

# Manual for Alliance VISTA Data Tracking

September 2018



## INTRO

Minnesota Alliance With Youth VISTAs are responsible for submitting **Monthly Reflections** as well as completing four **Periodic Reports** and an end of year supplemental report throughout their term of service. Monthly Reflections include narratives on the successes and challenges of service and Professional Development updates. Monthly Reflections are due on the final day of every month and are submitted using SurveyMonkey. The link is emailed out by the VISTA Leader and can be found on the [VISTA Toolbox](#). A reminder email is sent at least one week before their due date. In the Periodic Reports, Members share specific details of their VISTA activities as they relate to their VAD as well as sick and personal leave time. Periodic Reports are submitted using a word document. VISTA Members and Supervisors receive an email from the VISTA Leader with their blank word document report attached on the last day of the reporting period. Members and supervisors then have 2 weeks to complete the report. Members must work with their supervisor when completing the periodic reports. It is ultimately the supervisor's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the report, and supervisors are who send the completed report back to the Alliance.

### REPORTING DATES:

- Monthly Reflections are due on the final day of each month starting in September.
- Periodic Reports are due on the following dates:

Reporting Period	Report Due Date
Start Date – September 30	October 12
October 1 – December 31	January 18
January 1 – March 31	April 19
April 1 – June 30	July 19
July 1 – Last day of service	Last day of service

## WORDS TO KNOW

**Monthly Reflections** – Monthly Reflections are short narratives that VISTA Members submit every month using SurveyMonkey. Members submit reflections on the successes and challenges of service, updates on their Professional Development plans, and leave time. The first monthly reflection is due the final day of September.

**VAD** – The VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) is a document that plans out a VISTA Member's year of service. VADs outline the **Host Site VISTA Goal** (the overall goal for the VISTA year of service), **Member Objectives** (3-5 objectives that the VISTA Member will achieve during their service year that align with the Host Site Goal), and **Member Activities** (the specific activities a VISTA does to achieve each Objective). When reporting, Members refer to their VAD as the framework of their service. If a Member takes on projects that are not accounted for in the VAD, contact the VISTA Leader. Use the VAD to help guide reporting.

**Periodic Reports** – Periodic Reports are submitted 4 times over the course of the VISTA service year. These reports capture the work the VISTA Members have done in reaching their Capacity Building and Anti-Poverty goals. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the report and for submitting the complete report to the Alliance.

**End of Year Supplemental Report** – The final report submitted on a member's last day. This report wraps up any loose ends following the 4th periodic report.

**Performance Measures (PMs)** - VISTA projects are developed on a foundation of two central factors: (1) to build the capacity of programs or organizations that (2) help individuals and communities out of poverty. Performance Measures for Alliance VISTA Members can be classified under these two categories – Capacity Building and Anti-Poverty. Members should refer to the Site Specific Performance Measures handout. If a Member needs another copy, email the VISTA Leader.

**Capacity Building Performance Measures** – The Capacity Building PMs set a goal for number of organizations and additional activities that the VISTA connects with or utilizes to build capacity for their Host Site.

**Anti-Poverty Performance Measures** – Anti-Poverty PMs set a goal for the number of students who complete a VISTA supported education program, and the number of students who complete a VISTA supported education program AND demonstrate improved academic engagement.

**Example Performance Measures:**

Each VISTA Host Site has Site specific Performance Measures. Email the VISTA Leader if the Member or Supervisor needs a copy of their Performance Measures.

	<b>Performance Measures (AKA Project Goals)</b>	<b>Output or Outcome</b>	<b>Target Goal</b>
Capacity Building	Number of organizations that received capacity building services. ➤ <i>Examples include: # of schools that received training on volunteer management; # of organizations attending coalition meetings; # of sites implementing host site programming.</i>	Output	9
	Number of additional activities completed and/or program outputs produced by the program. ➤ <i>Examples include: # of volunteer trainings; # of partnership development meetings; # of resources developed.</i>	Output	4
Anti-Poverty*	Number of students who completed a VISTA supported education program. ➤ <i>Examples include: # of youth who received mentoring; # of youth that attended conferences; # of youth leading focus groups.</i>	Output	180
	Number of students who completed a VISTA supported education program AND demonstrated improved academic engagement. ➤ <i>Examples include: # of youth reporting improved attitude toward school/school climate (out of total #); # of youth reporting increased motivation to be more engaged in school or learning (out of total #), # of youth who increased participation in school activities.</i>	Outcome	70

*\*Every VISTA Project has Capacity Building PM goals, but not every VISTA Project has Anti-Poverty PM goals*

**MONTHLY REFLECTIONS**

Performance Measures alone cannot tell the full story of the impact a VISTA member has on their community. Each month, Alliance VISTAs are asked to submit short narrative reflections on their service via SurveyMonkey, including stories about the impact they have on the community they serve, what they are working on at their sites, their own personal development, sick and personal leave, and feedback for the Alliance. The SurveyMonkey Link can be found on the [Toolbox](#). **These reflections are a core part of VISTA Members' data tracking responsibility. They are a required part of VISTA service and are meant to be shared with Site Supervisors.**

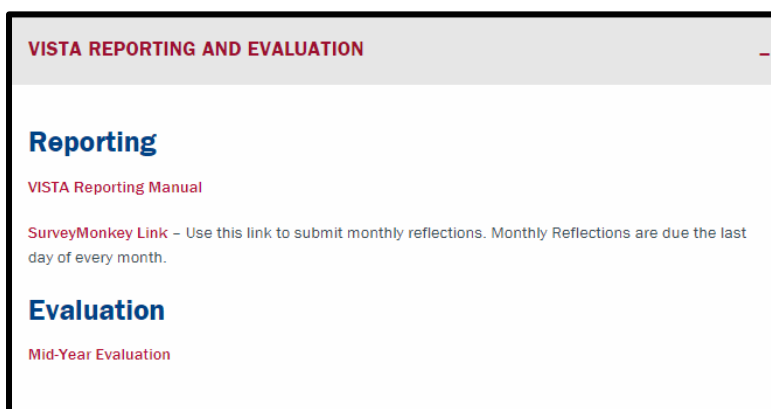
Understanding, sharing, and celebrating these stories is an invaluable part of service!

- It is one way for the Alliance VISTA team to learn more about what Members are doing at their Host Site, and to ensure that Host Sites are making appropriate use of the VISTA Member.
- It promotes personal reflection and helps Site Supervisors understand Member experience.
- It inspires fellow Alliance VISTAs.
- It helps the Alliance ensure we are doing what we say we will do to our funders.
- It articulates the impact of Alliance VISTAs in a personal and tangible way to our internal & external partners.

**The DUE DATE for each monthly reflection is the last day of the month** but they can be submitted at any point during the month. The VISTA Leader will email a reminder about Monthly Reflections at least one week before the due date.

## Submitting Monthly Reflections

1. Follow the SurveyMonkey link that the VISTA Leader emails out, or visit the [VISTA Reporting](#) section on the VISTA Toolbox.



2. Respond to the prompts. Be thoughtful and include more detail rather than less. Write as if the reader does not have prior knowledge of the VISTA Member Host Site or Project. Set aside at least 1 hour to complete this report prior to the due date.

A screenshot of a form titled "VISTA Monthly Reflections 17/18" with a teal header. The form is titled "Stories and Challenges" and includes the instruction "Answers should be at 1-2 paragraphs". There are three numbered prompts, each with a corresponding text input field:

- 2 Share a reflection from the past month of service.
- 3 Describe how you built capacity at your Host Site this past month. Examples include: New partnerships developed; Creation of resource; Grants raised; Media attention; etc
- 4 Describe a challenge you have faced in your service during the past month.

## PERIODIC REPORTS

VISTA Members are responsible for completing 4 periodic reports throughout their year of service. These reports capture the Capacity Building and Anti-Poverty Performance Measure goals that Host Sites have committed their VISTA Project to reaching. VADs are built around meeting these Performance Measures. It is estimated that Periodic Reports will take 2-3 hours to complete. Please make sure to set aside this time prior to the deadline.

1. Members and Supervisors receive an email from their VISTA Leader with an attached Word Document Periodic Report.
2. The Report is organized by Performance Measures. Members and supervisors list and describe each organization that received capacity building services and each additional activity that is completed. It is important to provide enough information and context when describing the organizational relationship or additional activity that the report can be verified.

Data submitted from past Reporting Periods will be included in future reports. Members and Supervisors can decide how best to fill out the report. The Member can fill out the report on their own and have their Supervisor look over it, or the Member and Supervisor can do it together – whatever works for the Member Supervisor pair! Supervisors are ultimately responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the report and for submitting the finalized reports back to the Alliance.

### Example of Blank Report

Performance Measures	Target Goal	To date reported total	Period 3 total (number list and brief description)
Number of organizations that received capacity building services.	2		
Number of additional activities completed.	3		
Number of students who completed a VISTA supported education program.	15		
Number of students who demonstrated improved academic engagement.	12		<i>How was improved engagement measured?</i>

## DEFINITIONS

**ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECEIVED CAPACITY BUILDING SERVICES** – List every **external** organization that received capacity building services as a result of the VISTA member's service. **Do not** include already existing partnerships. Examples include: schools that received training; organizational coalition meetings; organizations implementing Host Site programming.

*Example: West Side Summit Academy – is implementing curriculum on student leadership that VISTA created.*

**DESCRIBE ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES COMPLETED** – List every Additional Activity **completed** while the VISTA Member worked towards achieving their VAD Objectives. Think of Additional Activities as all projects completed. These can be big or little, examples include: volunteer trainings; partnership development meetings; curriculum written; resources developed (1-pagers, blog posts, research report).

*Example: 1-pager on the impact of our programming on student engagement*

**NUMBER STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED VISTA PROGRAM** Only count students who at this point in time have **completed** a VISTA supported program. Examples include: # of youth who received mentoring; # of youth that attended conferences; # of youth leading focus groups.

*Example: 20 students: attended weekend retreat 10/13-10-15 with curriculum developed by VISTA*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO IMPROVED ACADEMICS** Number of students who completed a VISTA supported education program AND demonstrated improved academic engagement. Only count students who at this point in time have **completed** a VISTA supported program. Include how academic engagement was measured. Examples include: # of youth reporting improved attitude toward school/school climate (out of total #); # of youth reporting increased motivation to be more engaged in school or learning (out of total #), # of youth who increased participation in school activities.

*Example: 15 students, pre/post survey*

**SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE TIME** Members are allotted 10 sick days and 10 personal days over their service term. VISTAs must report to the Alliance the specific sick and personal days they take over the course of the year. Supervisors must review the submitted days to ensure accuracy.

## Example of a Completed Report

	Personal Days (specific dates) 10 allotted	Sick Days (specific dates) 10 allotted	
Reported to date	8/15	9/28	
Planned dates	12/23, 12/27		
Performance Measures	Target Goal	To date reported total	Period 2 total (number list and brief description)
Number of organizations that received capacity building services.	2	1. <i>Washington Elementary School – school is implementing restorative curriculum developed by VISTA.</i>	2. YMCA– VISTA member compiled research development of partnered mentoring program.
Number of additional activities completed.	3	1. <i>Partnership meeting with Community College - discussed potential volunteer opportunities for college students with our students</i> 2. <i>Circle Curriculum – created a circle curriculum specific for teachers and students in county</i>	3. Restorative mentoring research (1-pager and brochure) – completed research on the importance of mentors utilizing a restorative approach.
Number of students who completed a VISTA supported education program.	15	7 students – <i>students attended a week long camp that utilized restorative curriculum developed by VISTA.</i>	7 students – 7 new students attended week long camp that utilized restorative curriculum developed by VISTA.
Number of students who demonstrated improved academic engagement.	12	5 students – <i>students who demonstrated improved academic engagement following the restorative camp.</i>	4 students – <i>students who demonstrated improved academic engagement following the restorative camp.</i>  <i>How was improved engagement measured?</i>

- Supervisors email the completed Periodic Report to the VISTA Leader and Program Manager by the end of the day on the due date. Be sure to CC the Member as well.
- The Alliance VISTA Team will review the submitted report and contact Supervisors and Members with follow up as needed.
- When the next Reporting Period ends, Members and Supervisors will receive an email from the VISTA Leader with an updated Reporting Form that includes verifiable data from past reports. Members will repeat the reporting process, and they will be able to see what information was shared in previous Periodic Reports. Sites will be able to build on the data they have already submitted. This is helpful for following up on projects that may have ended early on in the Reporting Period, for remembering what organizations and activities have already been included in a Periodic Report so that the data is as accurate as possible, and promotes a cohesive development of VISTA projects.

Reporting can be complicated! Please contact the VISTA Leader or Program Manager at any point when a Member needs data support.