

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Executive Summary

1. 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.

We Care San Jacinto Valley, Inc. (WCSJV) is a community-based nonprofit organization initially sponsored by San Jacinto Assembly of God, a congregation that has 15 years of experience and a proven track record of offering character education/academic tutoring to at-risk youth in California’s San Jacinto Valley. The purpose of the WCSJV Mentoring Program is to promote healthy lifestyles and increase resiliencies among disadvantaged children of prisoners ages 4 to 18 and their families through one-on-one mentoring by caring adult role models and improved access to community resources.

The targeted service delivery area includes the two cities of San Jacinto and Hemet, which border each other in eastern Riverside County, California, in the San Jacinto Valley. In this area, 22.7% of families with children ages 18 and younger live in poverty, and this number jumps to 43.9% among single-mother families – significantly higher than state averages of 15.3% and 32.5%, respectively.¹ The poverty many children face is also demonstrated by the number receiving free or reduced school lunches: 65.2% of students in San Jacinto and 63.3% of students in Hemet received free/reduced lunches during the 2004-2005 school year, compared to only 49% across the state.² Unemployment rates echo the disproportion between the San Jacinto Valley and other areas of the state: in April 2006, Hemet’s unemployment rate was 5.8% and San Jacinto’s was 6.6%, compared to much lower rates at the state (4.8%) and national (4.7%) levels.³

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).

Number and Characteristics of Youth and Families Affected by Incarceration in the Service Delivery Area – Solid data on the number of children of prisoners living in the San Jacinto/Hemet area is not available at this time. However, Prison Fellowship, a key project partner, has identified 883 children of prisoners living in our targeted service delivery area (see Letter of Agreement documenting this number in appendix). Prison Fellowship (PF), through their formal partnership with the California Corrections System, meets with incarcerated parents to provide support, spiritual guidance, and other services. PF also provides information on available programs for their children and receives applications from incarcerated parents for their children to participate in selected programs. In 2005, PF received applications from incarcerated parents for 883 children in San Jacinto/Hemet, indicating that there are at least this many children of prisoners in our proposed service area. PF will provide an updated number of

¹ U.S. Census Bureau 2000.

² California Department of Education, Ed-Data, 2004-2005.

³ California Employment Development Department; U.S. Department of Labor.

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children of prisoners and their contact information in September 2007, which we will use to identify and contact for participation in our program.

Strengthening Communities

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

In order to preserve families and strengthen bonds between children and their incarcerated parents when possible, the Project will provide ongoing wrap-around support assistance to the mentees, their siblings, and their parent/custodial caregiver. A Mentoring Support Network will be established to engage and retain the child and family in supportive services. The Mentoring Support Network will be comprised of public service agencies, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and community members (parents and children of prisoners). In addition the Network will reach out to local AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, in the area

VISTA Assignment Description

1. List the recommended skills and qualifications that an AmeriCorps*VISTA member should have to successfully complete the project plan.
2. Recommended skills and qualifications include:
 1. An interest in working on the problem of employment for low-income youth;
 2. Excellent writing skills;
 3. Experience coordinating a project or group of volunteers;
 4. An educator, counselor, or individual who has experience with youth programs is desirable; and,
 5. Proficiency in Spanish and/or experience in English as a Second Language tutoring.

Project Management

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

Our Mentor Coordinator will provide In Kind- Full –time supervision of the VISTA member

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.

The mission of our organization is to work with clients of our programs, we are in the process our Network will expand to include members or representatives of the low-income community served by the proposed project.

Organizational Capacity

1. What in-kind resources will you provide to ensure the success of the proposed project?
 - A. Office Space
 - B. Staff
 - C. Supplies
 - D. Office Equipment – computers, faxes, phones, etc.

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2. 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.

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

While our organization has not work directly with members with disability, we are open to working with anybody. Our staff would look to connect the available services to those who would need them.