

PART II. PROJECT NARRATIVE

A. Executive Summary

Provide a brief narrative of your proposed AmeriCorps*VISTA project, including population to be served, issue areas, history of your organization's activities in these issue areas, and the type of service activities you expect the AmeriCorps*VISTA members to accomplish.

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization that works to educate the public about family farming's important role in society; to develop new market opportunities for low-income farmers; and to promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Nutrition is at the heart of many of our most pressing children's health issues. Unhealthy eating and inactivity have surpassed tobacco as the leading contributor to premature death according to the US Department of Health and Human Services. In Humboldt County, 42% of youth over the age of five and 46% of adults are overweight according to California Food Policy Advocates. By educating the low-income population on the benefits of a healthy diet, we will enable them to make more educated food choices and prevent diet-related disease.

CAFF at the state level has 28 years' experience, annually manage 25 grants, and are responsible for an operating budget of over \$1.5 million dollars. They provide support to eight chapters, one of which is the Humboldt County chapter. The Humboldt CAFF chapter (HCAFF) is officially in its first year but has been in operation as the Friends of the Farmers' Markets for nearly three years. We have received over \$260,000 in grant funds for nutrition education, have developed new market opportunities for low-income farmers, and have organized several well-attended health-related events to name a few successes to date. Through our partnership with the Farm to School program we have also provided nutrition education field trip opportunities to over 1500 low-income students, positively influencing eating habits at a young impressionable age.

HCAFF achieves their goals through heavy collaboration with the Farm to School program, the Humboldt County Office of Education, and local agricultural organizations. HCAFF needs to develop infrastructure so that we can increase our nutrition education activities and ultimately decrease and/or prevent diet-related disease. Main VISTA activities will include: increasing project visibility, developing agency infrastructure, sustaining program activities, and planning and hosting health-related special events for low-income K-6 students and their families.

B. Summary of Accomplishments (For Current AmeriCorps*VISTA Sponsoring Organizations Only)

Please see Redwood Community Action Agency's AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Overview Narrative, Section B.

C. Needs and Activities

1. State in measurable and quantifiable terms the specific poverty-related need(s) identified by the community(ies) that the AmeriCorps*VISTA project will address, including the number of low-income people directly affected by the problem(s).

Humboldt County was ranked first for high rates of food insecurity with hunger according to the 2004 North Coast Nutrition and Fitness Collaborative policy brief. Food insecurity refers to not having enough money to meet one's basic food needs. Despite this, 46% of adults in Humboldt

County are overweight according to California Food Policy Advocates. Food insecurity and overweight are often linked because in order to cope with limited money for food and to stave off hunger, families try to maximize caloric intake, which can lead to over consumption of calories and a less healthful diet. This food paradox could shift by educating the low-income community on the benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables so they make healthy food choices and prevent diet related disease. Thirty-one schools in Humboldt County qualify as low income, which represents over 40% of all our schools. It is these children and their families that will be the focus of our nutrition education activities.

D. Strengthening Communities

1. Describe how the new infrastructure or organizational capacity created by your project will bring individuals and, ultimately, the community out of poverty.

The VISTA will help develop community awareness about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables to decrease and/or prevent diet-related disease. Taking control of one's health is an activity in which people of all income brackets can participate. Studies show that a well-nourished child is a child ready to learn (CA Department of Education). This fact applies not only to children, but also to adults - a well-nourished adult is a productive adult able to move himself out of poverty. Our VISTA will provide nutrition education to create behavioral change. In addition, the VISTA will help us develop databases, community communication pieces, and programs that will enable us teach a greater number of low-income residents about the benefits of a healthy diet.

2. How will you involve the community to ensure the sustainability of the proposed project?

Community members can participate in our project through our steering committee and/or many subcommittees such as: Fundraising, Farm Tour, Agritourism, and Calendar subcommittees. We are always recruiting volunteers to help with youth farm and farmers' market tours as well as general operational work. Our activities will be sustained through strong partnerships, diligent oversight, a well-developed fundraising/grant writing plan, and an involved farming community that steers our work.

3. How, if at all, will you collaborate with other national service programs (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, RSVP, NCC) in order to support the proposed project?

We will involve AmeriCorps in our outreach work. On several occasions, AmeriCorps, Humboldt State University service learning students, and numerous community volunteers have helped with school garden workdays, tours and health events. The VISTA member will continue to expand these collaborations in order to reach 200 low-resourced students (those students in schools in which more than 50% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced meals) and 200 of their family members annually. In addition, the VISTA will accomplish the following to ensure program sustainability: recruit 25 volunteers per year, keep a database for future recruiting; and assist with fundraising and grant writing activities.

E. Recruitment and Development (of Members, Volunteers and Participants)

1. Describe in specific terms how your organization will recruit qualified AmeriCorps*VISTA members to serve on this project.

Please see Redwood Community Action Agency's AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Overview Narrative, Section E-1.

2. Describe the service-related transportation needs of the AmeriCorps*VISTA members and your plans for meeting those needs.

Please see Redwood Community Action Agency's AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Overview Narrative, Section E-2.

3. Briefly describe plans for orienting members to your organization and the community. Describe any training opportunities and technical assistance that will be available to members throughout their service.

Please see Redwood Community Action Agency's AmeriCorps*VISTA Program Overview Narrative, Section E-3.

F. VISTA Assignment Description

1. List the tasks and activities AmeriCorps*VISTA member(s) and Leader(s) must perform to implement the strategies described in the project plan(s). These tasks and activities should

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logically relate to the overall project goals and activities you propose in Part III, Project plan for AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Applicants. This section will include more detail on the actual service activities, and should not include direct service activities. Create as many different assignment descriptions as needed for the project.

The VISTA Member tasks and activities for Year 1 will include:

- ? Assisting with the planning of health-related special events and the development of promotional materials for event advertisement
- ? Participating in health-related special event planning committees, recording the progression of ideas and event execution
- ? Developing promotional materials, emails and flyers for volunteer recruiting purposes
- ? Assisting in the development and piloting volunteer training materials
- ? Researching and developing funding resources to ensure project sustainability
- ? Building organizational capacity through database development
- ? Increasing project visibility through media activities and tabling
- ? Maintaining communication with current volunteers and assisting with the new member recruitment

2. List the recommended skills and qualifications that an AmeriCorps*VISTA member or Leader should have to successfully complete the project plan.

Recommended skills and qualifications include:

- ? Interest in food security and agricultural issues
- ? Background in agriculture and/or environmental education is desirable
- ? Previous non-profit and/or fund development experience is extremely desirable
- ? Computer competency: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Access, graphic design
- ? Excellent technical and creative writing skills. Grant writing experience preferred
- ? Comfortable and competent at public speaking and personable with one-on-one interactions
- ? Attention to detail, good follow-through, ability to prioritize and multi-task
- ? Self motivated, enthusiastic, self-starter and willing to adapt as necessary
- ? Desire to work as member of a team as well as the ability to work independently
- ? Previous database development/management experience preferred
- ? Valid driver's license
- ? Artistically inclined. Graphic design experience a plus
- ? Sense of humor and positive outlook.

G. Project Management

1. Describe plans for daily supervision of AmeriCorps*VISTA members. Specify if supervision will be a full-time or part-time responsibility.

A full-time director will be available on a daily basis to supervise the VISTA member. The director, a past VISTA member, will be sharing office space and collaborating with the VISTA on many projects.

2. Are 51 percent or more of the persons on your board of directors' members of the low-income community? If not, please describe how your agency has developed, or will develop, an advisory council for the AmeriCorps*VISTA project that consists of members or representatives of the low-income community served by the proposed project.

Our local chapter advisory committee is currently over 51% low income. We are actively recruiting a board of directors and expect that our board composition will also be greater than 51% low income.

3. Describe your plans for evaluating progress towards achieving your project's anticipated outcomes and accomplishments. What information and data will you use to demonstrate the concrete impacts of the project?

We will evaluate the project quantitatively through increased participation in field trips, farm tours, special events, and increased HCAFF membership. Additionally, the VISTA will increase visibility and sustainability through media coverage and grant writing activities tracked through circulation numbers,

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membership increase, and grant submissions. Finally, the VISTA will build capacity through the development of press kits, databases and forms/brochures.

H. Organizational Capacity

1. Is your organization able to contribute financially for all or some of costs related to AmeriCorps*VISTA members? Please explain.

No, we will not be able to contribute financially to VISTA-related costs because we are a start-up organization with an extremely limited budget.

2. What in-kind resources will you provide to ensure the success of the proposed project?

We are able to provide a computer, phone, internet access, office space, supervision, advisory committees, local travel reimbursement, established networks, a great "extended family" and volunteer farm opportunities where volunteer hours can be exchanged for fresh fruits and vegetables.

3. Describe current activities your organization and other organizations are undertaking to address the problems identified in your need statement. Describe how the proposed project will complement this work.

Food systems education is happening on many levels: Our partnership with the Farm to School program and the Humboldt County Office of Education reinforces low-resourced, K-6 classroom nutrition education through hands-on learning: farm field trips, farmers' market tours and school gardens. Likewise, our partnerships with agricultural organizations, local businesses, farmers, and the Farm to School program develop new market opportunities for low-income family farmers. And finally, educating the parents closes the loop and creates a behavioral change which is exhibited through increased spending on fruits and vegetables. If we reconnect low-income residents to their food and educate them on the benefits of buying fruits and vegetables and supporting the local farm economy, they will subsequently make more educated food purchases and decrease and/or prevent diet-related disease.

4. Describe the accessibility of services provided to members of the community with disabilities. Is your organization able to accommodate AmeriCorps*VISTA members with disabilities?

We are able to accommodate a VISTA member with a disability. We have building access and can make workstation accommodations. Unfortunately, we do not have transportation accommodations of any kind, though public transportation is limited but accessible.

I. Other

Please leave blank unless otherwise instructed.

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