 - **Phone: 1.800.570.4543 ext. 344 or vistachildcare@naccrra.org**
- Asterisks (*) indicate parties that the VMSU can contact for you on your behalf.



VISTA Online Resources

- **VISTA Campus:** www.vistacampus.org
 - VISTA Member Handbook is under Life as a VISTA > Finding Help > Member Handbook
 - Use it to understand your rights as a VISTA and look up CNS resources available to you.
 - Make sure you explore “Life as a VISTA” section under VISTAs tab
- **Leaders for Communities:** www.leadersforcommunities.org
 - Great way to connect with VISTAs and other professionals in community development field
 - Utilize this website as a main tool to find out about effective strategies and innovative initiatives
- **VISTA Google Group – Expect an invite soon – (September 2nd, 2010)**
 - Serve as an “open hours” outlet.
 - Please create a Gmail account and add nwavista@gmail.com to your contact list
 - Allows you to contact your VISTA Leader (ME!) and other VISTAs in a real time format
- **VISTA Land:** <http://vistaland.yolasite.com/>
 - Is a website specifically created for VISTAs in the NeighborWorks VISTA Program
 - Visit the FAQ section to answer your VISTA logistics related questions
 - Updates include: VISTA related events, community development related content and training resources
- **VISTA Resource guide:** <http://vistaland.yolasite.com/resources/VISTA+Resource+Guide.pdf>
 - Compiles similar information as VISTAcampus.org and lists in an accessible tabulated manner.

Capacity Building versus Direct Service

- Capacity building is working with staff and the community to create, expand, or strengthen the systems and processes that help an organization carry out its anti-poverty work. Throughout your year of service keep sustainability as key factor in mind.
- Direct services involve activities that immediately address a client's needs. For example, tutoring, or providing a meal.



“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Navigating the VISTA Lifecycle



Learning

- Setting Out
- VISTA assignment
- Identify your strengths
- Study the community and organizational culture
- Learning the Ropes
- Educate yourself
- Research current practices and innovative ideas

0-5 Months



Doing

- Cautiously Contributing
- Performing at your best.

3-8 Months



Training

- Transferring Capacity
- Sharing & building information



7-12 Months

Areas of focus for the first month

- Know your VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) and make sure that all the activities are capacity building related.
 - Highlight your areas of strength and incorporate them in your VAD
 - Study your community and organizational culture.
Establish weekly methods of communication.
 - Once you are adjusted, revise your goals.
 1. What would you want your end of service to look like?
 2. Are there any particular trainings or areas of content you want to explore?
 3. Re-align your personal goals based on the new responsibilities and goals you have established



Establishing yourself for Success

- **Communication Plan** – weekly meetings, feedback, VISTA Leader and other VISTAs
 - Review “Giving and Receiving Feedback” & “Planning for VISTA Service” on VISTA Land
- **Adjusting to your new environment** – Performing your best even though you are living on a stipend
 - ✓ Regional network of VISTAs – Use VISTA Campus VISTA locator map to connect.
 - ✓ VISTA Leader – Connect with and check in with me for more resources. Use “Open Hours” or emails.
 - ✓ Local organizations and personal network – Reach out and connect!!
- **Professional and personal growth resources**
 - ✓ Content based cluster – Participate in relevant WebEx’s
 - ✓ E-Learning Courses: Provide a fundamental background to issues you will discover
 - ✓ VISTA Campus: Please explore “The Work” tab
 - ✓ National Training Institutes: a great professional development tool
 - ✓ Local site experts and mentors
 - ✓ Leaders for Communities: a great resource for finding innovative and effective strategies

Being part of VISTA legacy

- ❑ Our VISTAs example as National Service Volunteers helped recruit 12,042 other volunteers that gave more than 76,106 hours of service
- ❑ We helped save 7,053 families escape the grip of foreclosure
- ❑ Our VISTAs creativity and innovation helped start 680 new community development programs across the country
- ❑ Working together with our host sites, we helped serve over 96,000 clients this year



Q&A

- Name: Swati Karandikar – skarandikar@nw.org
- Please email me your gmail email, work email, work and personal phone number if you haven't done so.
- Add nwavista@gmail.com on gtalk or gchat for open hours.
- Visit <http://vistaland.yolasite.com> for more updates.