

VISTA Welcome Packet

You've been hired. What's next?

PSO Date: <<Date>>

Official Start Date: <<Date>>

PSO Location: <<Location>>

Site Training: <<Dates>>

**<<Project Leader's Name>>
<<Project Name>> VISTA Leader**

<<e mail address>>

<<phone number>>

Location: Chicago

Dates: February 7–11, 2006

What happens next with Pre-Service Orientation (PSO)?

A packet of information, along with ticket information (plane, train, or bus) will be delivered to you about two weeks before PSO. This information, along with the ticket, is prepared for you by the AmeriCorps state office. If you do not hear from them within a week before your PSO date, please contact your Lead VISTA.

At PSO, you will learn about the VISTA program, benefits, and bi-weekly stipend. You do not get paid for the days you are at PSO. However, all your meals and hotel accommodations will be paid for by AmeriCorps. You will also be reimbursed for any travel to and from plane, train, or bus stations.

What should I bring to PSO?

Please bring:

- Birth certificate or documentation of legal residence status
- Photo ID (driver's license or passport, government issued)
- Voided check for direct deposit
- Insurance card, if applicable
- Red Cross certification cards
- Your work plan, which is attached to this sheet

- Casual, comfortable clothes (you will be in meetings from 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. every day)
- A sweater (it gets cold in the hotel)

Will I get health insurance?

If you are not covered by another plan, health insurance is provided at no cost and starts the day after you are sworn in. More details will be given at PSO.

Am I eligible for paid time off or sick days?

VISTA members are eligible for 10 sick days and 10 vacation days per year. The <<Project Name>> also gives time off for <<site specific items>>.

How much will I be paid?

You will be paid << \$ amount >> per month. Direct deposits will be made to your account every other week. Federal taxes are taken out of each paycheck, depending on how much you claim on your federal W-2 statement.

What is the Education Award?

After a completed one-year term of service, you will receive an education award certificate or an end-of-service stipend, whichever you chose at the start of your service. If you have any educa-

tional loans, you can put them into forbearance during your service and any interest accrued during service will be paid at the end of your service year. PSO will give you information about the education award, end of service stipend, loan forbearance and interest accrual. Please see your VISTA Leader after PSO if you still have questions.

Can I get Food Stamps?

As a VISTA member, you may qualify for food stamps. Please call your VISTA Leader if you have any questions regarding food stamps.

What happens the first week after PSO?

The day after your PSO is over, you are officially a VISTA. Training starts the next week. Please take <<Day>>, <<Date>> as a day to recover from your PSO travels and take care of any personal business, such as moving, in preparation for the training. Here are the details for your on-site training:

Start date: <<Day>>, <<Date>>

Report to <<Project Name>>

Where: <<Address>>

When: <<Time>>

At the beginning of the week, we will give you a detailed schedule of the training. Here are some of the topics that will be covered during training:

Project overview

Introduction to project partners

Volunteer management

Expectations and policies

Being a VISTA in <<Location>>

<<Location>> demographic

Who is here to support you

<<Other site specific topics>>

What about my site assignment, work schedule and work hours?

Announcements of site assignments will be made late in the training week. VISTAs work 40 hours a week. Some VISTAs have after school or evening commitments with the programs at their sites.

What should I wear to work?

Many VISTAs ask about appropriate dress for their work setting. Generally, we suggest that you look at what is being worn by other staff at your site. That will give you a good idea of what to wear to work. <<Include dress recommendations for your site>>