

VISTA Programs in Nebraska

The Corporation for National & Community Service is the largest grant making organization for service and volunteerism in the country. An agency of the federal government, the Corporation provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through three programs: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund.

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a national program whose mission is to strengthen and supplement efforts to eliminate poverty by providing meaningful and constructive volunteer service in agencies, institutions and situations where the application of human talent and dedication may assist in the solution of poverty and poverty related problems. VISTA members work to generate the commitment of private sector resources, to encourage volunteer service at the local level and to strengthen local agencies and organizations.

National Service Priorities: The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act enacted in 2009 calls for engaging citizens in a lifetime of service and is directed at finding community solutions to some of our nation's most pressing and persistent challenges. The Corporation's goal is to build on this momentum and foster higher levels of innovation, collaboration, and impact in America's service and voluntary sector. In Nebraska, VISTA Programs reflect the Corporation's strategic priorities and focus areas:

Strategic Priorities

1. Service as a solution – Targeting resources to tackle national priorities from increasing high school graduation rates to fostering economic opportunity, the Corporation will identify where service has an important role to play and target resources to tackle those issues.
2. Expanding opportunities to serve – connecting with citizens from diverse communities, backgrounds, and perspectives, providing easily accessible service opportunities to fit their needs, and engaging them in a lifetime of service.
3. Building enduring capacity – enabling individuals, organizations and communities to become more effective at addressing pressing challenges and better able to use service as a lasting solution.
4. Embracing innovation – investing in models that work, finding new ways of doing business, and serving as a source of ideas for local communities. All across America, groups are finding solutions to local problems, and the Corporation's challenge is to scale these opportunities to achieve our national priorities.

Focus Areas

1. Economic Opportunity: How can the country improve the financial stability of economically vulnerable Americans and their families?
2. Education: How can the country increase the number of students who are achieving in the classroom and beyond?
3. Healthy Futures: How can the country improve the physical and mental well-being of its citizens?
4. Veterans and Military Families: How can the country help veterans and military families secure the support they need to achieve financial security and improved quality of life?
5. Environmental Stewardship: How can the country reduce energy consumption and become an active steward of the environment?
6. Disaster Services: How can the country help economically vulnerable communities prepare for and respond to natural disasters effectively?

The following is a listing of Nebraska VISTA Programs and sites by Strategic Priorities and Focus Areas effective 1/01/2013.

SERVICE AS A SOLUTION

1. Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture – Combat Boots to Cowboy Boots (Project Id: 12VSNNE001)

404 E. 7th Street

Curtis, NE 69025

Website: <http://ncta.unl.edu/>

Phone: (402) 367-5253

Program Supervisor: Mr. Scott Mickelsen, Associate Dean

E-mail: smickelsen4@unlnotes.unl.edu

Description: NCTA's Combat Boots to Cowboy Boots is designed to assist eligible military personnel, their families and armed forces veterans to become Farmers, Ranchers, and Business Entrepreneurs in their next careers. Combat Boots to Cowboy Boots utilizes existing programs funded by the federal Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, Veterans Administration, Department of Defense, and various state and local agencies to create successful business succession plans that match participants with existing farm/ranch/business owners. It is the intent of this program to return NCTA graduates to rural communities with a large enough assets that they will be a viable partner.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity, Education, and Veterans

2. Food Bank for the Heartland – Expanding the Ability to End Hunger in Nebraska (Project Id: 13VSNNE005)

10525 J Street

Omaha, NE 68127-1021

Website: <http://www.omahafoodbank.org/>

Phone: (402) 331-1213

Fax: (402) 331-6632

Program Supervisor: Ms. Susan E.Ogborn, Executive Director

E-mail: SOgborn@FoodBankHeartland.org

Description: The Food Bank for the Heartland, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, project is to ensure a competent food distribution channel exists in every county in Nebraska. Nearly 22% of Nebraskans reported having to choose between medical care, utilities, transportation, mortgage payments and food during 2011. (USDA, 2012) VISTA members will assist to establish an efficient distribution network for emergency and supplement food in the state; expand local capacity to eliminate hunger by identifying what currently exists and by supplying resources needed to better support pantries and meal providers; increase the number of volunteers working on hunger issues across the state.

Focus Area: Healthy Futures – Food Access

3. City of South Sioux City – VISTA project (Project Id: 13VSNNE001)

1615 1st Avenue

South Sioux City, NE 68776-2236

Website: <http://www.southsiouxcity.org/>

Phone: (402) 494-7591

Program Supervisor: Ms. Tami Bailey, Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator

E-mail: tbailey@southsiouxcity.org

Description: In an effort to provide that quality of life for all residents, the City of South Sioux City's seeks to improve its capacity to adequately serve its residents and provide opportunities for those in need to overcome barriers that have led to their economic disadvantage. This project will be enlisted to assist the City and it's partner's in building the communities capacity to provide programs, resources and links to opportunities for those residents living within the City who are unemployed, underemployed, without adequate housing and lacking the necessary education and skills that would enable them to secure gainful employment.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity – Housing & Work Force development

4. Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska – Successful Transitions for Economic Progress (STEP) (Project Id: 13VSNNE003)

3350 10th Street

Gering, NE 69341-1724

Website: <http://capwn.org/main.html>

Phone: (308) 633-3089 X3317

Program Supervisor: Ms. Jennifer Rodgers, Director of Family & Community Programs

E-mail: jrogers@capwn.org

Description: Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska (CAPWN) is a 501(c)3 serving seven main southern panhandle counties, covering 8,319 square miles of rural area. The Successful Transitions to Economic Progress (STEP) initiative will focus on providing economic transformational change and self-sufficiency opportunities to low-income families and individuals. Specific activities will enable low-income families to move out of poverty by providing enhanced community support systems, financial literacy education and entrepreneurial opportunities through a wraparound approach.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

5. City of Omaha – Cities of Service Omaha Serves (Project ID: 10VSNNE001)

Mayor's Office

1819 Farnam Street, Suite 300

Omaha, NE 68183

Website: <http://omahaserves.org/>

Phone: (402) 444-5921

Program Supervisor: Mr. Craig Howell, Chief Service Officer

E-mail: craig.howell@ci.omaha.ne.us

Description: In January 2010, the City of Omaha was one of ten cities to be awarded the Cities of Service Leadership Grant funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. The City of Omaha AmeriCorps VISTAs will help to implement Omaha Serves, a comprehensive community strategy to reduce poverty. The Omaha Serves strategy engages volunteers and leverages existing resources to address pressing community issues and fight the basic underlying causes of poverty and poverty victims. To implement Omaha Serves, each VISTA focuses on one of four poverty reducing priority areas aligned with the Omaha Serves strategy: (1) increase access to education and out of school time programs; (2) restore and invigorating neighborhoods by increasing community engagement and participation in neighborhood associations; (3) build associations and coalitions to make non-profit organizations work more efficiently; (4) Increase employment skills and accessibility for at-risk youth.

Focus: Economic Opportunity (Workforce development), Education - Afterschool programming, and Non-profit capacity building.

BUILDING ENDURING CAPACITY

6. Lincoln Public Schools – Federal Programs (Project ID: 11VSNNE002)

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), Experian Bldg.

949 W. Bond Street

Lincoln, NE 68521

Website: <http://www.lps.org/index.html>

Phone: (402) 436-1994

Program Supervisor: Mr. Joshua Cramer, Federal Programs Supervisor

E-mail: jcramer@lps.org

Description: VISTA members will help improve graduation rates through a comprehensive birth to postsecondary success model. They will work to strengthen the following programs: ExCITE (Early Childhood Infant Toddler Educare), Title I, Community Learning Centers, Youth Development Team, and the Graduation Initiative. The VISTA members' work with these programs will help support and increase family engagement and the impact of the \$4.5 million dollar grant LPS received from the U.S. Department of Education to increase high school graduation rates.

Focus: Education-High School graduation and grade-level performance

7. Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska – LFS VISTA (Project Id: 13VSNNE002)

124 S. 24th Street

Omaha, NE 68102-1226

Website: <http://www.lfsneb.org/>

Phone: (402) 536-3502

Program Supervisor: Mr. Charles T. Olsen, AmeriCorps Program Manager

E-mail: colisen@lfsneb.org

Description: Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc. (LFS) is a faith-based, not-for-profit, multi-service human care agency based in Nebraska. LFS impacts over 35,000 people a year in 27 locations from as far west as North Platte, Nebraska, to Council Bluffs, Iowa. The LFS VISTA project will work with three specific programs with in Lutheran Family Services; the North Omaha Center for Healthy Families®, the International Center of the Heartland, and the At Ease® program, seeking to build and strengthen their capacity by measuring impact of current programs, evaluating needs, developing targeted programming; and developing outreach methods to expand within the community.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity, Education, and Veterans and Military Families

8. Provider's Network, Inc. – Capacity Building Project (Project Id: 13VSNNE004)

5625 O Street, Suite 114

Lincoln, NE 68510-2104

Website: www.pnicacfp.com

Phone: (402) 464-4335

Fax: (402) 464-4547

Program Supervisor: Ms. Gaylene Barstow, Executive Director

E-mail: gbarstow@pnicacfo.com

Description: The Provider's Network, Inc. (PNI) is a 501(c)3 organization that provides nutrition education, child development and business management training to child care providers in Nebraska. Provider's Network, Inc. has served as a comprehensive resource, offering service, support and training for family child care providers in Nebraska. The Capacity Building Project will strengthen the capacity of the Providers network to assist childcare providers, including refugee/immigrant providers, with business training, case management, assistance with licensing requirements, and a support network to operate a successful business allowing families and providers to maintain their native culture as they learn to live in their new culture. The VISTA project will assist in developing the curriculum to offer these services to more providers in a format that works for the specific population and their educational level; help develop policies and procedure manuals to ensure services are provided consistently in all areas of the state, and work with existing child care and refugee organizations to assist and promote development of quality child care providers.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity

Subsite: Community Justice Center – Capacity Building Project

5625 O Street, Suite 114

Lincoln, NE 68510-2104

Website: <http://www.communityjusticecenter.org/>

Phone: (402) 559-7458

Site Supervisor: Mr. James Jones, Executive Director

E-mail: jjonesoasis-ne@neb.rr.com

Description: The Community Justice Center (CJC) is a nonprofit public safety organization built on the philosophy, principles and values of Restorative Justice. CJC was created to address the high rate of return of offenders (youth and adult) to prison. The mission of the Community Justice Center is to provide educational support services and resource

information to crime victims, offenders, and communities; addressing the harm caused by crime, while increasing public safety. The agency incorporates internet-, institutional- and community-based offender motivation and skills programs that address the emotional, social, and financial impacts of crime on victims; holding offenders accountable while building the skills they need to avoid committing future crimes. The Capacity Building Project will expand the capacity of CJC to reach greater numbers of adult and juvenile offenders in the Lincoln area and across the state of Nebraska with our Offenders Motivational/Crime Victims Impact Classes by developing CIC curriculum (Employment Soft Skill) for high school students, other special populations, and develop the train-the-trainer manual for workshop instructors.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity

EMBRACING INNOVATION

9. Metropolitan Community College – ReEngage Omaha (Project Id: 11VSNNE001)

Fort Bldg. 14S

5300 North 30th Street

Omaha, NE 68103

Website: <https://www.mccneb.edu/>

Phone: (402) 457-2736

Program Supervisor: Ms. Tracy McTavish-Mlady, Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator

E-mail: tjmctavishmlady@mccneb.edu

Description: Metropolitan Community College (MCC) is developing targeted outreach and support systems for low-income military personnel and veterans who wish to increase their educational attainment as a pathway for employment and a livable income. In addition, VISTA members will focus efforts on neighborhood-based research, planning, and capacity building to expand opportunities for education, business development and employment through neighborhood-based community revitalization. VISTA members will build on accomplishments from MCC's first year of VISTA sponsorship, integrating year one research, planning and resource development into neighborhood-based capacity building in one of four target areas - South Omaha, North Omaha, Dodge County (rural) or West Omaha. VISTA members will work with advisors to develop and implement a common system to plan neighborhood-based community revitalization, identifying procedures, resources and strategies for coordination and communication within and across VISTA member areas of focus.

Focus Area: Education - High School Graduation, Economic Opportunity, and Veterans

Multi-State VISTA Programs with sites in Nebraska

10. College Possible – College Possible National Expansion (Project Id: 11VSNMN005)

450 N Syndicate Street, Ste 325

Saint Paul, MN 55104-4122

Website: www.CollegePossible.org

Phone: (612) 236-8864

Program Supervisor: Mr. Geoffrey S. Wilson, External Relations Coordinator

E-mail: gwilson@college-possible.org

Site: College Possible Omaha

900 S. 74th Plaza, Suite 403

Omaha, NE 68114

Phone: (402) 884-4750

Fax: (402) 884-4791

Program Supervisor: Mr. Bryan Seck, Program Manager

E-Mail BSeck@collegepossible.org

Description: College Possible (formerly Admission Possible) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit making college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support. Our after-school services include (1) academic support through ACT/SAT test preparation; (2) college application assistance; (3) financial aid consulting; (4) guidance in the college transition; and (5) support toward college degree completion. As an AmeriCorps organization, College Possible is recruiting college graduates to serve for one year to help make a college degree possible for low-income students. With VISTA positions ranging to writing grants to coordinating events, there are many opportunities offered.

Focus Area: Education

11. Spirit of the Sun Inc. – Native American Elder Services and Economic Development (Project Id: 12VSWCO005)

357 McCaslin Blvd.

Louisville, CO 80027

Website: www.spiritofthesun.org

Phone: (303) 926-5275

Program Supervisor: Ms. Jenica Baty

E-Mail: jbaty@spiritofthesun.org

Site: Winnebago Senior Center

103 Bluff Street, Winnebago, NE 68071

Phone: (402) 878-2487

Program Supervisor: Ms. Janet Bird, Acting Director

Description: VISTAs with Spirit of the Sun (SOTS), will work to alleviate disparities in health, nutrition, adequate and safe housing, transportation, poverty, the environment, the digital divide and social isolation. SOTS is a nonprofit focused on meeting the needs of Native American tribes and tribal organizations to provide tribes, nationwide, with the tools necessary to achieve goals. This is done in two ways, through: economic development opportunities and elder support services. VISTA members with our Native American Elders Program will work with elder service centers on tribal lands to build program capacity, write grants, enhance services and coordination, and perform other locally directed activities.

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity and Healthy Futures