

**Creating an Effective VISTA Assignment Description**

**Guiding Questions**

In considering how to craft a VAD, or VISTA Assignment Description, for your site, consider the following questions?

* Is there a poverty-focused project that my organization would like to start or expand?
* Are the project’s goals to move people and communities out of poverty, rather than making poverty more tolerable?
* How will the local community be involved in project planning and implementation? With what other community groups or organization will collaborate?
* How will a VISTA support these efforts?
* How will we measure the project’s impact?

**Prompts for VAD Components**

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| **Project Goal** | **Project Objectives** | **Project Activities** |
| * Address how the VISTA member will contribute to poverty alleviation * Describe the population served * Briefly describe VISTA activities * Define how the VISTA member will build capacity * State the specific product of service resulting from the VISTA member’s efforts | * Identify what the VISTA will achieve * Describe the outcome of a set of activities * Aligns with goal statement * Includes specific date ranges * Use active verbs | * Specify what the VISTA will be doing to achieve the objective * Aligns with the objective * Includes specific target dates and milestones that align with date range for the corresponding objective * Use active verbs |

**Understanding Capacity Building**

VISTA is unique in its mission to provide indirect service. The table below details the types of activities that are permissible for VISTAs to undertake.

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| **Acceptable Service** | **Capacity Building** | **Sustainable Activities** |
| Recruit volunteers | Develop forms, volunteer assignments | Develop volunteer handbook |
| Train direct service providers | Write training curriculum; train-the-trainer | Develop training manual |
| Coordinate projects | Develop procedures and systems | Create volunteer management system & procedures |
| Public speaking | Develop speakers’ bureau | Develop community partnerships |
| Write press releases | Develop press kids, media database | Secure media partners |
| Organize fundraising events | Grant writing and develop grants database | Secure project staffing |
| Organize task forces/coalitions | Develop leadership structure of task force/coalition | Create infrastructure |
| Conduct outreach | Design brochures, posters | Create mechanism for project evaluation |

**VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)  
*Please complete this VAD template for your site and include with your host site application materials.***

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| **Title:** Program Development VISTA at [Site Name] |
| **Site Name:** [Site Name] |
| **Sponsoring Organization:** University of Mississippi  **Project Name:** North MS VISTA Project  **Project Number:** 11VSSMS003  **Project Period:** 8/2020 – 8/2021 |
| **Focus Area:** Education |
| **Notes:** |

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| **VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities** |
| **Goal:** [What will the VISTA member accomplish? How will these activities contribute to poverty alleviation, community empowerment, capacity building, and the creation of sustainable solutions to improve quality of life in North Mississippi?] |

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| **Objective of the Assignment: (8/2020 – 8/2021)** You may edit dates as needed within the project period. Please aim to sequence objectives chronologically for the duration of the term of service.  [State Objective 1 here. Objectives should contribute to the achievement of the overarching goal of the VAD.]  **Member Activities:**   1. List as many activities as needed to accomplish each objective. 2. Present activities in a linear fashion. 3. Remember that these activities will provide a framework for VISTAs to establish a work plan. |

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| **Objective of the Assignment: (DATE RANGE)**  [Description of Objective 2.]  **Member Activities:**   1. [List related activities.] |
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| **Objective of the Assignment: (DATE RANGE)**  [Description of Objective 3.]  **Member Activities:**   1. [List related activities.]    *Please note that you may add objectives as needed. Most VADs have 4-5 objectives*. |

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| **Objective of the Assignment: (8/2020 –8/2021*)* \*\*DO NOT EDIT. All NMVP members share this objective.\*\***  The VISTA will help build the sustainability of NMVP and its programs by recruiting new members and developing community interest by participating in national service events, including two national days of service per year. The VISTA will also support the M Partner initiative by seeking opportunities for programmatic alignment and collaboration in M Partner communities.  **Member Activities:**  1. Promote and recruit for NMVP at the university and in other local communities/organizations.  2. Coordinate with other NMVP VISTAs to host recruitment events for NMVP and its programs.  3. Coordinate with other NMVP VISTAs to develop projects for 9/11 Day of Service, MLK Day, and AmeriCorps Week.  4. Support M Partner efforts by building partnerships and collaborating with mission-aligned organizations in the M Partner communities. |