

Please do not write more than 1-3 paragraphs per question but only when needed. Concise is best. Do not redesign or reformat this form. Work in this form only!

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.

Food for People is working to eliminate hunger and improve the health and well-being of our community through access to healthy and nutritious foods, community education, and advocacy. Food for People is designated as the food bank for Humboldt County, and has been providing emergency and supplementary food for people in need since 1979. We operate a total of 13 programs, each of which is designed to provide a safety net for those who are risk for hunger and/or malnutrition. Collectively, these programs serve an average of 9,000 to 10,000 people each month. Our mission is:

- **To provide emergency and supplementary food to those in need**
- **To improve food access through expanded participation in gleaned and gardening projects**
- **To conduct advocacy and outreach for local, state and federal food assistance programs and other anti-hunger activities**
- **To involve low income persons in self sufficiency programs**
- **To encourage self sufficiency in the community as a whole**

Food for People's anti-hunger activities have included a focus on nutrition education and access to food stamp benefits as a means of reducing hunger and improving health and we have coordinated the Food Stamp Task Force since 1999. The VISTA would be working with our Community Education and Outreach Program staff to extend nutrition education activities and food stamp and other federal food program outreach activities to other community based programs, including Family Resource Centers, Community Health Centers and Food for People's network of food pantries located throughout Humboldt County. Outreach and support activities will also be provided for low income individuals.

B. Needs and Activities

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 is ranked 9th statewide in the incidence of hunger and food insecurity among adults in low-income households, with #1 being the worst. According to California Food Policy Advocates, our county has a population of 128,330 people and 15% (19,295) live at or below the federal poverty level. This includes 5,759 children in poverty, representing 26% of all children under the age of 18 in our county. 58.4% of adults are identified as obese and approximately 5,000 have been diagnosed with diabetes. The Food Stamp Program is a USDA nutrition assistance program that helps low-income households purchase nutritious foods. Only 46% of Humboldt County residents eligible for food stamps are enrolled in the program. Our county covers 3,572 square miles with only 35.4 people per square mile. Misunderstandings about eligibility criteria and the rural nature of our county often make it difficult for low income individuals and families in need of food to access food pantries, the food stamp program and other available nutrition services.

C. Strengthening Communities

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1. Describe how the new infrastructure or organizational capacity created by your project will bring individuals and, ultimately, the community out of poverty.
2. How will you involve the community to ensure the sustainability of the proposed project?
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?

The new project will not necessarily bring individuals out of poverty, but will help to alleviate the incidence of hunger and food insecurity among low income households struggling to make ends meet. It will do so by helping low-income households to identify additional food resources necessary to combat hunger and improve nutrition so they have a healthier foundation from which to succeed in other areas of their lives. It will also provide targeted individuals with the nutrition education information they need to make healthier food choices. Children who are malnourished fail to grow and develop normally and tend to have a higher than average school drop-out rate. Families need good nutrition to be able to work and care for each other. Seniors and people with disabilities risk a loss of independence when they don't have enough to eat. Our project will help to strengthen our community by providing adequate food resources and nutrition education for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Food for People has a long history of community partnerships and collaborations. Approximately 1200 hours are donated each month by 200 volunteers across all of our programs. Our volunteer base includes but is not limited to individuals referred through RSVP, AARP Senior Employment, Welfare to Work (CalWorks), school programs and community service referrals. This does not include the many individuals who volunteer their time to operate the network of food pantries countywide that stretch from Garberville to Orick and Eureka to Willow Creek. These pantries are supported by local churches, businesses and civic organizations that provide them with funding, food and volunteers. The VISTA would be working closely with these pantries and their support networks to ensure sustainability. We would also continue to work with AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers to support these efforts. AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers have been a tremendous resource for the food bank at all levels in recent years, and we are grateful for their expertise and assistance.

D. VISTA Assignment Description

1. ***List*** the tasks and activities AmeriCorps*VISTA member(s) must perform to implement the strategies described in the project plan(s). These tasks and activities should logically relate to the overall project goals and activities you propose in your VISTA Assignment Description. This section will include more detail on the actual service activities.
2. ***List*** the recommended skills and qualifications that an AmeriCorps*VISTA member should have to successfully complete the project plan.

The member tasks and activities for year one will include:

- **Work with Community Education and Outreach Coordinator to prepare nutrition education materials for dissemination monthly at the food bank**
- **Research additional nutrition information and resources through public health/Project LEAN and other nutrition professionals**
- **Update, maintain and/or create a comprehensive “tool box” of nutrition education and federal food programs information tailored for each pantry site, Family Resource Center and Community Health Center**
- **Assist with the scheduling of cooking classes, taste tests and other food/cooking demonstrations**

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- Assist Community Education and Outreach Coordinator with food stamp outreach efforts, including pre-screening and direct application assistance for individuals
- Assist with the coordination of activities designed to educate the community about the benefits of food stamps as a nutrition assistance (not welfare) resource
- Work with the Coordinator to schedule and deliver training on the food stamp application process for case managers in partner organizations serving low income individuals
- Recruit and screen additional volunteers to support project activities in each community, as needed

Qualifications:

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Ability to work with people from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds
- Desire to work to improve access to nutrition programs and nutrition education for low-income households
- Excellent writing skills
- Strong organizational skills, including the ability to prioritize tasks for self and volunteers
- Spanish language proficiency is desirable
- Strong computer skills

E. Project Management

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

Daily supervision will be provided by the executive director and the Community Education and Outreach Coordinator on a part time basis as the VISTA will also be working independently in the community a portion of the time.

Our Board of Directors does not reflect a 51% majority of low income representatives. Based on the level of daily contact we have with members of the low income community, we do not anticipate any problems in forming an advisory committee that is representative of the individuals served through the food bank.

The goals for nutrition education and outreach for food stamp and other federal food programs will mirror those of the grants and contracts already in place for that program. This includes specific tracking measures for materials disseminated, number of people applying for and receiving food stamps, number of individuals trained, nutrition education or food stamp outreach events, and community partnerships.

F. Organizational Capacity

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

Food for People is able to provide a monthly food box and a Costco membership which will enable the VISTA to purchase the “cheapest gas in town”. All necessary work-related supplies will be provided, along with mileage reimbursement for project related travel. Resource materials and outreach training will be provided by the Community Education and Outreach Coordinator. A computer, printer access and DSL service will be available at the VISTA’s assigned work station. A food bank vehicle can be available on a scheduled basis for travel to pantry sites. Any training offered to Food for People staff will be extended to the VISTA. Our site is fully accessible to persons with disabilities on the first floor of our facility. The second floor is not currently accessible (all office space), although office space on the first floor can be made available and all program services are delivered on the first floor.

Since 1999, Food for People has conducted food stamp outreach and advocacy activities as part of an initiative to increase enrollment and reduce the incidence of hunger. Current outreach efforts include presentations on the food stamp application process for local organizations providing case management services to low income populations; and individualized support for food bank clients. Cooking classes have been offered through the food bank for over 9 years and recipes and other nutrition and health related information are routinely disseminated in food boxes. The Community Education and Outreach Coordinator is currently working on several programs (nutrition education, food stamp outreach and access, and hunger education) so the assistance and support provided by the VISTA will allow us to expand these efforts. It will also allow us to extend these services to the individual pantry sites throughout the community that serve some of our most impoverished citizens.

PART III. ATTACHMENTS

Please submit the following attachments with your project narrative or soon after.

- List of Board of Directors, or governing body (not applicable if public entity).
- List of Advisory Council Members if already selected. If not, the list must be submitted before the end of the first quarter of the project.
- Copy of Articles of Incorporation (not applicable to public entities).
- Organizational chart.
- Tax exempt status: either IRS determination or copy of application to IRS for exemption (not applicable to public entities).
- Copy of Supervisor’s Resume and Job Description.
- One letter of commitment from the proposed board of directors. The letter should describe the type of support and/or resources the partner organization will contribute.

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