Welcome to

Writing Fabulous VADs

Dial: 888.982.7417   Passcode: 9437104

Session Goals

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to:

- Articulate the key elements of an effective VAD.

- Define VISTA's focus on capacity building and community engagement.

- Write member activities that reflect VISTA's focus on capacity building and community engagement.

- Work with VADs as a living document that is tailored to the needs of their community and organization.

Today's Speaker

Cathy Lins

VISTA Trainer, Education
Northwest/JBS International,
Development Plus, Inc.

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What is a VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)?

- Details activities a VISTA member will perform

- Customized for each VISTA member

- Foundation on which the entire member experience is built

What does a VAD do?

- Serves as position description and work plan
- Translates proposal milestones into a realistic set of activities
- Helps VISTAs identify a course of action
- Evolves to fit the member and project needs
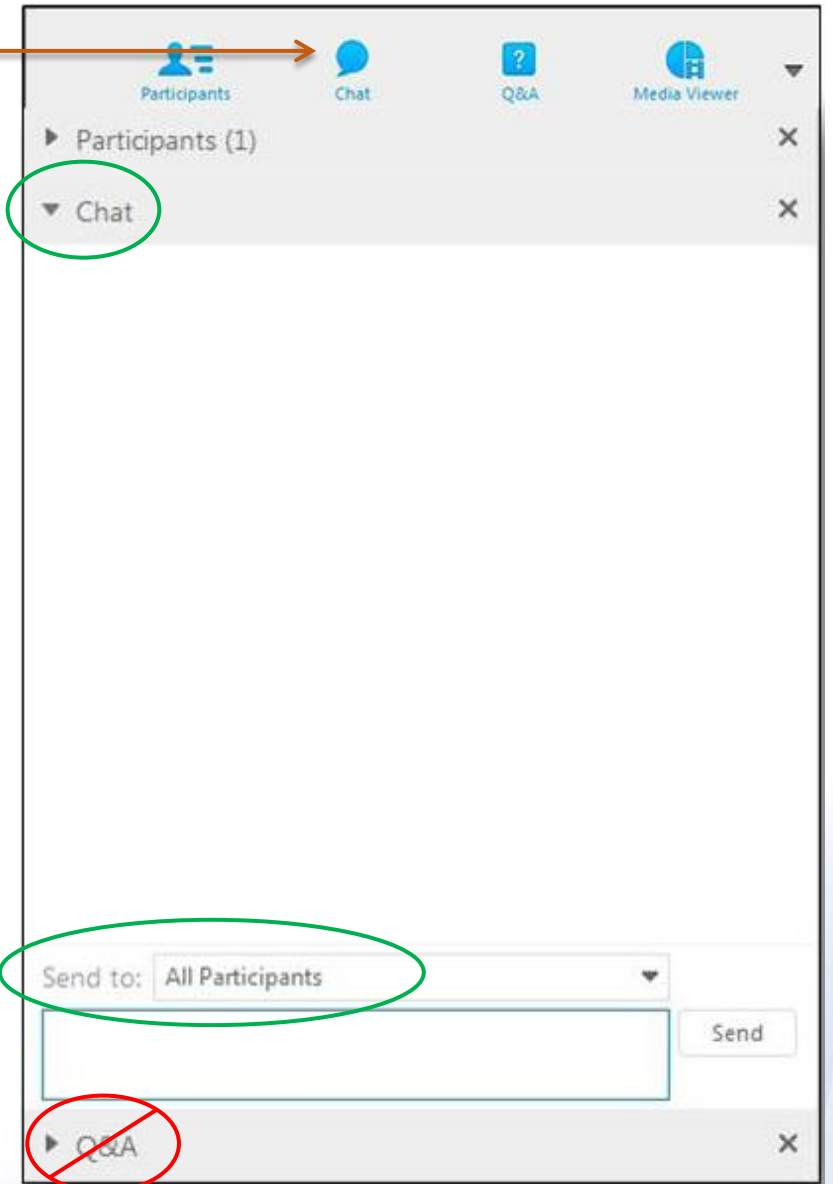- Assists with recruiting and tracking performance

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Core Principles that the VAD is Based on:

- Sustainability

- Building Capacity

- Empowering Communities

Chat Question

- What is sustainability of a project?

- What would we see happening if a project was sustainable beyond the VISTAs being there?
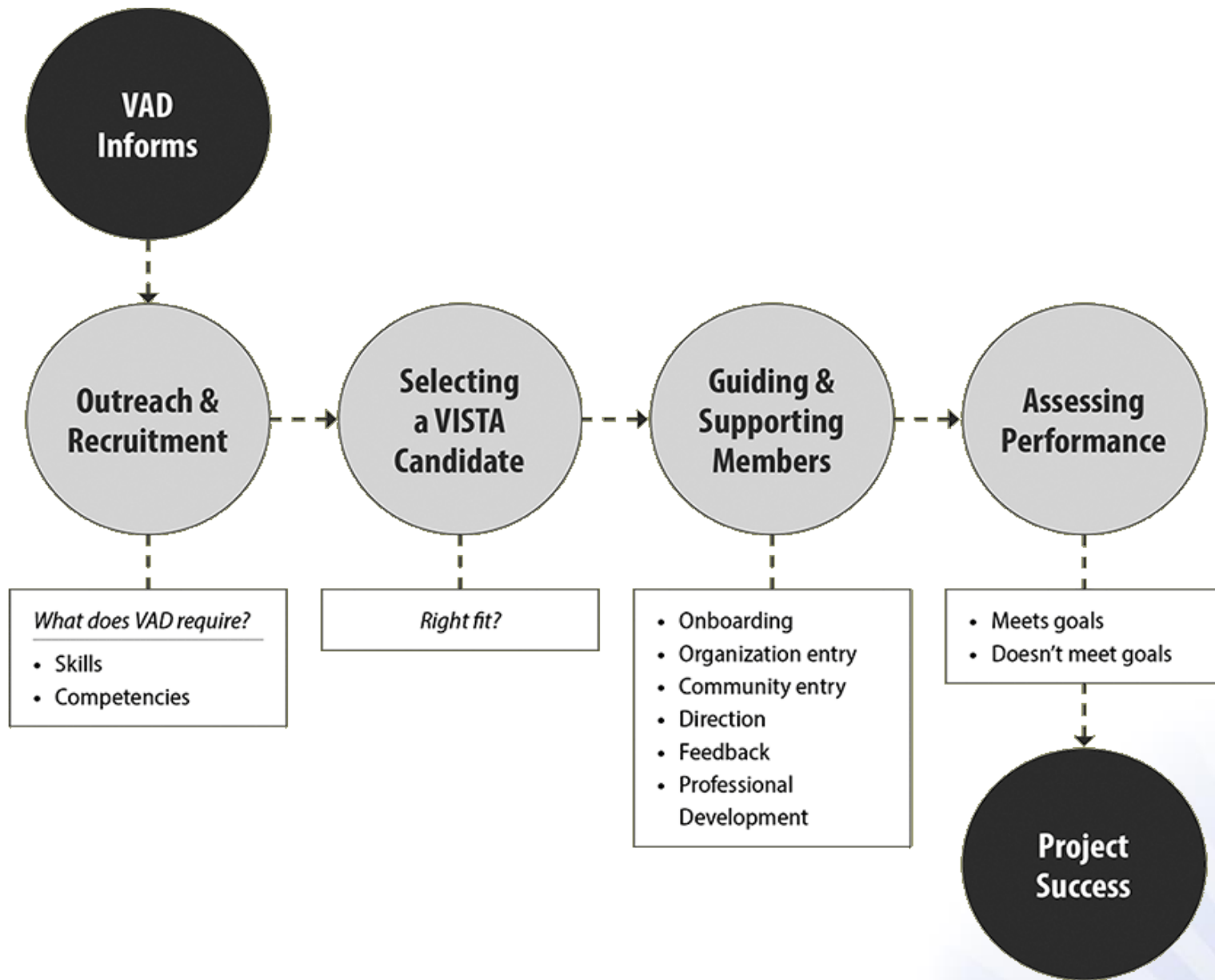
Program Sustainability

Building Capacity for Sustainability

VISTA projects build capacity to support program sustainability.

VISTA members:

- Create, expand or strengthen organizational systems or processes

- Engage and empower community members and organizational partners

Poll Question

How many of you have used a VAD for…?

Key Elements of a VAD

1. Title
2. Details
3. Project Goal
4. Objectives
5. Member Activities

Sample VAD available at:

www.vistacampus.gov/supervisors/vista-assignment

TITLE	Mentor Recruitment and Management Systems Designer
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	Waketa Community Services (WCS)
PROJECT NAME	MentorCorps
PROJECT NUMBER	12ABCD345
PROJECT PERIOD	08/20/20XX - 08/19/20YY
SITE NAME	*if applicable*
FOCUS AREA(S)	Education (Primary)
NOTE	If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.

VISTA Assignment Objectives & Member Activities

| PROJECT GOAL	To help ensure that children of incarcerated parents receive the educational, social, and emotional support they need to help them break the cycle of poverty, the MentorCorps VISTA project will build the capacity of WCS by developing a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management system for its mentoring program.
OBJECTIVE	Assess the current state of WCS' efforts in reaching, selecting, and supporting volunteer mentors, and create or revise policies, procedures, and documents to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentor recruitment and matching system.
MEMBER ACTIVITIES	1. Research the history of volunteer programs at WCS. a. Identify strengths and challenges of the current program.

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Project Goal

- Addresses Poverty

- Defines how the VISTA activities will build capacity

PROJECT GOAL: To help ensure that children of incarcerated parents receive the educational, social, and emotional support they need to help them break the cycle of poverty, the MentorCorps VISTA project will build the capacity of WCS by developing a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management systems for its mentoring program.

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Objectives & Member Activities

Objectives identify what the VISTA will achieve
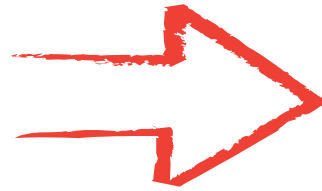
→ Member activities specify what VISTAs will be doing to achieve objectives

SAMPLE OBJECTIVE:

By January 2016, plan outreach systems and build partnerships with community organizations in order to spread the word about the mentor program. Develop targeted marketing materials.

TIP:

Start with the Performance Milestones in the Action Plan section of your project application and edit into appropriate activities.

Steps for Writing Objectives

✓Describe the outcome of a set of activities in a sentence or two

✓Check that what you've written aligns with your goal statement

✓Check that you've included a completion date

Strengthen Objectives

3. Transfer

2. Act

1. Assess

Objectives: Level 1 - Assess

- Current state of systems
- Key players and the part they play
- Historical environment
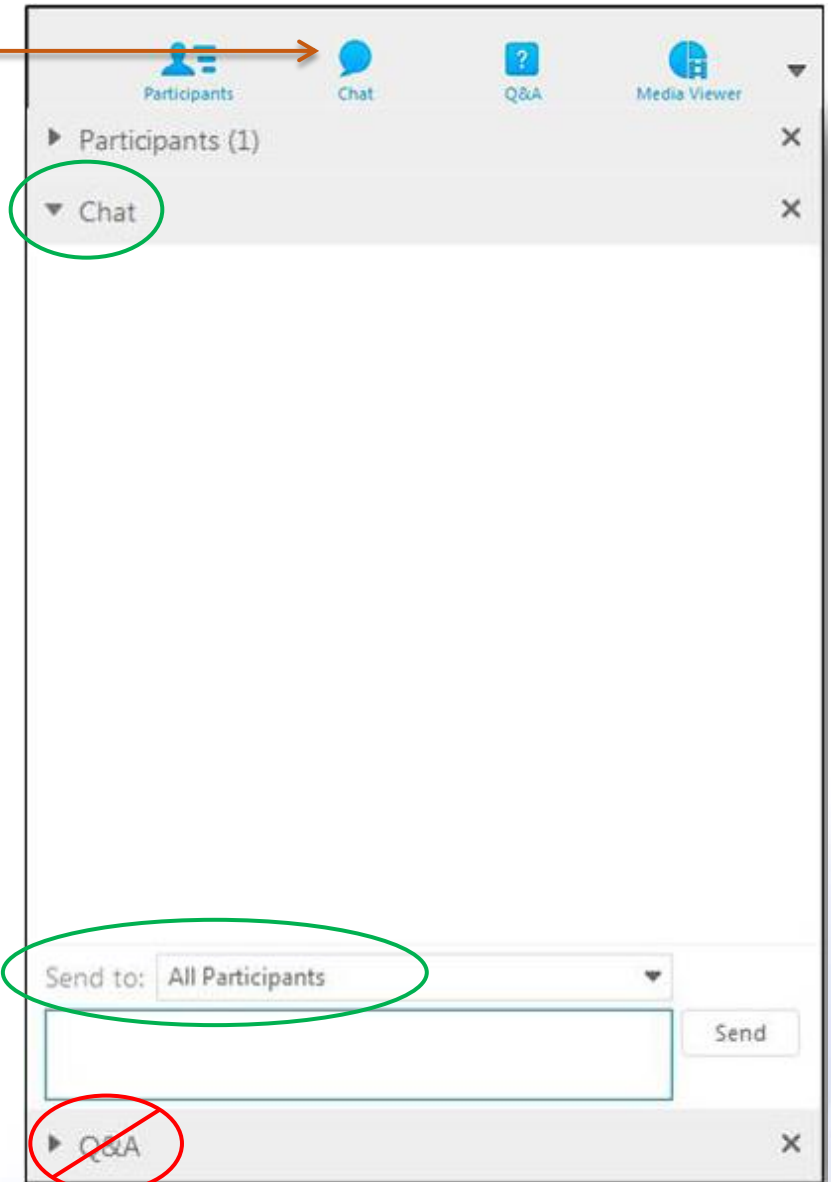- Engagement of the target community

Member Activities Connect to Objective

- What are some member activities a VISTA could do for this objective?

OBJECTIVE: Assess the current state of WCS' efforts in reaching, selecting, and supporting volunteer mentors and create or revise policies, procedures, and documents to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentor recruitment and matching system by January 2016.

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Objectives: Level 2 - Act

- Create the tools
- Create the processes

OBJECTIVE: Set up outreach systems and build partnerships with community organizations in order to spread the word about the mentor program. Develop targeted marketing materials.
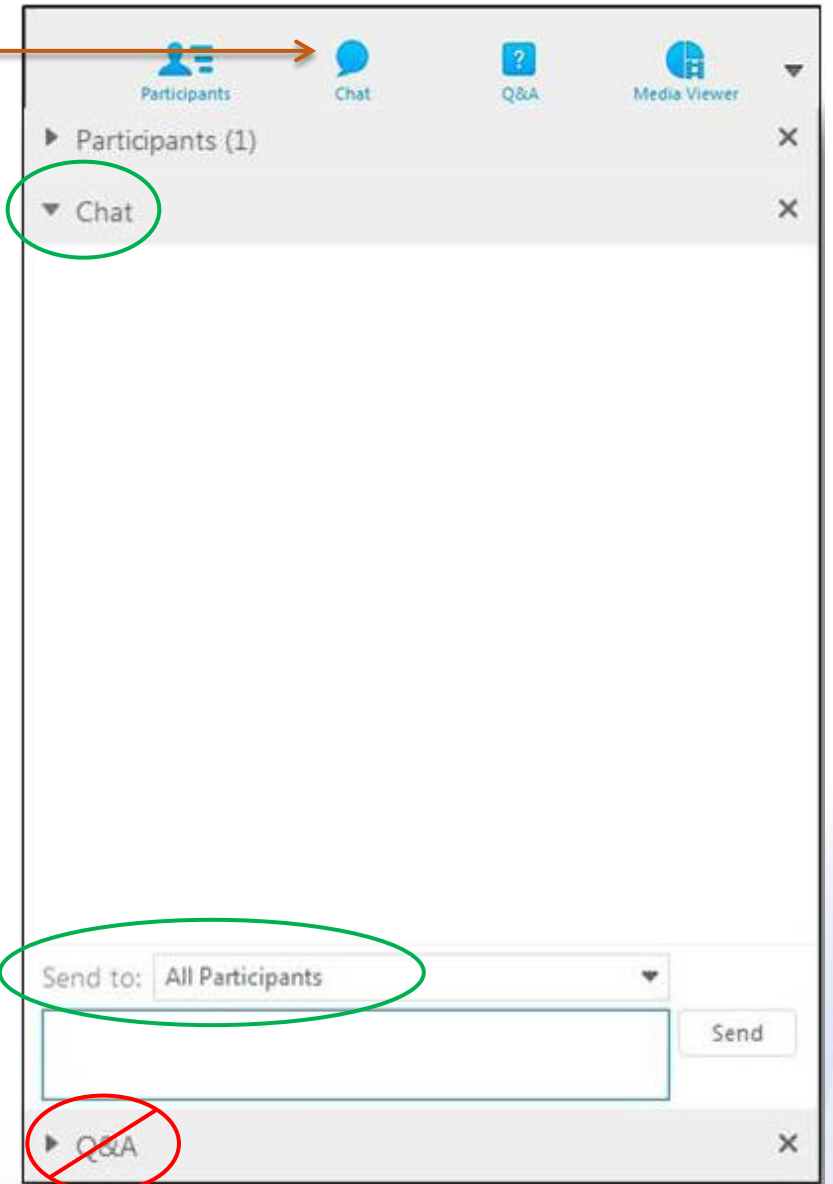
Objectives: Level 3 - Transfer

- Transfer knowledge
- Transfer products
- Transfer relationships

OBJECTIVE: Set up training for new volunteer coordinator.

Chat Question

- What activities could you include in a VAD to ensure the sustainability of your program?

Objectives and Activities Format

Objective of the Assignment (mm/dd/yyyy - mm/dd/yyyy)

First objective of this assignment, written in a sentence or two.

Member Activities

- **Activity 1** and how it will contribute to accomplishing Objective 1.
  - Sub activity of the first activity
  - Another Sub activity of first activity
- **Activity 2**
  - Sub activity of second activity

Member Activities Format

- Start sentences with active verbs
- Be clear and specific, avoid too much detail
- Be realistic and delineate activities for each year of the project
- Delineate the work for each year

Chat Activity

Write a sub activity for the following member activity:

ACTIVITY: Establish a volunteer system and build partnerships with community organizations to engage community members as mentors. Develop needed databases; and forms and procedures by November 2016.

Member Activities
1. Set up a recruitment system.
    a.
    b.
    c.
2.

Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.

Participants   Chat   Q&A   Media Viewer

▶ Participants (1)

▼ Chat

Send to: All Participants

Send

▶ Q&A
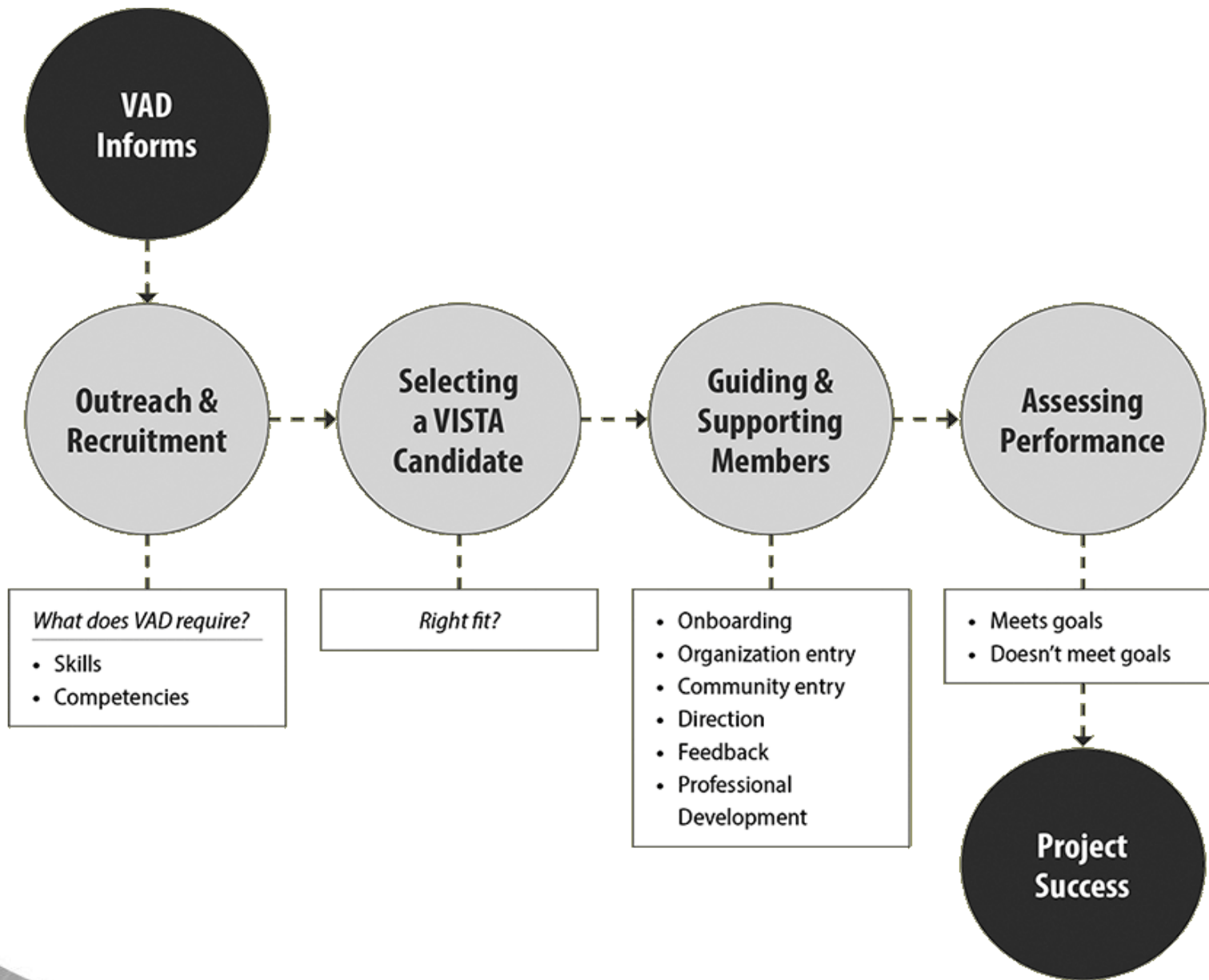
The VAD is a living document!

Recap

- Key Elements of an Effective VAD
- Member Activities that reflect VISTAs focus on capacity building and community engagement
- Work with VADs as a living document that is tailored to the needs of their community and organization.

Next Steps

- ✓ Review your existing VAD(s) with a critical eye
- ✓ Create a customized VAD for each member
- ✓ Add date ranges to each objective
- ✓ Detail out sub activities for each objective
- ✓ Update VADs that are out-of-date
- ✓ Ensure every candidate has an up-to-date and complete VAD for use at PSO

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Evaluation

- Please take a few moments to share your feedback through the quick poll on the right side of the screen.

- How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?

- Thank you very much for your time and participation!

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Questions ?

- To ask a question verbally, call in using the number on this slide and press *1

- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask "All Panelists"

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Thank You for Your Participation!

If you have further questions or for more information, contact us: **VISTAwebinars@cns.gov**

Our next webinar:

Crafting a Compelling Service Opportunity Listing

March 15, 2016

2:00pm Eastern

*Visit the Supervisor Webinars page on the VISTA Campus
for a schedule of upcoming webinars and recordings of past webinars*

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