



VISTA Supervisor Responsibilities in Virtual Member Orientation

About Virtual Member Orientation

The AmeriCorps VISTA program offers training to address the terms, conditions and benefits of service and key programming principles to VISTA members at the start of their service in two formats: a face-to-face Pre-Service Orientation (“PSO Classic”) and an online Virtual Member Orientation (VMO).

The Virtual Member Orientation combines self-directed online tutorials on the VISTA Campus, live webinars, and face-to-face training in *On-Site Orientation and Training* (OSOT) at project site. VMO gives the VISTA program, as well as projects, flexibility in meeting recruitment targets, and removes challenges for VISTAs related to travel and time away from home.

Here is a summary of some key differences between VMO and PSO Classic.

Virtual Member Orientation	PSO Classic
Online, and overlaps with OSOT	Mostly face-to-face, with online pre-requisites. OSOT is offered after the PSO Classic
Takes place at VISTA project site, in the community, and at home	Takes place regionally at hotel or conference center
No training-related travel involved	Candidates travel to the training location
Self-paced	Presented in 3 ½ days
VISTAs complete part of VMO prior to service and part while in service	VISTAs complete PSO Classic and then begin service the following day

VISTA sponsors can check with their CNCS state office to learn which orientation events their VISTAs will attend and the associated deadlines.

How to Ensure Your Candidate Completes Virtual Member Orientation

AmeriCorps VISTA supervisors who have candidates enrolled in a VMO are responsible for ensuring their VISTAs successfully complete all the requirements of the onboarding and training process. The supervisor’s responsibilities in supporting VMO go beyond those for PSO Classic.

Before the VISTA Candidate’s Arrival

The following capacities are required for VISTA candidates to participate in VMO.

Candidate Capacity

During the interview process, confirm with your candidate that they possess the following capacities:

- English proficiency, including reading and writing and understanding spoken and written English
- Ability to communicate verbally (speaking and hearing)
- Basic proficiency and comfort using computer and internet technology
- Access to computer with reliable internet connection prior to service start date

If your candidate does not meet one or more of these requirements, please let your CNCS State Office know immediately so that the candidate can be enrolled in the in-person PSO Classic.

Worksite Technology

Prior to your candidate's arrival, ensure the following are in place:

- Individual computer for each VISTA with high speed internet access, telephone, access to internal systems, etc.
- Ensure your IT systems and equipment will allow your VISTA to attend webinar sessions via Skype for Business and Cisco WebEx (visit <https://www.webex.com/test-meeting.html> to verify that the WebEx platform is accessible through the computers at your site)
- Obtain IT security clearances (if needed)

If your site cannot provide one or more of these requirements, please let your CNCS State Office know immediately so that the candidate can be enrolled in PSO Classic.

Upon VISTA Candidate's Arrival

- Please be present on-site on the VISTA's first day of service to welcome the candidate and ensure they take the Oath of Service.
- Guide your VISTA to attend the webinar on their first day at 3:00 pm ET/noon PT. Candidates may all attend the webinar from the same computer, but are encouraged to join individually as their ability to participate individually in the chat, online Q&A, and polls will be hindered or impossible when joining as a group.
- Print and distribute a VISTA Oath Form to each VISTA prior to the first webinar. Be present with your VISTA(s) during the swearing-in to witness the oath, which usually takes place about 35-45 minutes into the "Launching Your VISTA Service" webinar.
- After the webinar, collect a signed Oath Form from each VISTA, sign on the witness line, scan, and email the form to the VISTA Member Support Unit following the instructions listed at the bottom of the form. The Oath Form must be submitted on the day the oath is taken.
- Distribute the fingerprint kit (two cards, mailing label, and instructions) and support the VISTAs in submitting their fingerprints as early as possible, but no later than 30 days from their start of VISTA service. (If you do not have fingerprint kits, please follow up with your Program Officer.)
 - VISTAs are notified of the exact fingerprint submission due date in the "Guide to Entering VISTA Service" document.

On-Site Orientation and Training

In addition to conducting an *On-Site Orientation and Training*, please support your VISTA member in completing the in-service coursework of the Virtual Member Orientation. The early-service coursework is aimed at orienting them to the community, your organization, and the overall mission of the VISTA Program.

Sponsors may integrate VMO coursework into their OSOT by including the VMO coursework readings and worksheets as OSOT activities and then building discussion sessions around them.

Two weeks prior to the first day of service, VISTA headquarters sends a "Guide to Entering VISTA Service" to all the candidates who are enrolled in the VMO. CNCS State Offices forward the Guide to supervisors who have candidates enrolled in the VMO. The Guide outlines the onboarding steps a VISTA candidate needs to complete prior to arriving at their service site. It also includes a list of early service coursework to be completed during the first few weeks of service. Please download a copy of the Guide so you have the schedule and can remind them of important dates.

Supervisor support of VISTA members is crucial to their success. The VISTA program appreciates the time and energy supervisors invest. One of the challenges of online training is developing a sense of connection to the national community of VISTA members—please encourage them to use the VISTA Campus forums, the interactive map, and our series of professional development webinars to connect with other VISTA members in their area and around the country.

If you have questions about the Virtual Member Orientation, please contact your Program Officer at the CNCS State Office.

