

Program Stages

*"Teach this triple truth to all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity."
- The Buddha*

When developing the Volunteer Assignment Description, it's helpful to look at the grant in three stages: building the foundation for the program, implementing the program, and sustaining the program. The next section uses a three-year VISTA grant to outline what some typical VISTA activities are in each of the three stages.

"We've seen a lot of projects terminated because the organization says, 'We need help, we need help' only they can't articulate in tangible terms what that help would translate into when a human being shows up and wants to do it. They can't do that. Secondly, they are unable to explain what a difference it will make. As a result of our being here, what may change? If the answer is it's going to be the same as when you left, you are going to have minimal impact."

- Mal Coles, CNCS

Year One: The Foundation Stage

Year one activities focus on information gathering, relationship building, and designing and refining program plans and infrastructure. During the foundation stage the Volunteer Assignment Description should focus on solidifying the scope of the project and building the partnerships and relationships that will sustain the program. This can be done by attending a variety of community events, learning community and organizational history, finding strategies on how to merge the program agenda with other local agencies' work, involving community stakeholders, building collaborations, involving the clients in the program planning stages, and identifying helpful resource and technical assistance providers.

Year Two: The Implementation Stage

Year two activities center around running the project and documenting the impact that the program is having in the community. Project maintenance activities could include mass recruiting efforts, evaluation and modification of the program according to evaluation, or finding long-term funding for the project. During the implementation stage it is also important to develop a plan for what will happen when the VISTA resource is no longer there. Determining a transition strategy and outlining sustainability activities for the third year are important activities in this stage.

Year Three: The Sustaining Stage

While activities throughout the three years should address sustainability, during the final year of the grant activities should focus on securing staff, volunteer and partnership support, as well as financial resources to continue the project. During the third year it is also important to assess the impact of the project in the community by developing reports that document the number of people the project has reached, amount of money raised, number of volunteer hours contributed, and how the program has aided the community.

VISTA ROLE	YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO	YEAR THREE
Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organize a Development Committee and establish common mission/vision * Complete Community Needs Assessment * Secure partnerships and agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Implement, evaluate programs in community-identified area of need * Solidify relationships, volunteer training procedures, and sustainability plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Integrate leadership of program into existing student organizations * Incorporate into specific faculty syllabi * Procure funds to continue partnership
Tutoring and Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assess interest and capacity of possible community sites * Develop structure for program * Run a pilot program in spring semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Expand program to additional schools * Increase volunteer retention and impact * Evaluate/assess impact of program * Create institutional identity for program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Integrate program into existing student organizations * Transition to full-time program director * Secure for institutional funding
Service-Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assess needs/assets regarding long-term sustained S-L partnerships * Organize S-L projects with poverty-serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Recruit additional faculty, students * Solidify community partnerships, MOUs * Evaluate impact of program on impoverished population served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Incorporate S-L project into additional syllabi * Compile an impact report * Secure a full time S-L Director position

For More Information:

Alli Kitchner
NYCC VISTA Program Coordinator
95 Brown Rd. #1006 Ithaca, NY 14850
ph: 607.254.6239 f: 607.254.6397
email: ak558@cornell.edu
http://www.nyccvista.org

