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Description automatically generated****New Hampshire Food Insecurity AmeriCorps Project**

**VISTA Assignment Descriptions (VADs)**

**Families in Transition VISTA Program**

**AmeriCorps VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)**

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| **VISTA Project:** Campus Compact | **Service Term: 2021** | |
| **VISTA Member Name: TBD** | | |
| **Host Site:** Families in Transition-New Horizons | **VISTA Title:** Manchester Food Collaborative Coordinator | |
| **Focus Area:** COVID-19 | **Priority Area:** Food Insecurity | |
| **VISTA Member Activities and Steps Checklist** | |  |
| **Project Goal**:  To address hunger and poverty issues in the Manchester region by fostering growth, developing and supporting the creation of new coalitions through various methods including assessing and identifying community needs, increasing awareness of programs, events and activities, strengthening partnerships and creating opportunities for involvement through outreach, communication, education and engagement.  **Community Need:**  Even before the pandemic, many New Hampshire citizens experienced regular food insecurity. This continual inability to meet their food-related needs was only heightened after the arrival of COVID-19. To respond to this increased and unique need, Manchester social service agencies have made dramatic shifts in how food is accessed, processed and distributed to ensure safe COVID prevention practices. While non-profits have accomplished these adjustments with impressive flexibility and agility to continue to meet their mission, it has become apparent that the pandemic has caused many social service food agencies to focus inward on own their operations and programs, while paying less attention to the important role of collaboration and integration to ensure effective and efficient food deliver services for the community.  Recognizing that collaboration is key to successfully meeting the food-related needs of the community, Dartmouth-Hitchcock identified a gap in collaboration and communication across food service initiatives in the City of Manchester. To address this gap and with Dartmouth-Hitchcock’s support and resources, the Manchester Food Collaborative (MFC) was formed. The MFC is in initial stages of collaborative development and membership. Because members are tasked with significant responsibilities in their own organizations that limits their ability to organize and implement collaborative activities, the MFC proposes to enlist a VISTA volunteer who can engage in a number of activities that will support the development of the MFC as an entity including: 1) Assist in establishing and carrying out identified goals including researching best food service practices, particularly in COVID times; 2) support the members in collaborating and partnering to improve efficiencies and share resources; 3) Identify ways to decrease overlap and support positive outcomes in food service to the most vulnerable populations 4) understand the population accessing food services through data collection to then best identify and meet their food insecurity needs and 4) identify additional partnerships and funding resources that can enhance the impact of the MFC.  **Goal Statement (750 characters max):**  In May of 2020, FIT-NH, in collaboration with Dartmouth-Hitchcock, began convening a group of agencies providing services that address food insecurity due to poverty in Manchester, NH. The group became known as the Manchester Food Collaborative and consists of a broad network of agencies including The Boys and Girls Club, Families in Transition-New Horizons, Tower Hill Ministries, Good Samaritans, among others. The purpose of the Manchester Food Collaborative is to identify services that are currently being provided in the community to people who are experiencing hunger and food insecurity, while also identifying gaps in services that may be able to be filled by a partner agency in the community. Over the past month, member agencies have been learning from other communities about how they can most effectively collaborate to meet the nutritional needs of the Manchester community. The Collaborative has identified the following goals with the support of a VISTA volunteer position:  1.) The identification of Food-Service Community resources and gaps in the community; 2.) Development of a resource for improving the ease in accessing the City’s food resource information for those utilizing these food services; 3.) Increase membership and organization of the Manchester Food Collaborative for enhanced partnerships and better cohesion of food service programs; and 4.) Improve models of food service delivery amongst providers in the City, particularly during times of COVID-19 which highlight best prevention and health practices.    **Activities Identified:** | | |
| **Activity 1 Objective (1000 characters max):**  One of this VISTA’s primary tasks will be to increase the development of the Manchester Food Collaborative (MFC) and its organizational structure, coordinate activities and assist in providing administrative support. This would include: 1) Identifying and engaging members of the Collaborative; 2) Planning meetings; 3) Organizing agendas; 4) Maintaining communication with members for optimal engagement; 5) Taking and distributing minutes; 6) Attending work group meetings, 7) Assisting in charter and collaborative structure development and; 8) Any other activities arising out of the MFC.  **Step 1:** Assist in identifying potential members of the MFC and support engagement of the food service providers with the Collaborative. Identify areas for greater collaboration among existing and new partners. Engage the NH Food Bank as a key stakeholder in the community.  **Step 2:** Collaborate with the Nashua Food Council and Upper Valley Collaborative on models of food collaboratives and identification of goals and strategies to replicate in the City of Manchester. Utilize resources of Nashua Food Council Coordinator to assist in model implementation.  **Step 3:** Research the population, history, demographics, poverty data and trends of a potential or existing food site. Conduct a Manchester community asset mapping, identifying the strengths, resources, assets and needs of the community. Document barriers to food access, such as transportation barriers. Identify potential in-kind and financial resources in communities to help support agency partners. Develop report and recommendations  **Step 4:** Aid in the coordination of the planning of MFC regular meetings and any scheduled meetings of workgroups.  **Step 5:** Assist membership in identifying the Collaboratives purpose, charter and organizational structure. Assist in the organization and delivery of a regional gathering of Collaborative stakeholders in the region to provide networking, training and knowledge exchange opportunities.  **Step 6:** Track, manage, and facilitate communication with members and others who are involved with the work of the MFC, including identifying the use of technology for documentation archiving and sharing (i.e. Google Docs, Etc.)  **Step 7:** Assist any MFC workgroups in carrying out policy or other related-work and assist in developing reports for the MFC.  **Step 8:**  Measure and report on MFC activities and develop written organizational structure, and a calendar of activities, based on the activities of the MFC over the past year. | | **Activity 2 Timeline**  January 2021-April 2021 |
| Activity 1 Measurable Outcomes:   * Number of MFC-related meetings coordinated: 6 * Number of new members engaged in the MFC: 5 * Number of new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) put in place as a result of capacity building services by the VISTA member: 3 | | |
| **Activity 2 Objective (1000 characters max):**  The VISTA position will assist in the assessment of the food resources in the City of Manchester and identify ways to keep those with food insecurities informed of resources available to meet their needs. Identify best practices and resources to improve communication and raise awareness of the City’s food resources for constituents.  **Step 1**: Research and document the existing food services in the City of Manchester, including the identification of differences in programs such as payment, food types/nutrition, times of day/week, etc.  **Step 2**: Develop data collection reports and data systems to understand the population accessing food services. Gather qualitative data to understand what the needs are, gaps in community resources and best practices to enhance food service programs to enhance the outcomes of the programs.  **Step 3**: Assist MFC in assessing gaps in addressing the food insecurity needs of identified populations (youth, refugees, seniors, etc.) and/or regions of the city identified as a food desert. Coordinate with Good Samaritans organization to assess ministry food programs.  **Step 4**: Collaborate with the Nashua Food Collaborative Coordinator in communicating resources to constituents, including technology systems such as Apps to support immediate access to information related to food resources.  **Step 5**: Assist in obtaining resources to support the implementation of a communication tool for constituents to be informed of food resources in the community.  **Step 6**: Assist in developing workflows for systems of sharing food resources when available.  **Step 7**: Coordinate logistical support by aiding in the development of impact strategies to improve access to health food, development of materials as needed to support Collaborative activities, and aiding in the implementation and evaluation of Collaborative projects. | | **Activity 3 Timeline**  January 2021 to April 2020 |
| Activity 2 Measurable Outcomes:   * Identify model/best practice strategies/goals for Food Collaborative: 3 * Identify and apply for funding resources for implementation of strategy identified for constituent education/information (i.e. technology/App): 2 * Develop workflows for food sharing systems among programs: 3 | | |
| **Activity 3 Objective (1000 characters max):**  This VISTA will be charged with assisting the MFC with learning best food service models and COVID-19 practices to utilize either in individual programs and/or partnering opportunities.  **Step 1:** Research national and local best practices and models of food service delivery, including food pantries and soup kitchens. Identify key COVID-19 prevention strategies identified to support health and safety. Document best practices/models summarizing key findings.  **Step 2:** Investigate best practices and explore supplemental programs and mobile food pantries being offered in urban areas. Research successful, innovative programs that transport food to hunger insecure children and adults in Manchester.  **Step 4:** Assist in coordinating local site visits and/or zoom calls for MFC members to tour and learn from other food service entities to learn best practices and models.  **Step 5:** Support MFC in identifying goals related to collaboration and/or individuals members programs to identify strategic plans and steps for implementation of best practices learned for improvements for the food resources in the City.  **Step 6:** Identify potential collaborative food events across multiple organizations to improve reach and efficiencies.  **Step 7:** Participate in food pantry or soup kitchen activities as volunteer as well as observe how organizations implement their food service program and best practices. Engage in volunteer/observation activity with all members of the Food Collaborative. Provide direct service support in the operations of the food pantry and soup kitchen activities.  **Step 8:** Coordinate with staff to ensure the Collaborative supports transitions from VISTA support in a sustainable manner by (1) documenting systems and processes and (2) identifying network organizations who will take on the responsibilities moving forward. | | **Activity 4 Timeline**  February 2021 – May 2021 |
| Activity 3 Measurable Outcomes:   * Number of models/best practices identified: 5 * Number of site visits or food resource expert meetings planned: 3 * Number of collaborative food events across organizations: 2 * Percentage of members who implement 1 or more best practices/models identified: 25% | | |

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| **VISTA Member** | **Families in Transition VISTA Program** |
| Name: | Name: |
| Title: | Title: |
| Signature: | Signature: |
| Date: | Date: |