

VISTA Leader Action Learning Challenge Opportunity

The Action Learning Challenge is an opportunity to influence the VISTA leader experience for current and future leaders. This engaging learning model is designed to enhance professional skills through meeting a significant goal that will positively influence the future of the VISTA program.

Interested Leaders are required to make a commitment to participate in the challenge through its completion, which will take 5-6 months. The next Action Learning Challenge will begin in June 2013. More details will be shared during your VISTA Leader Orientation.

How does it work?

Action learning is an ongoing process of learning and reflection, supported by other team members and coaches with an intention of getting things done. Action learning teams agree to commit to completing a project that has been selected by the VISTA headquarters staff in Washington, D.C. The projects are selected with the goal of strengthening the VISTA program.

Informational Sessions

An informational session about the Action Learning Challenge will be held at the VISTA Leader Orientation. Follow-up informational sessions will occur via webinar for those who are interested in submitting an application.

Virtual Meetings and Coaching

Each Action Learning Challenge team will work and meet virtually using online collaborative tools throughout the course of the challenge. Each team is supported by an Action Learning Coach, who provides ongoing support and guidance. The Action Learning Challenge also provides participating VISTA Leaders the opportunity to provide peer coaching and facilitative leadership as they move through the Action Learning Challenge process.

What is the primary goal of the Action Learning Challenge?

The goal is twofold: (1) To enhance the VISTA program's capacity by engaging teams of VISTA leaders who are committed to applying their talents and additional time to an unmet VISTA program need while enhancing their capacity to support their VISTAs. (2) To enhance and develop the leadership skills and capacities of the VISTA Leaders who participate in Action Learning.

Ultimately, the Action Learning Challenge will result in effective practice recommendations, learning tools, and knowledge sharing, all of which will be made available in an attractive format to the VISTA community through the VISTA Campus. In effect, leaders have an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing development of VISTA leaders and the VISTA program. In addition the project enhances each participating VISTA Leader's portfolio and resume.

What will I gain from taking on the Action Learning Challenge?

Leaders participating in the challenge will receive professional development coaching from experienced organizational development consultants who guide and support the teams as they implement the Action Learning Challenge. Leaders will have an enhanced service and leader

experience, increased project management experience and a product that demonstrates their knowledge and experience.

How much time will be required from me?

You should expect to put in several hours a week attending virtual team meetings, participating in all team conference calls, and doing the work required to meet the challenge and produce a final product. In general, the projects will be completed within 5-6 months. You are strongly encouraged to consider your ability to commit to these time requirements before joining an Action Learning Challenge Team.

What do I need to do to be eligible for this opportunity?

1. You will need to attend an informational webinar. The webinars will be announced on the VISTA Leader campus and via an email.
2. If you are interested in submitting an application for consideration after attending an informational webinar, you will need to secure approval to participate from your Supervisor and State Office prior to actual submission of your application.

What projects have been selected?

The Action Learning Challenge project will be selected by the VISTA headquarters staff in Washington, D.C. and will be introduced during the informational webinar. These projects are selected with the goal of strengthening the VISTA program.

For example, following are the three Action Learning Challenge projects completed by VISTA Leader Action Learning teams:

Project 1: *A Guide to Making the Transition from VISTA Member to VISTA Leader.* This Action Learning Challenge focused on identifying and designing techniques and strategies to help new leaders in establishing their new role identity and carry out their newly acquired role and responsibilities effectively.

Project 2: *Keeping Cool Under Pressure* demands a high degree of self-awareness at many levels. This Action Learning Challenge group explored ways to steady the Leader's inner core and self-confidence in order to better manage the challenges of the external environment.

Project 3: *Getting Started: Your 30 Days and Beyond* was developed with the new VISTA Leader in mind. The product includes a compilation of resources designed to enable new VISTA leaders to connect to the resources they need to develop positive relationships with members, communicate more effectively with members, and develop more effective trainings for members.

Innovation is change that creates a new dimension of performance. - Peter Drucker