



Community Services Consortium's
'Building Bridges'
AmeriCorps*VISTA Program

An AmeriCorps* Intermediary Project sponsored by the Oregon State Office of the
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

Program Supplement
2010-2011 Program Year
Starts August 2010



Learn more about our program on the web at: www.communityservices.us (see AmeriCorps*VISTA)

Creating a VISTA Assignment Description

Design the VISTA Assignment Description to cover the one year period in which the member will be serving. The description will demonstrate:

- A realistic effort to help bring communities out of poverty; not simply make poverty more tolerable.
- Responsibilities and duties of VISTA members that are geared toward building a permanent infrastructure within the organization; and
- Proposed project results that are measurable and convey the actual impact the project has on the individuals, families and communities being served.

Directions for the VISTA Assignment Description

Project Summary: Enter a summary of the project.

Project Logistics: Provide a brief agency description. Also include the nature of the work that is anticipated. For example: Is it largely building community partnerships or will it primarily be in the office at a computer? Is the organization large or small?

Objectives: Enter the objectives of the project. Projects may have more than one objective. Objectives are what your program wants to accomplish or achieve with the VISTA resource over the course of the year of service. AmeriCorps*VISTA programs can generally be renewed for up to three years, but a project doesn't have to continue for a three year period. Each objective should contribute to the overall goal of the *'Building Bridges'* program.

GOAL: *'Building Bridges'* AmeriCorps*VISTA Members will increase the capacity of organizations in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties to help alleviate poverty across our communities.

Activities: Enter the activities required for the VISTA member to complete each objective. Activities are what the member will do during the course of twelve months to support the goals and objectives of the project. Add activities as needed to accomplish the objective.

Steps to Complete Activities: Each activity should be broken down into manageable steps. Enter the steps needed to complete each activity. Add steps as needed to accomplish the activity.

Expected Outcomes: Enter the “**anticipated**” results expected for each activity. **Note: These should also be listed in the 'Results' section of the narrative.**

Actual Outcomes: Enter the “**actual**” results for each activity. **Leave blank during initial application.**

Timeline: Enter the timeline required to complete each activity.

**‘Building Bridges’ AmeriCorps*VISTA Program
VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)**

Host Site: Community Services Consortium

Project Summary: The AmeriCorps*VISTA member will coordinate efforts of affordable housing and homeless advocates in Linn and Benton counties. This position will assemble resources, set up meeting sessions, record pertinent information, and help organize the planning process. It will also focus on developing and implementing sessions to educate and inform groups and the public on opportunities to work on homeless issues.

Project Logistics: Community Services Consortium is the community action agency that serves Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. There are 160 staff members across the three counties. The agency offers programs to assist with housing, energy assistance, food, and education. This project will be a combination of community based work and office tasks. The member will be interacting with diverse groups of people, including homeless persons and Executive Directors, on a daily basis.

Goal: ‘Building Bridges’ AmeriCorps*VISTA Members will increase the capacity of organizations in Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties to help alleviate poverty across our communities.

Objective:

EXAMPLE: To address issues of homelessness, the VISTA member will assist in writing a 10 Year Plan to End Homeless for Linn County and a separate plan for Benton County. This project should be completed in two years.

Activities	Steps to Complete Activities	Expected Outcomes	Actual Outcomes	Timeline
<p>EXAMPLE: Coordinate community forums in Linn and Benton counties to incorporate feedback into 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Advisory group to create timeline and delegate tasks. 2. Promote forums through press releases, outreach at shelters and other community locations. 3. Arrange for location to conduct forums. 4. Evaluate forums and create planning document for future events. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50 people will attend each forum in Linn and Benton counties to provide community feedback for the plan. 2. 15% of attendees will have increased knowledge of homeless issues. 3. Infrastructure will be created to conduct forums in the future. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 30 people attended in Linn County and 51 people attended in Benton County. 2. Many community members and leaders attended the forums. Pre and Post tests were conducted to measure changes in knowledge levels. 10% of attendees showed an increase. 85% of attendees maintained the same level. 5% showed a decrease in knowledge. 3. VISTA member created a planning document for future activities and a detailed evaluation of the event. A copy is also available electronically. 	<p>December 2007- March 2008</p>

Position Description Example

Organization: Community Housing Program (CHP) www.fakewebsitename.org

Position Title: Housing Initiatives Coordinator

Location: 555 NE Somewhere Street, Corvallis, OR 00000

Position is based out of Corvallis, but will also be traveling to Lincoln County.

Mission: To help the people in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties overcome the causes and conditions of poverty by providing services leading to productive and self-sufficient lives.

Summary of Position: The Housing Initiatives Coordinator (HIC) will coordinate activities leading to the development of a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Lincoln County. The position will assemble resources, set up meeting sessions, record pertinent information, and help organize the planning process. The HIC will also develop and implement education sessions to inform groups and the public on housing and home ownership opportunities.

Essential Responsibilities:

1. Assists in setting up meetings and forums in Lincoln County. Records information and organizes data into a 10-year action plan.
2. Develops and maintains a resource database of new homeless prevention programs and resources that are being implemented in other areas.
3. Acts as an agency representative to other housing providers, community groups and lending institutions by attending meetings, organizing presentations and developing community education events.
4. Assists in the development and marketing of homebuyer and financial education programs in Lincoln County.
5. Assists the Regional Housing Center to expand the current website and develop a web-based marketing plan in collaboration with other housing agencies.

AmeriCorps*VISTA Benefits:

- A monthly living allowance of \$858 (before taxes)
- An education award of \$5,350 OR a stipend of \$1,500 upon successful completion of service
- Health Care for member
- Relocation allowance (if eligible)
- Loan forbearance on qualified student loans
- Interest accrual payment on qualified student loans
- Child Care (if eligible)
- Training and Professional Development
- Non-competitive eligibility for federal government service (for one year after service)

Additional Benefits:

CHP can offer the VISTA member an apartment in our low-income housing complex. VISTA member's income and credit must meet eligibility requirements.

Preferred Qualifications:

1. An interest in housing programs and services available to assist low and moderate income households and also interest in homeless populations.
2. An ability to coordinate events and activities.

3. Strong communication skills both verbally and in writing. The position may require speaking in group settings.
4. Ability to work independently.
5. Skill in the operation of a personal computer and standard office equipment, including website development.
6. Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.
7. Four year degree in social services, public or business administration, education or counseling from an accredited college.

Contact Information: For more information contact Joe Smith, Community Housing Director (541) 555-1212 or jsmith@email.com

EXAMPLE



Funding the Share of Cost to Host a VISTA Member

Suggested Funding Sources

The following is a list of funding sources organizations may research to secure funding for their share of costs to host a 'Building Bridges' AmeriCorps*VISTA Member.

- **Corporate Sponsor** – Many corporations are supportive of specific issues and communities. Check with corporations in your area to see what opportunities are available.
- **Bank or Credit Union Foundations** – Most banks or credit unions have foundations that grant smaller awards to organizations.
- **Board Member Sponsorship** – One or more of your organization's Board Members may be willing to donate the resources necessary to support the VISTA position.
- **Community Donations** – VISTA is about building community. Your organization may be able to secure pieces of funding through members of the community.
- **Funding from a Community Partner** – Many VISTA projects are benefiting several organizations through the project that is being implemented. Several organizations may come together to fund the share of cost.
- **Private Foundations** – Many private foundations are supportive of AmeriCorps*VISTA projects. Some possibilities include: Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Collins Family Foundation, Bill and Ann Swindells Trust, and Trust Management Services (will be funding in Linn and Benton Counties for 2010-2011 program year). For more Foundation resources please review the Oregon Foundation Databook.

Tips for Securing Funding

- **Start Early** – Begin your funding search when you submit your VISTA application, even though you haven't been selected yet. Many funding sources, especially foundations, have long time lines to notify you about your request. If you start your search early in the application process you are likely to have heard from one of your funding sources by the time site selections have been made.
- **Leverage Funds** – Create opportunities for donors and foundations to "challenge" other funds you've raised. It is possible to turn the \$1000 donation from the community into \$2000 with a challenge grant from a foundation.
- **Combine Sources** – Get creative and diversify where funding comes from. It is possible that you will fund the position from all of the above listed sources.