

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title: VISTA Food Systems Coordinator

Sponsoring Organization: Knoxville – Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC)

Project Name: CAC Americorps VISTA

Project Number:

Project Period: 08/07/18 – 08/06/2019

Site Name (if applicable): UT Recycling

Focus Area(s)

Primary: Healthy Futures

Secondary:

Note:

If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: The VISTA will increase the supply of wholesome, nutritious food to the economically marginalized and disadvantaged populations of Knoxville. They will accomplish this goal by increasing the sustainability of the campus garden, facilitating the regular donation of garden-grown produce, and by recovering and donating wholesome food from campus events and restaurants. Additionally, the VISTA will close waste loops on campus by diverting useable goods from the landfill to individuals and communities that can use them.

Objective of the Assignment (*August 2018 – May 2019*)

Increase institutional sustainability of the Grow Lab (the campus garden created to address local food insecurity, foster community engagement, and function as a living lab).

Member Activities:

1. Maintain academic ties to the garden by involving professors, increasing research plots, and encouraging academic departments to utilize the Grow Lab.
2. Plan and execute regular educational events, community workshops, and volunteer workdays.
3. Oversee the construction and implementation of garden structures.
4. Increase student and community awareness of and involvement with the Grow Lab.
5. Identify new campus and Knoxville area partners to receive donations of produce.

Objective of the Assignment (*August 2018 – August 2019*)

Recruit and oversee a team of hired students, interns, and volunteers to maintain the garden.

Member Activities:

1. Oversee student garden manager to ensure the Grow Lab is being maintained and productive.
2. Coordinate with professors to recruit student interns that will receive academic credit.
3. Collaborate with student groups (SPEAK, Environment and Sustainability Committee, IAAS, Eco-Vols), service-learning courses, and off-campus community organizations to recruit volunteers able to work year round (including during school holidays).

Objective of the Assignment (October 2018 – February 2019)

Oversee and increase recurring donations of wholesome, surplus food from on campus restaurants and popular campus events.

Member Activities:

1. Identify campus restaurants that are not currently donating surplus food and coordinate with Aramark managers to start routine food donations.
2. Expand donations from large-scale campus events, including basketball games and catered events.
3. Create partnerships with an expanded network of hunger-alleviating organizations in the community in order to facilitate regular food donations.
4. Oversee current food recovery efforts, including at UT football games and POD markets

Objective of the Assignment (August 2017 – May 2018)

Reduce the amount of useable items going to landfills by expanding Free Store Operations and by working with the Surplus Department and Rapid Recovery Team.

1. Collaborate with management in the Surplus Department to identify type and quality of items that can be donated.
2. Coordinate with local non-profits, such as Goodwill, to facilitate routine donation pick-ups.
3. Expand locations for students to donate items to the Free Store, and work with campus partners (SGA, Office of Service-Learning, etc.) to ensure that items reach students that have demonstrated need.
4. Hold regular Free Store days to connect high quality donated items to members of the community.
5. Work with SGA and other campus partners to create a permanent Free Store.

(PRIORITY) G3-3.1: Number of community volunteers recruited by organizations or participants

Target: 85 volunteers

Measured By: Volunteer Tracking System

Describe Instrument: A volunteer tracking system will be used to document volunteer efforts and assure non-duplication.

(PRIORITY) G3-3.3: Number of organizations implementing effective volunteer management practices

Target: 1 Organization

Measured by: Pre/Post Organizational Assessment tool

Describe instrument: A pre and post organizational assessment will be utilized to identify changes in volunteer management efficiency over time and assure effective volunteer management practices are being implemented.

Service Activity – Expand/strengthen partnerships/networks

Description: Continue strengthening relationships with food pantries for routine food donations from campus. Expand academic partnerships to make the campus garden more sustainable.

Service Activity – Performance Measurement

Description: Identify how to best quantify pounds of donated food with number of individuals served.

Service Activity – Volunteer Recruitment and Management System

Description: Recruit a team of volunteers to maintain the campus garden. Work with student groups to recruit volunteers for large event food recoveries.

Service Activity – Expand/strengthen material donation pathways

Description: Hold regular free store events. Work with Facilities Services and the Surplus Department to minimize landfill waste of useable items. Expand donation locations.

(PRIORITY) H10: Number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks/other organizations

Target: 750 individuals

Measured by: Tracking Form

Describe Instrument: A tracking form will be filled out by recipient organizations estimating pounds donated and number of unique individuals served. A second tracking form will be kept to measure pounds of food donated from the garden and number of recipient individuals.

(PRIORITY) H12: Number of individuals that reported increased food security

Target: 200 individuals

Measured by: Survey

Describe instrument: A survey will be administered to secure an understanding of whether individuals receiving produce from the garden and/or donations from recovered food were saved from short-term hunger.

Anti-Poverty Program Strategy/Intervention

Campus garden

Description: Expand campus garden operations and ensure that an increased number of individuals receive produce.

Anti-Poverty Program Strategy/Intervention

Emergency Food Collection

Description: Facilitate the collection of food from key locations on campus and at large special events to provide to partner organizations.

Anti-Poverty Program Strategy/Intervention

Nutrition Education

Description: Work with faculty and community members to facilitate workshops about the nutritional aspects of produce grown in the garden.