

POSITION DESCRIPTION: VISTA SITE SUPERVISOR*
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION VISTA PROJECT
125 S. WEBSTER STREET
MADISON, WI 53707

The Wisconsin DPI Family-School-Community Partnerships AmeriCorps*VISTA Project began in 1998 and is funded by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. The grant allows for 20 AmeriCorps*VISTA members to serve as family-school-community partnership coordinators in low-income Wisconsin schools and a VISTA Leader located at the DPI in Madison. The project goals for the sites are to:

- Develop and expand ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools and their respective families and communities;
- Involve parents of students in learning at home, volunteering, communicating with teachers and administrators, and participating in school decision making and community collaboration,
- Create and train an Action Team for Partnerships to design, implement, and sustain partnership practices for the purpose of improving student achievement.

The project design is based on the research of Joyce Epstein, Director of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

VISTA Supervisor Overview:

- Talk to your VISTAs often and share with them your needs, expectations, and how you believe they can most effectively be utilized. Recognize that supervision involves communication and training.
- VISTA Supervisors are responsible for the overall direction and support of VISTA Members, who are highly motivated national volunteers, eager to apply their skills and to learn new ones. The DPI VISTA Project requires a college degree of a VISTA candidate, yet he or she will typically not have professional experience. What are your expectations of the VISTAs? How can the community benefit from his or her service? Do not take for granted that VISTAs understand their capabilities, or where they best fit.
- Have a full and working knowledge of the goals and objectives of the DPI VISTA Project, along with the goals and objectives that are specific to the VAD (VISTA Assignment Description).
- Hold regular meetings with your VISTA. This should be quality time, with no interruptions, that allow you to open the lines of communication and problem-solve together.
- Regarding problems: take an objective look at the situation and consider whether the VISTA Member has been receiving the proper instructions, supervision, training, etc. Talk to your VISTA, and ask if there is anything you can do to assist. Contact Parents Plus (if you're a Milwaukee supervisor) or the Project Coordinator for additional insight and guidance in resolving the problem.

VISTA Supervisor Duties:

- Supervisors must attend and participate in Supervisor Training.
- Develop a quality On-Site Orientation Training (OSOT) to immediately follow VISTA Pre-Service Orientation (PSO).
- Make sure VISTAs have access to the Host-Site Work Plan of goals, objectives, and expectations. VISTAs must be trained to perform necessary Activities listed in the Work Plan if they do not already possess the skills and abilities.
- Introduce VISTAs to offices, agencies, and organizations of both your campus and your community through the use of media, letters, or personal introductions to local partners.
- Ensure that VISTAs, as national volunteers, serve the project on a full-time basis, and that they do not work for or receive compensation from any another outside employment. Also, ensure that VISTAs are not overworked or excessively stressed, and that they take appropriate time-off.
- Immediately report to Parents Plus (if you're a Milwaukee supervisor) or the Project Coordinator any change in status of your VISTAs (i.e. absence without leave, early close-of service, and hospitalization). If you have a problem or concern about the performance of your VISTAs, immediately contact Parents Plus (if you're a Milwaukee supervisor) or the Project Coordinator. We're always ready to help resolve problems; to do so, we must first be aware of the problem.
- VISTAs require a reliable supervision. Contingency plans are advised in the event of the interruption of the Supervisor role. If the VISTA Supervisor will be unavailable for any extended period of time, plans to leave, or is to be replaced, please contact Parents Plus (if you're a Milwaukee supervisor) or the Project Coordinator immediately.
- Supervisors are responsible for the submission of bi-weekly and quarterly reports and other documentation required by the DPI VISTA Project though the VISTA member will do the majority of the writing and compiling of these reports. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to assist and should read over each report carefully, providing feedback.
- Promote interaction, reflection, and closure for your VISTAs at the end of their years of service. Acknowledge this event with a close-of-service ceremony or special event. Be prepared to assist VISTAs with career planning.

VISTA Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Orientation, training, and introduction of VISTAs to school, staff, and community.
- Complete the Get to Know Your Site form, Orientation Checklist, and OSOT with your VISTA member and send a copy to the Project Coordinator at the DPI.
- Attend and participate in the DPI Orientation and Training in September; support VISTA attendance of DPI and CNCS events.
- Provide daily supervision and establish regular meetings with your VISTA.
- Serve as advocate and liaison to school administration, other school staff, and community members.
- Maintain communication with Parents Plus Supervisor (if you're a Milwaukee supervisor) or the VISTA Leader and report directly any concerns with the VISTA or his/her work.
- Work with VISTAs to complete quarterly reporting requirements to DPI.
- Review VISTA bi-weekly reports and provide feedback. Submit all bi-weekly reports to the DPI in a timely manner.

Host-Site Institutions:

- Provide office space and materials (including phone, fax, computer, internet access, etc.).
- On-Site Orientation Training and introduction of VISTAs to school, staff, and community.
- Reimbursement of travel expenses related to host-site program.
- Daily supervision by a host site staff member.
- Support VISTA attendance of DPI and CNCS events.
- Ensure completion of reporting and evaluation requirements, including bi-weekly and quarterly reporting requirements of VISTA Members.
- Be available to Supervisor for concerns regarding the VISTA or the project itself.

Wisconsin DPI and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS):

- Select host-site institutions.
- Recruit, select, and place VISTAs, in partnership with host-sites.
- Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) and DPI VISTA Project Orientation.
- In-service training opportunities and regular meetings for VISTAs.
- Reimbursement of mileage for required DPI and CNCS events.
- Payment of VISTA living allowance, health and other benefits.
- VISTA Member and Supervisor support and assistance.
- Technical assistance to campus and community, as necessary.
- If necessary, management of grievance procedures.
- Opportunities for professional development of VISTAs.
- Assessment of host-site program and VISTA progress toward project goals and objectives.
- Quality assurance and oversight in meeting DPI VISTA goals and objectives.
- Overall evaluation of the DPI AmeriCorps*VISTA Project.

DPI VISTA Member Duties:

Each individual project site should adapt the position description and work plan to the needs of the school and local community (these modifications need to be approved by the Program Director). For example, DPI VISTAs are expected to:

- Participate in an assets mapping project in collaboration with school staff and community members.
- Help develop staff development and parent education workshops.
- Enhance relationships with staff, volunteers, parents, and others that will help sustain programs beyond the VISTA's term of service.
- Help establish an effective and comprehensive communication system for the school community.
- Help families understand school structure and to feel welcome in the school.
- Coordinate the recruitment and training of tutors and/or mentors.
- Communicate regularly with volunteers to discuss their work and address any concerns.
- Help in offering learning activities and events for the whole family.
- Include parents and other community members in facilitating children's learning outside of school.
- Recruit families and other community members to volunteer in school community events.
- Encourage parents to participate in school activities, including attending school board and site council meetings.
- Involve local service groups in the school.
- Recognize and celebrate community involvement in schools.
- Promote school partnership efforts through various media, such as local newspapers, radio stations, or community bulletin boards.
- Write grant proposals to support partnership activities.

Appropriate VISTA Service Activities:

The VISTA national service program is designed place quality volunteers in positions of indirect service, through which they can the build capacity of sustainable endeavors that address poverty-related issues.

Indirect Service ►

Recruit volunteers
Train direct-service providers
Coordinate projects and activities
Public speaking
Write press releases
Organize fundraising events
Organize taskforces/coalitions
Conduct Outreach
Facilitate meetings

Capacity Building ►

Develop forms, tracking documents, etc.
Research curriculum/manuals; train
Develop systems and procedures
Develop speakers' bureau
Develop press kits, media database
Write grants; develop databases
Develop leadership structure
Design brochures, posters, etc.
Develop Parent Involvement program at the school

Sustainable Endeavors

Develop volunteer handbook
Complete Resource Mapping
Train staff and community members in ATP process
Develop training manuals
Develop management system/guide
Develop community partnerships
Secure media partners
Secure project staffing
Create infrastructure
Create evaluation mechanisms

Restricted Activities:

Federal restrictions on the use of AmeriCorps*VISTA positions mandate that VISTAs are not permitted to:

- Engage in any political or lobbying activities, including voter registration drives.
- Hold another job, or receive additional compensation for work performed.
- Proselytize or engage in related activities.

Contact Information:

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*ADAPTED FROM KANSAS CAMPUS COMPACT