

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title: Office of Neighborhoods VISTA Community Specialist*

Sponsoring Organization: Knoxville Knox County Community Action Committee

Project Name: CAC AmeriCorps VISTA

Project Number: 17VSSTN007

Project Period: 03/04/2018 - 03/02/2019

Site Name (if applicable): City of Knoxville, Office of Neighborhoods

Focus Area(s)

Primary: Economic Opportunity

Secondary:

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: Knoxville has several economically disadvantaged neighborhoods that have no resident-led, resident-controlled neighborhood organization, i.e. no common voice. Experience has proven that developing resident leadership in disadvantaged neighborhoods is especially challenging. The objective of this assignment is for the VISTA member to increase the capacity of struggling neighborhood groups, forming or established, to better serve their communities by connecting these groups to community and leadership resources.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: 08/13/2018 – 08/12/2019*)

Collaborate with struggling neighborhoods to develop and identify resources that increase the capacity of the neighborhood group. Each plan will build on the strengths and assets of the neighborhood group to improve and/or create access to governmental agencies and other partners that can improve the neighborhood.

Member Activity: 1. Conduct neighborhood outreach to identify depth of support needed. (A) Reach out to targeted neighborhoods to identify the scope of assistance needed. (B) Contact existing neighborhood groups requesting support.

Member Activity: 2. Develop knowledge of and connections to Knoxville's resources. (A) Develop understanding of neighborhood issues in Knoxville (ex: blighted property) through research and other related activities. (B) Network with social service providers and other organizations (ex: programs that address blighted property).

Member Activity: 3. Support neighborhood groups' development. (A) Help neighbors and groups with technical support such as creating flyers and door-to-door surveys that help neighbors organize around common issues and resources. (B) Help neighbors and groups with programmatic support in their neighborhood (ex: planning activities to engage neighbors). (C) Help neighbors and groups with organizational support in their neighborhood (ex: holding effective neighborhood meetings). (D) Help neighbors and groups utilize host site's programmatic support aimed at addressing neighborhood related issues (ex: traffic calming). (E) Connect neighborhood leaders with Office of Neighborhoods' organizational support programs such as grant writing and volunteer management.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/13/2018 – 08/12/2019)

Develop the skills of emerging leaders from disadvantaged neighborhoods. The VISTA member will develop resources to encourage leadership traits at all organizational levels, ranging from bringing refreshments to meetings to chairing committees.

Member Activity: 4. Support host site's existing workshops aimed at developing basic organizational skills.

Member Activity: 5. Develop additional workshops aimed at meeting needs that have been identified in collaboration with the community.

Member Activity: 6. Guide neighborhood leaders on how to connect with appropriate governmental and non-profit resources in order to increase their opportunities to utilize services available.

Member Activity: 7. Support the planning of the annual Citywide Neighborhood Conference.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 08/13/2018 – 08/12/2019)

Increase the capacity of the host site to provide support services to neighborhood groups by developing a holistic organizational assessment that identifies areas of strength and growth. Identifying organizational capacity is an essential first component in creating an organizational development plan.

Member Activity: 8. Organize a comprehensive assessment of the host site's current capacity. (A) Develop, implement and analyze pre-and post-assessments of workshops given by the host site. (B) Develop, implement and analyze programmatic evaluations (ex: "Building Strong Neighborhood Organizations" leadership training course). (C) Develop, implement and analyze organizational evaluations (ex: gathering input on host site's yearly objectives). (D) Create an End of Year report that summarizes the organization's activity and outcomes. Report should be submitted to the Neighborhood Coordinator at the end of the year.

Member Activity: 9. Develop a resource tracking system to ensure material resources provided are up to date and relevant to neighborhoods. (A) Organize a system through which staff can easily locate and utilize material resources.

Member Activity: 10. Collaborate to create internal system of project responsibilities (ex: VISTA member compiles yearly organizational assessment) with staff.