

**UAB<sup>®</sup> AMERICORPS**  
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# Site Supervisor Manual

Created: January 2024

**UAB** SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
The University of Alabama at Birmingham



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## UAB AmeriCorps Program

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### **About The University of Alabama at Birmingham**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is a world-renowned research university and medical center, occupying 100 city blocks in Alabama's largest metropolitan area. It is one of three institutions in the University of Alabama System that also includes the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and the University of Alabama in Huntsville. The UAB campus encompasses a medical center, located east of the Campus Green, and an academic center, which surrounds the Campus Green through University Boulevard South. The UAB AmeriCorps Program aligns with UAB's community engagement pillar. As we engage with the community in meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations that contribute to the public good. Our program aims to address social issues in Alabama, by placing year-long capacity building volunteers in service positions with community agencies to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement.

### **UAB VISTA Program Directory**

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## Onboarding New VISTAs

### **Prior to selection**

1. Supervisors will
  - a. Create a new VAD or use existing VAD for UAB approved for VISTA positions.
  - b. Actively recruit to fill openings to avoid gaps in service.
  - c. Interview and let program staff know of their VISTA selections in advance of recruitment deadline.

### **After selection**

2. VISTAs will complete UAB application.
  - a. This will be sent to members via the email associated with their AmeriCorps application.
  - b. Return this application to the VISTA Program Director.
3. VISTAs will complete UAB onboarding tasks.
  - a. Work with Program Director and Program Coordinators to complete the task below.
    - i. Submit Emergency Contact Form
    - ii. Set up Blazer ID
    - iii. Set up direct deposit
    - iv. Complete Teleservice Form
    - v. Photo Release Form
4. Supervisor will
  - a. Coordinate an on-site orientation and training for incoming members.
  - b. Ensure that member have workspace and access to necessary equipment on their 1<sup>st</sup> day of service.
5. VISTAs will get UAB ONE Card: **NOTE** If your member is not serving on UAB's campus they do not need a ONE Card.
6. Background checks: AmeriCorps will send members instructions on how to complete the alternative background check.

## Logistical Information

### Onboarding & Orientation

VISTA candidates will be emailed onboarding tasks from UAB, AmeriCorps and their placement site. It is important for candidates to check their email regularly and read the content thoroughly. As the information is critical to members to be enrolled in the program successfully. Site supervisors will provide an onsite orientation and training to help members become acquainted with their organization and their role within it.

### Hours

AmeriCorps VISTAs are expected to work 35- 40 hours each week. Depending on your site and specific project(s), the specific times may vary. Typical hours are 8:00 am-5:00 pm on Monday through Friday with an hour for lunch. VISTAs are required to complete weekly timesheets and VISTA reports through the [OnCorps system](#). These are to be approved by the member's direct supervisor. Please note that vacant VISTA positions will **not** be relisted if there are timesheets & VISTA reports pending supervisor review.

Members with incomplete timesheets and/or VISTA reports will not be re-enrolled for additional service terms. Additionally, members mileage reimbursements will not be approved if they have incomplete timesheets & VISTA reports.

### Pay Schedule

VISTAs serving through UAB are paid **bi-weekly** via AmeriCorps direct deposit. Members must ensure that their direct deposit and tax information is up to date in their [MyAmeriCorps Portal](#). The VISTA living allowance schedule can be found at the link below.

[2024 VISTA Living Allowance Schedule and Sample \(AmeriCorps.gov\)](#)

## Mileage Reimbursements

VISTAs cannot be reimbursed for daily travel to and from their site (i.e., they will not be reimbursed for mileage used to travel to work in the mornings or to travel back home in the evenings).

When traveling to meet with community partners and/or attending meetings off-campus, VISTAs may be reimbursed for their travel. The mileage reimbursement rate is in accordance with UAB policies and procedures.

To be reimbursed for mileage, VISTAs must complete the following steps:

- 1) Provide an agenda with the title, date, time, and location of the event. If they are not provided with an agenda, they can create one. Travel reimbursements must be submitted within **10 days** of a VISTAs trip.
- 2) Please also provide a link to Google maps that shows the distance from your site (not your home address) to the event location.
- 3) All this information will be submitted to the UAB VISTA Program Director. (A template is attached to the end of this manual.)

Reimbursements will be paid via UAB direct deposit. Information on how to set up a UAB direct deposit will be sent to members during their 1<sup>st</sup> week of service.

UAB will only provide you with a notice when the payment is dispersed via your UAB email. Turnaround time varies depending on when the reimbursement is fully approved by UAB. Mileage reimbursements are paid out according to the [UAB Finance schedule](#) based on when they are approved.

## Holiday Schedule & Time Off

Full-Time VISTAs are allowed **10 personal days, 10 sick days, and 5 emergency days** in accordance with the federal AmeriCorps VISTA policy. In addition, VISTAs receive all holidays designated by your site. Only those holidays noted are officially observed. Members who contract or are exposed to COVID-19 can request 14 calendar days of emergency leave if they are unable to work from home. The COVID-19 emergency leave can only be used once during your term of service. More information about leave benefits can be found [here](#)

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## Using the VAD Throughout the Project

This worksheet is specifically for sub-site supervisors. You are responsible for the day-to-day management of your VISTA throughout their term of service and the VAD is key to that responsibility. You may also take part in the recruitment and selection of the VISTA along with your intermediary supervisor. The worksheet below will help you plan how to use each individual VAD productively throughout the project.

**Individual VAD:** Describe in your own words the overarching goal or purpose of the VAD.

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Topic/Agenda Item	Implications for VISTA Member(s)	Resources to Use (From VISTA Campus)
<p><b>Use VAD during Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills required?</li> <li>• Competencies required?</li> </ul>	<p><i>It's important to match candidates' skills and competencies with those required by the VISTA assignment.</i></p> <p><i>How best to find people with these skills?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Attributes of Successful VISTAs</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Recruiting and Engaging Older Members</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Recruitment Team Training</a></li> </ul>
Topic/Agenda Item	Implications for VISTA Member(s)	Resources to Use (from VISTA Campus)
	<p><i>Where to look?</i></p>	<p><a href="#">&amp; Process Enhancement</a></p>
<p><b>Guide/Support Members with VAD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onboarding</li> <li>• Community entry</li> <li>• Providing direction</li> <li>• Giving feedback (positive and corrective)</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><i>The VAD gives useful clues for approaching all your important responsibilities in directing and guiding your VISTA.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Coaching &amp; Supervision "Checklist" of Must-do Functions</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Core Competencies of a Supervisor</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Introduction to Coaching</a></li> </ul>



<p><b>Use VAD as an Assessment Tool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the member meeting target goals?</li> <li>• If not, how is member missing goals?</li> </ul>	<p><i>The VAD itself provides useful measures for evaluating your VISTA's performance.</i></p>	
<p><b>Other</b></p>		

Funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps VISTA and produced by Education Northwest and Bank Street College of Education.

# AmeriCorps VISTA Member Problem-Solving VAD

<b>Program Concern:</b>	<b>Or change:</b>
<b>What is/was the original task/objective?</b>	
<b>VISTA Member – what was tried?</b>	<b>What were the results of the attempt, both good and bad?</b>
<b>Task 1:</b>	
<b>Task 2:</b>	
<b>New approach to the task:</b>	
<b>Task</b>  <b>Step 1:</b>  <b>Step 2:</b>  <b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Completion Date:</b>

Field-vetted resource contributed by University of Wisconsin Extension AmeriCorps, WI. Please retain the original program attribution when adapting or using this resource.

## Coaching and Supervision Checklist

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**Coaching** and **supervision** are related but are NOT the same thing. **Supervision** ensures that your VISTA has the right conditions and requirements to perform his or her service, including a full understanding of your organization's mission, goals, and vision, as well as a solid understanding of your community.

**Coaching** is about **performance, action, and strategies** that lead to success. Coaching grows from the:

### Foundation of good supervision.

The checklist below represents supervision and coaching techniques that are key for your work with VISTAs. Look for ways to enhance and amplify them.

#### Supervision

- Familiarize yourself with each member's VAD.
- Create a weekly check-in schedule.
- Prepare for the end-of-service transition.
  - Help member prepare for life after AmeriCorps.
- Create measurement milestones and progress indicators aligned with project goals (refer to the VAD).
- Provide resources and guidance in working with the community.
- Provide contact methods (phone, text, email, etc.) and reasonable hours of availability for a member to contact you.

#### Coaching and Communication

- Promote a culture of ongoing learning and growth.
- Ask open-ended questions and collaborate in problem-solving with your VISTA(s).
- Share with your VISTA(s) your conversation style, how you'll give feedback, and other working agreements.
- Provide actionable, positive feedback when appropriate.
- Be open to hearing VISTA complaints, obstacles, and frustrations without judgment.
- Assist VISTAs in finding their own solutions to problems.
- Provide networking and professional development opportunities for members.
- Develop protocols for addressing conflict.

## Challenges With Members

### I. Member Disciplinary and Dismissal

Neither UAB AmeriCorps PROGRAM nor the Partner Site has the discretion or authority to dismiss or separate a VISTA from service. **AmeriCorps** is the sole authority that can terminate a VISTA member's term of service.

If the site is having **performance-based** issues, the site supervisor must document in writing and immediately notify the UAB VISTA Program Staff of any issues that affect a member's performance. If a site feels that a member should be removed from service, the supervisor must provide proof of steps taken to resolve the situation. Clear documentation of the member's failure to improve and to meet expectations must be produced. Sites understand that, while the decision to release a member early will certainly be made in consultation with the partner site, ultimately it is the UAB VISTA Program Staff's responsibility to notify AmeriCorps. Sites also understand that the Program Director retains the right to refuse to request the early release without sufficient documentation of grievances and steps taken to address said grievances.

When a member violates the Member Service Agreement, VISTA Member Handbook, and the Standards of Conduct at the SITE LEVEL, the following protocol will take place –

- All offenses must be documented and explained, in writing, how the Member's conduct is to be redirected.
- Site supervisors will provide a copy to program staff. The site supervisor shall discuss all disciplinary actions with program staff prior to implementation.

For violations of Member Serve Agreement, VISTA Member Handbook, and the Standards of Conduct at the PROGRAM LEVEL, the following will occur –

- First offense – the Member Coordinator will issue a written warning and a copy will be placed in the Member's file.
- Second offense – the Member Coordinator will issue a second written warning and a copy will be placed in the Member's file.
- Third offense – the Program Staff will issue a written warning and may request termination of the VISTA from the project.

**\*The use of the Corrective Action Form from the partner site may substitute for one or more of the above steps.**

Members will be requested for release from service immediately for gross, egregious violations of the Member Service Agreement, VISTA Member Handbook, or Standards of Conduct.

***In the event of resignation, dismissal, suspension, or reassignment of a member, UAB VISTA Program will not refund any portion of the partner site contribution.***

## Hatch Act

### Limitations on Political Activities

AmeriCorps VISTA members, as well as AmeriCorps VISTA programs and projects, are subject to certain restrictions related to their engagement in political activities. Such political activities are classified as either: (1) engaging in electoral activities; (2) engaging in lobbying; or (3) participating in demonstrations.

#### Engaging in Electoral Activities

AmeriCorps VISTA members may participate in electoral activities to the extent the activities are allowed under a federal law called the Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. Chapter 73. The Hatch Act defines the rules and restrictions on political activities in which federal workers may engage. The Domestic Volunteer Service Act, at 42 U.S.C. § 5055, applies the Hatch Act to AmeriCorps VISTA members during their service.

The Hatch Act applies to all AmeriCorps VISTA members, whether they serve full-time or part time, at all times during their service, including off duty hours. Permissible activities under the Hatch Act, unless prohibited by other statutory authority, apply to members when they are on authorized leave or are not perceived to be performing as an AmeriCorps VISTA member (e.g., while not actually or perceived as performing service, or off duty service time).

Under the Hatch Act, during off duty service time, AmeriCorps VISTA members may engage in certain political activities, as follows:

- **May** be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections.
- **May** register and vote as they choose.
- **May** assist in voter registration drives.
- **May** express opinions about candidates and issues.
- **May** contribute money to political organizations.
- **May** attend political fundraising functions.
- **May** attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- **May** join and be an active member of a political party or club.
- **May** sign nominating petitions.
- **May** campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances.
- **May** campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.
- **May** make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections.
- **May** distribute campaign literature in partisan elections.
- **May** hold office in political clubs or parties, including serving as a delegate to a convention

Under the Hatch Act, AmeriCorps VISTA members are prohibited from always engaging in the following activities during service, including off duty service time:

- **May not** use their official authority or influence, as an AmeriCorps VISTA member, to influence an election.
- **May not** knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any individual or organization that has business before the Corporation for National and Community Service or the AmeriCorps VISTA program (e.g., an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsoring

- organization or project).
- **May not** engage in political activity while in service time as an AmeriCorps VISTA member (e.g., while on duty as an AmeriCorps VISTA member at a sponsoring organization or project).
- **May not** engage in political activity while in any office of the AmeriCorps VISTA program (e.g., while at the sponsoring organization or the project).
- **May not** engage in political activity while using a vehicle owned or leased by the AmeriCorps VISTA sponsoring organization or project.
- **May not** be a candidate for public office in a partisan election.
- **May not** wear political buttons while in service time as an AmeriCorps VISTA member (e.g., while on duty as an AmeriCorps VISTA member at a sponsoring organization or project).
- **May not** engage in political activity while wearing an article of clothing, badge, insignia, or other similar item that identifies the Corporation or the AmeriCorps VISTA program.

**Project Sites Cannot Ask VISTAS to –**

- Draft letters or materials for or against partisan candidates or legislative initiatives.
- Suggest a client call or write his/her representative in support of or in opposition to an issue.
- Conduct or encourage voter registration.
- Drive community members to the polls.

**Prohibited Activities**

- 1) Performing services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any: a) Presently employed worker; b) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged; c) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures. d) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency or sick); or e) Employee who is on strike or is being locked out.
- 2) At no time should a member be hired to perform any work for the project station even if it is unrelated to the member's service. Should a project station offer a full-time job to a member during his or her service year, the project station will be responsible for the full cash match as per the contract (Memorandum of Understanding).
- 3) VISTA member stipends cannot be supplemented nor modified monetarily.
- 4) Participating in efforts to influence legislation, including state or local ballot initiatives, or lobbying for your program.
- 5) Organizing a letter-writing campaign to congress.
- 6) Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office.
- 7) Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials.
- 8) Voter registration drives.
- 9) Organizing or participating in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes.
- 10) Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing.

11) Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

12) Engage in religious instruction; conduct worship services; provide instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship; construct or operate facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship; maintain facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship; or engage in any form of religious proselytizing.

13) Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, a labor union, a partisan political organization, or, in general, an organization engaged in the religious activities described in the preceding bullet.

### **List of Approved Financial and In-Kind Support**

Below is a list of support that your organization may provide to VISTA members. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is a site required to provide any such support.

Financial or in-kind support for VISTA members may be provided under the following conditions:

- Support is offered and available equally to all VISTA members at a site.
- Cash or checks (unless for reimbursable expenses) are not given directly to the VISTA member.
- Support offered does not violate VISTA's legislation that mandates VISTAs must, to the maximum extent practicable, make a commitment to live among and at the economic level of the people served.

#### **Relocation Assistance**

1. **Additional relocation travel assistance** – Sites may arrange and pay for or reimburse VISTA members for the travel and/or shipping costs that exceed the support provided by AmeriCorps without regard to the number of miles the VISTA member moved. Sites must purchase the travel or reimburse the VISTA member (member provides receipts) for such costs. Only in circumstances of reimbursement may funds be given directly to the VISTA member. Funds may not be given directly to the VISTA under any other circumstances.
2. **Match settling-in allowance** – Sites may provide an additional settling-in allowance up to the settling-in allowance set by AmeriCorps without regard to the number of miles the VISTA member moved. This support can help cover costs associated with settling into a new city that often exceed AmeriCorps's settling-in allowance (i.e., rental or lease application fees, credit check fees, security deposit, first and last month rent, deposits to turn on gas and utilities, etc.). Sites must pay the funds directly to the landlord or leading agent, utility company, etc. or reimburse the VISTA member (member provides receipts) for such costs. Only in circumstances of reimbursement may funds be given directly to the VISTA member. Funds may not be given directly to the VISTA under any other circumstances.
3. **Donated furniture, appliances, equipment** – Sites may give donated or used items to VISTAs to furnish their homes.

## Housing

VISTAs may accept offers of low-cost or free housing from community members, local organizations, educational institutions, or sites. Examples of housing support include:

1. **Rent/Mortgage** – assistance can be provided through a monthly rent or mortgage payment. All housing support must be paid directly to the landlord. A site *cannot* offer money directly to the VISTA to supplement their living allowance or pay utilities or other housing costs.

## Transportation

Sites may provide transportation support.

1. **Parking permits/passes** – Sites may pay parking permit or pass fees associated with a service site (e.g., a permit to park at the service site), without regard to whether the same support is provided to all staff.
2. **Public transit pass** – If public transit is required for service-related transportation or travel, Sites may provide a monthly or annual public transit pass in lieu of reimbursing the VISTA member for actual transit costs. Sites may provide VISTAs with transit passes to offset the costs of commuting provided they use sponsor funds.
3. **Mileage and gas gift cards for use of privately owned vehicle (POV)** – Sites may reimburse VISTA members at a mileage rate established by the sponsor for VISTAs that use a POV for service-related transportation or travel. However, UAB has funds to reimburse members for offsite VISTA related activities if a site does not have funds available.

VISTAs may not receive gas gift cards in lieu of reimbursement. Sites may provide VISTAs with gas gift cards to offset the cost of commuting provided they use sponsor funds.

## Food

1. **Meal plans associated with housing or free access to the sponsor's cafeteria** – Sites may provide meal plans associated with housing or free access to their cafeteria.
2. **Grocery card** – Sites may provide gift cards to grocery stores to VISTA members without regard to whether it is provided to all staff.

## Support Services

1. **Client support services** – Sites may allow VISTA members access to support programs that their organization administers and that are available to the public. VISTA members must follow the same objective criteria, qualification guidelines, and other processes that members of the public follow, without exception. VISTAs must not be involved in the administration of processing of any of these programs. In reviewing a VISTA's application for such assistance or services, the sponsoring organization must adhere to its policies and processes for awarding such services. The VISTA member's involvement must not present concerns where a reasonable person would perceive favoritism or a conflict of interest on behalf of the parties involved. For example, if a VISTA wants to apply to receive food from the food bank where she serves, she is subject to the same eligibility criteria and processes (application review, wait times, level of food distribution) as the public (e.g., VISTA cannot



receive preference to “jump the queue” for benefits). AmeriCorps is never involved in a VISTA’s receipt or denial of such assistance or services.

2. **Employee benefit programs (health, dental, employee assistance program)** – Supplemental benefits are optional benefits that host sites can offer if they are capable.
3. **Emergency assistance** – Sites may assist VISTAs members who experience emergency situations that fall outside the VISTA program’s standard emergency support (e.g., illness of a service animal, flare up of a medical condition not covered by the VISTA health care plan). The assistance is allowable when it does not present concerns that a reasonable person would perceive favoritism or a conflict of interest on behalf of the parties involved (e.g., a VISTA cannot receive preference to “jump the queue” for benefits).

## Other

1. **Access to sponsor managed facilities** – Sites may allow VISTA members to access their gymnasium, recreational facilities, library, or computer labs without regard to whether all staff is granted the same privileges. Sites may also assist members with accessing local centers that provide similar services. The UAB rec center is available to affiliates at a cost. At this time, we are not able to cover these charges for members.
2. **Birthday, holiday, and other special occasion gifts** – Sites may provide gifts provided they do not exceed existing employee or community volunteer appreciation gifts.
3. **Career and education support** – In keeping with the VISTA program’s commitment to provide educational and professional development, Sites may provide support with regards to attending professional conferences and classes – such as the payment of conference fees, travel, lodging and meals, or per diem that applies to standard employees. A VISTA’s participation in such conferences and classes must not interfere with VISTA service hours or performing VISTA service. Discounting or paying educational costs are also allowable when a mechanism is in place to pay the cost directly to schools or lenders or receipts exist to ensure that such payments are made on behalf of the VISTA. For full details regarding VISTAs taking educational courses during their service year, see the VISTA Policy allowing Members to Take Educational Classes while Serving.

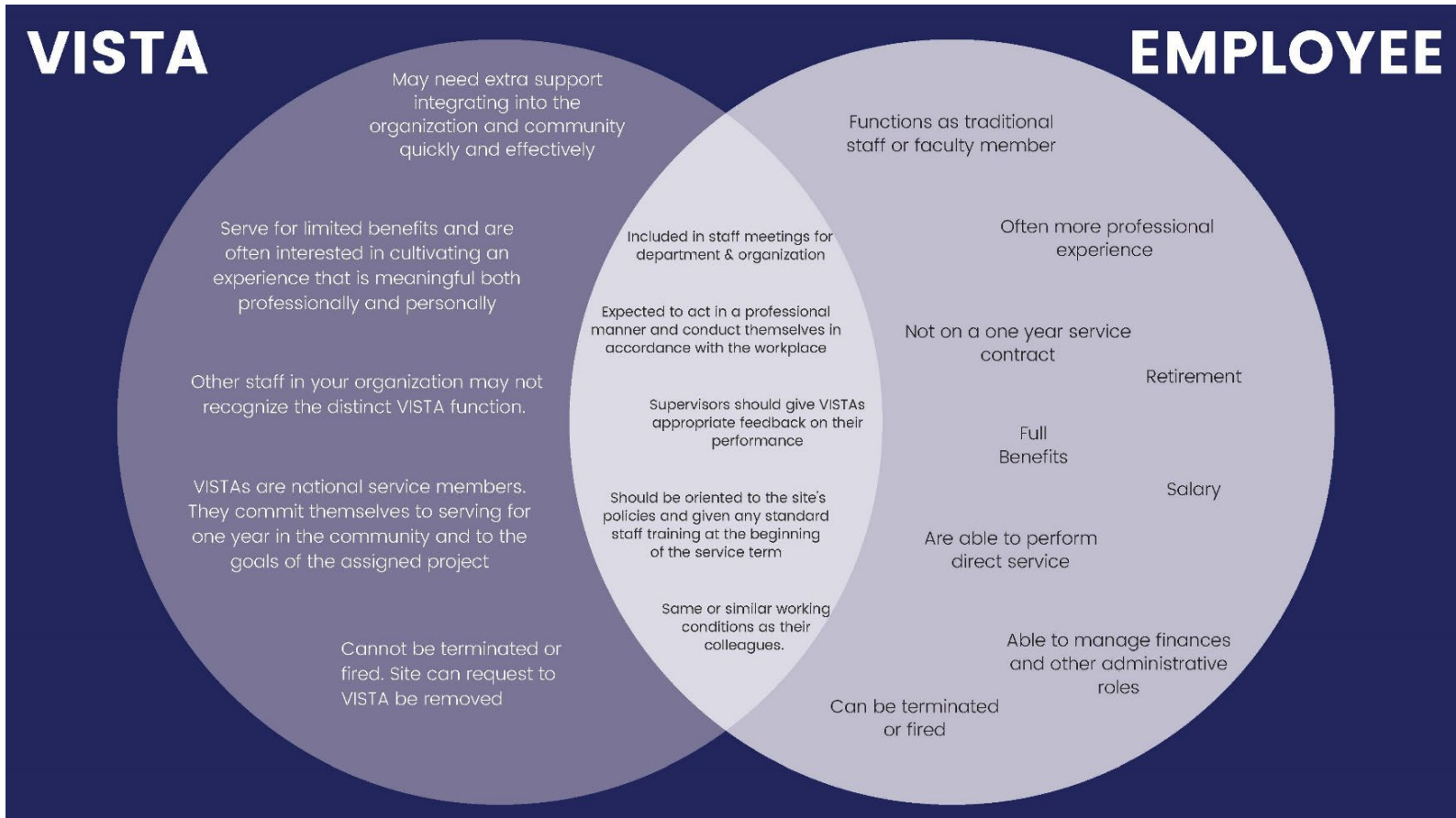
# UAB VISTA Chain of Command

## VISTA CHAIN OF COMMAND

When questions or issues arise during your VISTA service year, it can be difficult to know where best to turn for solutions. Members are encouraged to consult [VISTACampus.gov](http://VISTACampus.gov) in regard to VISTA policy and benefits. Please use this chart to guide you through your points of contact to find your resolution for any and all additional concerns.



# VISTAs vs Employees



## VISTA Mileage Reimbursement Template

Name:

Date	Starting Address	Destination Address	Reason for Travel	Roundtrip Miles

Insert map image for each trip and its return trip below:

Must haves:

- Name
- Date of Travel
- Total miles at top
- Start and end locations are the same (if applicable)
- Miles listed for each leg of trip
- Accurate map for each section
- No more than 5 chunks, or trips, per one form (if one travel day is more than 5 stops that is okay, but then don't include other days)
- Travel reimbursement must be submitted within 10 days of your trip (You can't submit a reimbursement on Sept 31st for a trip that was taken on Sept 1st)

## VISTA Supervisor Resources

1. [UAB VISTA Website](#)
2. [VISTA Campus](#)
  - a. Access to webinars related to VISTA supervision.
3. [Free Recruitment Kits](#)
  - a. Promotional items are available to support your recruitment and outreach efforts. To place an order: Create an account on the [AmeriCorps promotional items website](#). Use Item Name or SKU Number to easily search for each item: After completing your order, click “Check Out.” Enter your shipping address. No PO Boxes will be accepted. Click “Continue to Review.” Review your order at the top of the screen to ensure all items are added. In the Order Justification box, please include the following: **Name of your organization + SPONKIFY22**. Click “Complete Checkout. You will receive an email message that your order is complete with your order number. You can track your package by clicking on the link in your email.
  - b. You can request free materials once per quarter.