



VISTA Assignment Description

VAD

VISTA Member Name	TBD
VISTA Title	Foodscares VISTA – Volunteer Program & Community Engagement Coordinator
Member Term of Service	August 30, 2022 – August 29, 2023

Site Name	Maine Foodscares, Inc.
EIN Number	83-4414589
Service Location (address including 4 digit zip extension)	Maine Foodscares 22 Montgomery Road Windham, ME 04062
Supervisor Name/Title	Ali Mediate
Supervisor Phone/Email	(207) 671-6306, ali@mainefoodscares.org

Project Name	Goodwill VISTA Partnership
Sponsoring Organization	Goodwill Industries of Northern New England
Project Number	17VSAME002
Project Period	TBD
Focus Area	Healthy Futures
Secondary Focus Area	Environmental Stewardship
Number of Years with Goodwill VISTA Partnership	1
If more than 3 site must define a NEW project for the VISTA(s).	N/A

If the service the VISTA member will perform meets the following priority areas, please highlight which and briefly explain how:	Opioid Addiction Prevention and/or Recovery Employment/Workforce Development Housing: particularly for veterans STEM programming for underrepresented students
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VISTA Assignment Objectives & Member Activities	
Host Site Organization Overview	Maine Foodscares focuses on reducing food insecurity by providing low-income families and individuals with free gardens, gardening and food preparation instruction, and a community experience based on shared desires to increase direct access to healthy, nutritious produce. Maine Foodscares also participates in the network of southern Maine organizations and programs concerned with producing food to reduce food insecurity and has developed partnerships with several other organizations that enable us to leverage additional resources

	to combat hunger and poverty throughout Southern Maine. Because organic vegetable gardening embodies the principles of sustainable agriculture, reduces the transportation component of food costs, and improves the micro-ecology in the area where the garden is located, the Free Garden Project also generates positive outcomes for the environment.
Project Goal	<p>The goal of this VISTA project is to build the capacity of Maine Foodscapes to act as a non-profit agency by developing the tools and procedures necessary to meet the needs of the Garden Project’s community of low-income gardeners throughout Southern Maine.</p> <p>The AmeriCorps VISTA Service Member will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage the Volunteer Program through recruitment, engagement, retention; and Volunteer Handbook development. 2. Develop and implement strategies to survey and evaluate impacts on program participants in the Garden Project, Volunteer Program, and Community Workshops. Support data management and reporting. 3. Improve digital communication practices through e-Newsletters, social media, and other online media campaigns. 4. Manage outreach, community engagement, and tabling events.
Sustainability	<i>The Service Member’s contributions will be sustainable once their term ends because of their service year’s efforts. The member will have established processes and procedures and will have established tools that can be easily transferred to successors or volunteers that have been recruited because of their work developing the Foodscapes Volunteer Program.</i>
Objective 1	Work towards ending the cycle of poverty through the organization’s mission and the activities of the VISTA.
Timeframe	Continuous
Member Activities – Objective 1	<p>Project target population</p> <p>The Maine Foodscapes Garden Project serves low-income, food-insecure families in southern Maine; depending on how the data are counted, 16% of Maine’s households, 16% of its seniors, and 20% of its children do not have enough to eat. Maine has the highest rate of hunger (“very low” on the food insecurity scale) in New England; our hunger rate is third in the nation, and sixth for overall food insecurity. Cumberland and York Counties comprise the majority of Maine Foodscapes’ service area. Of the households in Cumberland County, just over 12% experience food insecurity, and 50% are eligible for federal food assistance programs; in York County, just over 11% of households are food insecure, and 52% are eligible for federal food assistance. Both counties have a poverty rate of about 10%.</p> <p>Recruitment of gardeners is conducted through notices sent to over 50 partners who work with our target population (food banks, social service agencies, community gardens, etc.). Along with information about gardening skills, the application form gathers demographic characteristics and perceptions of household food security and self-efficacy. For our three years of operation to date, 45% of Foodscapes households are headed by single parents; 50% receive EBT/WIC benefits, are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches, and use a food bank or pantry more than twice a month. Over 75% reported that their funds did not cover enough food to last the month, and nearly 80% reported that their budget often or sometimes did not stretch to provide healthful, well-balanced meals.</p> <p>Although there are few studies to date on the impact of personal vegetable gardening on food insecurity, interest is growing, and preliminary data have been collected. A 2018 study in San Jose, CA, found that home gardens active for six months saved \$552 on the household food budget. The three-raised-bed gardens provided by Maine Foodscapes can, if succession</p>

	<p>planning and season extension techniques are used, provide about \$1,200 of produce for a garden year. The poverty line for a family of four in Maine is \$25,100; if a household did produce \$1,200 worth of food, it would increase household income by 4.7%.</p>
	<p>VISTA Member Involvement The Maine Foodscapes VISTA member will be supporting Maine Foodscapes, rather than providing direct service to program participants. Through the member’s work on community engagement, and managing volunteers, Maine Foodscapes will be able to support additional households and social service organizations.</p>
Objective 2	<i>Increase sustainability of Maine Foodscapes by creating engagement strategies that increase donor contributions and monthly commitments.</i>
Timeframe	Continuous
Member Activities – Objective 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with Foodscapes Fundraising & Development Manager VISTA to expand and keep an up-to-date list of donors. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify new donors through campaigns, meetings, organizing, tabling, and networking. b. Help keep list serv updated; add prospective donors to database; update prospective events and tabling opportunities to cultivate donors and contributions 2. Outreach to current and prospective donors using various digital strategies; and develop best practices for outreach, story-telling, saying thank you to donors, and donor retainment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Set up meetings and tours with prospective donors b. Develop digital campaigns and story-telling strategies c. Develop “Thank You” best practices and communication strategies for donor retainment
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Lead the creation of digital and print materials for outreach, communications, and Foodscapes Ambassador training for volunteers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Host Training/Orientations for Foodscapes Ambassadors (volunteers) who can go out into the community and fundraise/ network on behalf of Maine Foodscapes b. Utilize and finetune community fundraising tools and resources for local school groups and businesses to help raise funds to build gardens for low-income families in their communities through self-run campaigns c. Adapt 2022 Fundraising Guide for Spring Garden Build Teams for general use throughout the year d. Keep fundraising and campaign materials updated and help develop any materials as needed 4. Identify, recruit, and engage volunteers in tabling, community networking, & fundraising events Conduct community engagement and volunteer events. Coordinate tabling efforts with Foodscapes volunteers. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Host annual Farm to Table Fundraising event in the fall with Volunteer Events Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Recruit for, coordinate, and lead Volunteer Events Committee b. Support tabling outreach efforts by pairing volunteers with opportunities to act as Foodscapes Ambassadors in the community c. Assist in organizing Annual Volunteer Events such as Seed Sorting Party, Volunteer Orientations, Volunteer Appreciations, etc.

Objective 3	<i>Develop and implement strategies to survey and evaluate impacts on program participants in the Garden Project, Volunteer Program, and Community Workshops. Support data management.</i>	
Timeframe	Continuous	
Member Activities	1. Develop a master schedule for data collection, entry, and analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Application data b. Pre-, mid-, and post-surveys of garden participants c. Mid-season crop survey d. Post-season crop survey 	
	2. Identify any emerging topics for data collection that could improve impact measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review literature on low-income gardening, health impacts of gardening b. Review literature on gardening, food insecurity, and poverty in Maine and the U.S. c. Research measurement tools for emerging topics, e.g. mental health measures and environmental impact measures d. Prepare data collection instruments e. Incorporate into the master schedule for data collection, entry, and analysis 	
Objective 4	<i>Manage and develop the Foodscapes Volunteer Program through volunteer coordination & by developing new volunteer recruitment, engagement, and retention strategies (e.g., digital & print materials, communication plan, events)</i>	
Timeframe	Continuous	
Member Activities – Objective 4	1. Continue to recruit, collect applications/ volunteer agreements, orient, and manage volunteers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Respond quickly and professionally to volunteer inquiries and applications. b. Host quarterly volunteer orientations c. Collaborate with FGP Coordinator to match Garden Mentor Volunteers with Gardeners d. Track volunteer hours through Neon e. Create a Volunteer Handbook 	
	2. Send monthly or bi-monthly e-News to Foodscapes Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use MailChimp to create an e-News template and regular communications schedule. E-news to include key volunteer opportunities and events. b. Help compile Quarterly e-News to entire Foodscapes listserv 	
	3. Respond to all volunteer communication in a timely manner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure appropriate and respectful communication 	
	4. Conduct volunteer program evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop and distribute a survey to Foodscapes Volunteers to gather important program feedback b. Develop a Volunteer Celebration Annual event to thank our volunteers 	

Training	Training	Expected Timeframe
	Goodwill VISTA Partnership Trainings <i>(outlined in Member Training Calendar)</i>	Ongoing

Component	3 overnight trainings in September, February and May. Dates TBD. Most are 2 nights, 3 days.	
	Monthly trainings including: webinars, member conferences or day-long conferences. Dates and locations TBD. Travel may be required.	
	Foodscapes VISTA Orientation	Beginning of Service Term
	1-2 Garden Visits – Understanding the program	TBD
	Monthly Leadership Team Meetings	TBD
Services Components	National Days of Service	Expected Timeframe
	9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance	Week of 9/11
	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service	Week of 1/21
	AmeriCorps Week	2 nd Week of March

AmeriCorps VISTA Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stipend of \$954 per month throughout the 12 month term (\$1,174 in Cumberland and York Counties) ● Choice of \$6,195 education award or \$1,800 cash stipend upon completion of service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education award can be to pay off qualified loans, or for educational expenses at Title IV schools ● Forbearance of federally qualified student loans during service term (interest paid by AmeriCorps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stafford ○ Perkins ○ Some private loans (you must call lender to ask) ● Health Benefits (go to link below for more details) ● Workers Compensation Coverage ● Child Care Reimbursement (if income eligible) ● 10 days of sick leave and 10 days of vacation leave ● Relocation Allowance for service for those who relocate 50 miles or more (from their home of record) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One time relocation allotment of \$750 and reimbursement for travel costs (baggage shipment, mileage reimbursement if driving a personal vehicle) ● Non-competitive eligibility for Federal Jobs for 1 year after your term of service ● Networking/professional development ● Mileage reimbursement to AmeriCorps sponsored training events ● Mileage reimbursement for project/site related travel consistent with staff reimbursement at the site ● Usually eligible for Food Stamps (SNAP) – should apply for benefit before starting VISTA term
For more information about VISTA: http://www.vistacampus.gov/

AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities
<p>The following activities are prohibited in AmeriCorps Programs:</p> <p>(a) While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attempting to influence legislation; 2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;

3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
8. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - i. A business organized for profit;
 - ii. A labor union;
 - iii. A partisan political organization;
 - iv. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
11. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit

Capacity Building Performance Measures

As a general rule, capacity building activities are *indirect services* that enable CNCS-supported organizations to provide more, better and sustained *direct services*. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Capacity building activities must:

1. Be intended to support or enhance the program delivery model.
2. Respond to the organization’s goal of increasing, expanding or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified in the community, and
3. Enable the organization to provide a sustained level of more or better services after the national service participant’s term of service has ended.

These Capacity Building Performance Measures should directly relate to the VISTA member Goal/Objectives/Activities outlined in the VAD. Please rank your top three performance measures in order as how they correlate to the VAD objectives and activities you just listed.

Please Note: Although we ask that you to rank the top 3 primary measures associated with the member position, members will be expected to report applicable accomplishments on ALL performance measures via reporting procedures throughout the year. Please indicate your top performance measurement.

Selection 2020-2021	Performance Measure	2020-2021 Target #
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	Number of community volunteers recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
	Number of community volunteers managed by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
	Number of organizations implementing three or more effective volunteer management practices as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
	Number of organizations that received capacity building services from CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
1	Number of staff and community volunteers that received training (of one or more types) as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	40
	<i>Number of organizations that completed a community assessment identifying goals and recommendations with the assistance of CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants</i>	
2	Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	1000
	Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were managed by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
	Number of organizations reporting that capacity building activities provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants have helped to make the organization more efficient	
	Number of organizations reporting that capacity building activities provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants have helped to make the organization more effective	
3	Number of new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc) or enhancements to existing systems and business processes put in place as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	8
	Number of organizations that monitored their progress towards the goals identified in their community assessment with the assistance of CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
	Number of additional activities completed and/or program outputs produced by the program as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants in:	
	a) Disaster Services	
	b) Economic Opportunity	
	c) Education	
	d) Environmental Stewardship	
	e) Healthy Futures	
	f) Veterans and Military Families	
	Number of organizations that have experienced an increase in requests for their programs and services as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or notational service participants	
	Number of additional types of services offered by organizations as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants in:	

	a) Disaster Services	
	b) Economic Opportunity	
	c) Education	
	d) Environmental Stewardship	
	e) Healthy Futures	
	f) Veterans and Military Families	
4	Dollar value of cash resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	\$3 ,500
	Dollar value of in-kind resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants	
5	Number of new beneficiaries that received services as a result of capacity building efforts in	
	a) Disaster Services	
	b) Economic Opportunity	
	c) Education	
	d) Environmental Stewardship	
	e) Healthy Futures	50-100
	f) Veterans and Military Families	
	Number of new beneficiaries from one or more targeted or underserved populations (counts by target population, e.g. racial or ethnic group) that received services as a result of capacity building efforts in:	
	a) Disaster Services	
	b) Economic Opportunity	
	c) Education	
	d) Environmental Stewardship	X
	e) Healthy Futures	X
	f) Veterans and Military Families	