Alum Engagement

Goals

1. Mentorship for the next class/generation of service members
2. To help new members see the big picture perspective to increase retention
3. Build a better donor base.
4. Brand-building/branding for the program
5. Attract potential sites to host VISTAs

Incentives

Alum and currently serving VISTAs both benefit from alum engagement. For VISTAs currently serving they get networking opportunities and shown how service is a stepping stone/springboard for professional development. Alums get awards for service recommendations and chances to tap into PHENNDs network. Both share references and job opportunities/connections. And PHENND gets a list of "trusted messengers", Word-of-Mouth (WoM) for recruiting, and help to coordinate closing/"graduation" ceremonies.

Resources to use

PHENND can tap into our diverse networks to share resources with alums as well as send their info to external partners. Resources to tap into include:

- Social media platforms
- National Service Task Force (NSTF) events
- Get funds for food from PennSERVE
- Get awards for service (past/present) from PennSERVE

We can seek best practices for how to engage alums from our partner universities. Moreover, we can tap into second year serving members to function as informal mentors. Alums can also be combined together to form alum 'families' with similar interests who can generate resources for specific VISTAs.

Calendar

A general suggestion of activities to do throughout the year to engage Alums.

Start of the Year

- Hosting alum panels
- Update and build upon your alum contact information
- Hosting an alum picnic/ice-cream social
- Match VISTAs with Alums for Mentors

Middle of the Year

- Next steps panel
- MLK/Event invitations
- Mock-interviews w/ alum
- Spotlights on social media

- Invite them to holiday parties
- Send out jobs and ask for jobs to send to current members
- Bringing back alum to serve if you’re having low retention
- Have alum be readers for host applications

End of the Year

- Gather personal emails from current members to put on the alum lists
- Life after AmeriCorps fairs
- Recruiting/career fairs
- Ramp up for the next year of mentoring program
- Exit interviews
- Find a key-note speaker at the ending ceremony

Best Practices

There are few things to consider in expanding the alum engagement programming. First how might branding the service year generally as AmeriCorps, rather than PHENN and/or VISTA, help alums connect to national service members more generally. This can be achieved by continually encouraging alums to connect with the NSTF network through Gerolly. This is not to say that recognition should be taken away from the program. There should still be opportunities to foster pride in the program and the work alums did specifically.

Currently serving VISTAs should also be prepped for how to become successful alums. The program should create a process that fosters open communication, sets communication experctions, and outlines the best, or preferred, ways to communicate. On our end we should ensure that we are keeping track of ways to stay engaged with PHENND. A potential way to gauge this is to create an alum interest board.

Activities

Mentoring Program

The overall goal is to provide a tangible touch point for alum and to improve our career preparation for currently serving VISTAs. The Education VISTA Leader will manage/monitor the School-Based VISTAs mentorship and the Non-Profit VISTA Leader will manage/monitor the continued mentorship of the NP VISTAs. 440 VISTAs will be split up based upon which VISTA Leader they respond to.

The first step is to survey Alum and currently serving VISTAs to determine their interest to participate in the program. You are seeking to collect the following information to build profiles for each potential participant:

Alum:

[Yes/Maybe]

[Headshot]

Name (Pronouns)
Email
College / University (Subjects)
Highest Degree
Current Position / Field
Current Employer
Current City / Hometown
About

VISTAs:

[Yes/Maybe]

Name
Site
Roadblocks In the Workplace
Professional Coaching Needs
Interests
Career Goals

Prospective matches

- Firstname Lastname (Pronouns) (Commonalities/connections, Location, VISTA Track)

All VISTAs should fill out a Mentoring Agreement with their mentor, sign it, and send a scanned copy for you to save in the folder. These will be your basis of evaluation at the end and middle of the Mentor Program year. You will evaluate the program by sending out this survey for alum/this survey for VISTAs in the middle of their mentorship and at the end of the program year. Be sure to make a copy and rename it for each iteration for which you send it. Use the data to improve the delivery of the program.

A complete description of the program can be found in the mentoring manual.

Alum Audits

Twice a year, as part of your role, you will conduct alum audits. These will be a combination of researching via LinkeIn, emails, and phone calls to continually update the alum tracking system

Subject Header: PHENND Fellows Biannual Alum Audit

For fully filled-out profiles

Hi [First],

My name is [First Last], the Non-Profit VISTA Leader here at PHENND. I am assuming the responsibilities of tracking our alum and the alum we inherited from assuming Philly Fellows in 2016. With the past combined 13 years of service, there are lots of potentials for us to help you and for you to help our current VISTA Corps. To streamline this and make it more effective, we are consolidating alum information and filling in the gaps. The Non-Profit VISTA Leader will contact you twice a year to see where you are in your professional career and see how we can best support you.

To help us out, please take 5-10 minutes to review the following information and double-check its accuracy:

1. Is this the best email by which to reach you? If not, by what is a better email for us to contact you?
2. Is this the correct LinkedIn page [link]? If so, how regularly do you update it or check it for accuracy? If you update it regularly, would you like us to use it as a reference instead of a biannual email check-in?
3. Are these the past titles you've held and organizations you've worked at since completing your year of service? [list all titles and organizations]. Is there anything to add?
4. Is this your correct current city? [City, ST]. If not, what is your current city?
5. Is this your correct hometown? [City, ST]. If not, what is it?
6. Is this the correct place where you served during your VISTA year? [Name of Organization]. If not, what was it?
7. Is/Are this/these the correct college(s)/university(s) you attended and the correct degrees conferred or that you are obtaining? [Insert (Institution, Degree)]. If not, what is missing?
8. You have indicated that you are/are not interested in being a mentor for VISTAs. Do you want to/still want to be considered for this?
9. Do you receive the PHENND Updates? If not, do you want to receive them?
10. Do you receive the Alum Newsletters? If not, do you want to receive them?

Extra Credit: Are you willing to help facilitate training in the following topics in person or via a webinar?

- outreach/community engagement
- coalition-building
- community meeting/workshop facilitation
- volunteer management
- managing up

- planning
- fundraising
- monitoring/data analysis
- program evaluation

I'd like to thank you again for your year of service! Let me know if you have any questions and how we can help you in the future.

Best,

For empty profiles

Hi [First],

My name is [First Last], the Non-Profit VISTA Leader here at PHENND. I am assuming the responsibilities of tracking our alum and the alum we inherited from assuming Philly Fellows in 2016. With the past combined 13 years of service, there are lots of potentials for us to help you and for you to help our current VISTA Corps. To streamline this and make it more effective, we are consolidating alum information and filling in the gaps. The Non-Profit VISTA Leader will contact you twice a year to see where you are in your professional career and see how we can best support you.

To help us out, please take 5-10 minutes to answer the following information:

1. Is this the best email by which to reach you? If not, by what is a better email for us to contact you?
2. What is your correct LinkedIn page? Do you regularly update it or check it for accuracy? If you update it regularly, would you like us to use it as a reference instead of a biannual email check-in?
3. What are the past titles you've held and organizations you've worked at since completing your year of service? (This is to measure your professional journey and/or to connect you better to current VISTAs for mentorship or informational interviews)
4. In what city do you currently live/work? (This is to measure how many people stay or come back to Philadelphia)
5. What is your hometown? (This is to measure how well the program recruits from the Greater Philadelphia Area)
6. Where did you serve during your VISTA year?
7. What is/are the correct college(s)/university(s) you attended and the degrees you received or are currently obtaining? (As a higher education consortium, educational attainment is important to us.)
8. Are you interested in being a mentor for present or future VISTAs? (You may answer 'yes', 'no', or 'maybe'. If 'yes'/'maybe', we will put you on a list of potential mentors. If you are a good match we will check-in again to see if you are still interested before assigning you to a mentee.)
9. Have you done any national service (AmeriCorps/Peace Corps) prior to your VISTA year? Have you done any national service since completing your VISTA year?
10. Do you receive the PHENND Updates? If not, do you want to receive them?
11. Do you receive the Alum Newsletters? If not, do you want to receive them?

Extra Credit: Are you willing to help facilitate training in the following topics in person or via a webinar?

- outreach/community engagement
- coalition-building

- community meeting/workshop facilitation
- volunteer management
- managing up
- planning
- fundraising
- monitoring/data analysis
- program evaluation

I'd like to thank you again for your year of service! Let me know if you have any questions and how we can help you in the future.
Best,

For incomplete profiles
Hi [First],
My name is [First Last], the Non-Profit VISTA Leader here at PHENND. I am assuming the responsibilities of tracking our alum and the alum we inherited from assuming Philly Fellows in 2016. With the past combined 13 years of service, there are lots of potentials for us to help you and for you to help our current VISTA Corps. To streamline this and make it more effective, we are consolidating alum information and filling in the gaps. The Non-Profit VISTA Leader will contact you twice a year to see where you are in your professional career and see how we can best support you.
To help us out, please take 5-10 minutes to answer the following information:

- mix/match the above statements based upon what is there and what is missing.

Alum Tracking

Tracking engagement and contact information has been consolidated to one tracker. The tracker currently has the following information:

- Under **General Info**: Has their name (which is also a link to their LinkedIn profile), The year they served, a phone number and/or an email address, where they went to undergrad, if and where they went to graduate school, where they served, and their hometown that is linked to the **MSA Philadelphia** tab.
    - Why?
        - Name: obvious reasons
        - LinkedIn Profile: to remotely monitor their changes in careers
        - Service Year: to understand how far along their career they will generally be
        - Contact Info: obvious reasons
        - Educational Attainment: match VISTAs with alums who have gone to the same schools or have matriculated through programs in which the VISTAs are interested in pursuing.
        - Where they Served: to connect VISTAs who are serving at the same location or want to know more about the organization.
        - Hometown/MSA Philadelphia: to calculate in the last row whether they are from the Greater Philadelphia Area.

- Under the **LANS** (Life after National Service): Has their name, the type of program they served with, where they currently live, whether it's in Philadelphia, the degrees they have or are achiev[ed/ing], whether they have served previously or after their year at PHENND, the job titles they've held, the organizations for which they've worked, and fields in which they have worked.
    - Why? Create better mentorship and streamline informational interviews
        - Name: obvious reasons
        - Program type: their organization is documented in another tab, but it is still meaningful to distinguish if they were a Philly Fellow, NP Fellow, School Based Fellow, 440 Fellow, or VISTA Leader.
        - Are they Still in Philadelphia: Can they be contacted to participate in the mentoring program or can they be contacted to facilitate trainings
        - Degrees Achiev[ed/ing]: Quick search for VISTAs who are considering higher degrees.
        - Service Years: we value national service at all levels. Moreover, if they served after serving at PHENND they will be good points of contact for other VISTAs considering additional service opportunities.
        - Job Titles: for VISTAs to contact them if they are looking for similar opportunities
        - Organizations: If VISTAs want more information or would like to work for any of these organizations.
        - Fields: If VISTAs are interested in working in these specific fields and would benefit from more information.
        - Blank columns may be calculated tracking the total number of jobs or organizations and using them with these formulas to calculate scores. These calculated formulas can be used to further filter alum based on what VISTAs want for their professional career.
- Under **Mentoring**: Has their name, the type of program they served with, if they are a mentor, if they're interested in being a mentor, and if they've attended any alum event.
    - Why? Track mentor program and availability to mentor
        - Name: obvious reasons
        - Program type: their organization is documented in another tab, but it is still meaningful to distinguish if they were a Philly Fellow, NP Fellow, School Based Fellow, 440 Fellow, or VISTA Leader.
        - Mentor: 1 pt. is given for if they are currently a member. An additional pt. is awarded for each year they are a mentor for a separate VISTA.
        - Mentor Potential: 1 pt. is award if they are interested in being a mentor. 2 pts. are awarded if they currently are a mentor. They are marked '0' if they are not interested in providing mentorship

        - Attended an Alum Event: First this does not apply to any PHENND event, but specifically events in which we are intentionally targeting alums. 1 pt. is awarded for each event they attend.
        - Total Score: This is automated to add up their total scores to see who are our Mentor Champions and who can be ambassadors for the program to get more alum to participate.
- You will note that there are more spreadsheets in the database that are empty. These are potential things to track as well. You are welcome to build these out however you wish. Make sure that there is intention for the
    - Ben Sereda, the 2019 Non-Profit VISTA Leader, devised the following formulas to further filter Alums to guide selection for mentorship or information interviews.
        - **Career Path Score**: This is a point value connected to their current highest position title (note that some have chose to step down from higher positions). The scores are summarized as:

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Career Path Score:	Intern	Associate	Supervisor	Managing Supervisor	Senior Manager	Director	(Chief) Executive
	Clerk	Paralegal	Attorney	Jr/ Associate Partner	Partner	Sr. Partner	Managing Attorney

        - **Number of Jobs after Service**: This is the tally count of jobs separated by commas and parentheses in the "Jobs After Service" column.
        - **Number of Jobs Types after Service**: This is a tally count of the jobs separated by commas in the "Jobs After Service" column. Duplicates of a job title or type are not counted.
        - **Number of Industry Changes**: This is the tally count of industries separated by commas in the "Career Industries" column.
        - **Number of Employers**: This is the tally count of organizations separated by commas in the "Employers" column.
        - **Service Score**: This is the score, i.e. tally count, of service experiences found under the "Service Score" column.
        - **Career Mobility**: This is a means to measure how much a person has moved upwards through an organization or industry. If a person has worked in one industry and consistently moved up, they will most likely have a high mobility score. If a person has jumped around multiple industries or has a been

promoted, they will most likely have a low mobility score. It is suggested to calculate this score using this formula:

$$\frac{(Number\ of\ Jobs\ after\ Service) + (Career\ Path\ Score)}{(Number\ of\ Industry\ Changes)}$$

- **Career Adaptability**: This is a means to measure the plasticity of a person's career and their ability to maneuver through multiple types of jobs and careers. If a person has moved up through jumping from one job to another across industries, then their score will most likely be high. If a person has not moved between multiple industries or have has the same type of job at multiple organizations, then their score will most likely be low. It is suggested to calculate this score using this formula:

$$\left\{\left[\frac{\begin{pmatrix} Number\ of\ Job \\ Types\ after\ Service \end{pmatrix} + (Career\ Path\ Score)}{(Number\ of\ Employers)}\right] \times \left[\begin{pmatrix} Number\ of \\ Industry\ Changes \end{pmatrix} + (Service\ Score)\right]\right\}$$

The VISTA Leader will also oversee ensuring the integrity of all the data collected. You will note empty or filled yellow boxes throughout the spreadsheet. This represents missing or uncorroborated information. This information will be collected through biannual alum audits. These alum audits are conducted by both you to the NP folx and by the Education VISTA Leader to all School-Based folx. These are done via LinkedIn and email. Email outreach may follow the prompts. Over the course of your work you will get random replies to your email, sometimes right away, sometimes after a few months, and sometimes who knows if they will ever give you the time of day.

Newsletters

As part of your alum engagement role, you will be tasked with creating a VISTA Alum Newsletter. The intent of this newsletter is to inform Alum of the events at PHENND, but also to offer opportunities to engage with current VISTAs (i.e. mentoring, training, reading proposals, etc.) While a basic template exists, the newsletter is still conceptual and able to grow as you wish.

You can access the newsletter by signing into Myemma.com. Once you log in you can follow this path:

Campaigns (menu bar) > Create New Campaign (button) > (select) Regular Email & name the newsletter > (under "My Templates" select) VISTA Alum Newsletter.

Images and information for the newsletter can be saved under our shared folder.

MyEmma is alright in terms of UX, and mostly intuitive. In the template:

- Function bar along the top allows you to
  - Save: although it generally autosaves regularly,
  - Revert: as the Ctrl+Z function is inoperative,
  - Preview: to see how it will look like as an email and test links,
  - Send Test: to test the email outside of the Preview),

    - Review & Send: to finalize and send out the email.
- Menu bar along the top, under function bar, allows you to generally format the email
- Menu bar under this bar will pop up with text/font operations
- Menu bar along the left is to add content
    - This functions as a drag and drop. Double click on boxes, once you've dropped them, to add content
- To edit individual content boxes, hover over the box. This will cause a function bar to appear. This bar includes:
    - Move
    - Settings:
        - Styles:
            - Background Color: Change the background color of the box
            - Margin: Will change the external spacing around the box, i.e. shrink it inwards
            - Padding: Will change the internal spacing of the box, i.e. cause content to expand towards the border
            - Border:
                - You can increase the size,
                - Select a style,
                - Change the color
        - Settings:
            - Variety of options depending upon the content box.
    - Duplicate: Will make an exact copy of whatever is in the box. Useful for under member spotlight, if you have multiple VISTAs to highlight
    - Delete

The regularity of these newsletters should be determined based on how much information you have to share. In terms of best practices, actively seek content at staff meetings and check-in with everyone before you review and send the email. Newsletters can be enhanced based on Canva's Color Palette, by making GIFs on Canva, and including pictures, links, etc. However, be aware of their functionality and the size.