

Project Committee Structures

I. Background and Rationale:

All VISTAs on our projects serve on one of four subcommittees designed to further our program goals and objectives as well as provide opportunities for ongoing professional development including leadership, grant writing, marketing, and technical skills such as web design and database management.

Our four committees are:

- Public Relations and Outreach
- Volunteer Recruitment and Placement
- VISTA and Volunteer Training
- Fundraising

II. Committee Goals:

A. Public Relations and Outreach

- Establish year-round working relationships with local media (print, television, radio) and other agencies (community centers, places of worship, universities) for the purposes of ongoing volunteer recruitment, VISTA recruitment, and overall project support

B. Volunteer Recruitment and Placement

- Receives applications routed through Lead VISTAs
- Monitors direct recruitment tools such as volunteeryourtime.org
- Tracks site requests and volunteers looking for placements, and matches them with our needs

C. VISTA and Community Volunteer Training

- Provide ongoing training opportunities for volunteers and VISTAs
- Organize and develop existing training materials

D. Fundraising

- Recognizes volunteers at all VISTA sites for their service by organizing tributes, luncheons, events, gift certificates, cards, awards, etc.
- Raises funds when possible for any committee that needs funding through charitable donations
- Serves as filter for business and other community resources

III. Committee Operation:

A. Initial Committee Assignment:

1. During our initial VISTA team training, current team members meet with new VISTAs and discuss the work of each committee, emphasizing the ways in which each offers opportunities for members to expand upon their individual interests and skills
2. New VISTAs rank the committees in terms of their own personal preferences
3. Project directors make the final assignments that take into account VISTA rankings, team needs, and current work loads

B. Committee Meeting Schedule:

1. The committees meet weekly for 30 minutes either before or after our regular team meetings, which ensures that all members are in one locale (facilitating communication and reducing excess travel time)
2. During initial meetings each year, each committee identifies specific activities related to their short- and long-term goals. These activities are noted on a work plan that is updated weekly. The plan includes columns for activities, next steps, deadline, assignments (who is responsible) and general comments.
3. Committee members rotate each week in taking notes and sending out updated work plans in advance of the next week's meeting
4. After the individual committees meet each week, we call the entire group together and provide 15 minutes for committee reports

C. Annual Cycle of Committee Activity:

Because of the flow of project activity on an annual basis, we find that each committee has its own cycle of busy periods followed by "down time". These follow the general yearly pattern of recruitment, training, placement and volunteer recognition at the end of the school year. As a result, the work of the project usually feels equitably distributed, and while some times are more intense in terms of timelines and labor, all share fairly equally in the overall tasks.