

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title: Health Partnership Organizer VISTA - Montgomery County Food Bank (Implementation and Evaluation Y3)

Sponsoring Organization: Feeding Texas

Project Name: Feeding Texas-Client Empowerment Corps

Project Number: 15VSWTX006

Project Period:

Site Name (if applicable): Montgomery County Food Bank

Focus Area(s)

Primary: Healthy Futures

Secondary: Capacity Building

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: 1)Begin to address the upstream causes (inadequate income) and the downstream effects (poor health) of food insecurity through new, nontraditional partnerships that provide access to education, cross-sector services, referrals, and nutrition to help break the cycle of food bank client needs rooted in poverty.

2)Strategically incorporate client voice through a client empowerment/storybanking project to ensure sustainability of services, build robust communication networks, reduce stigma, and increase participation to move more community members out of food insecurity and poverty. The VISTA project will assess service gaps revealed by local natural disasters and help build new strategies to address unmet need for low income individuals.

Objective of the Assignment (50% of time to be spent on this objective)

Complete a needs assessment in order to identify the unmet service needs of the food bank's service area (specifically focused on food deserts, and increased need due to COVID-19) and resources available (Mobile Markets) in food banks and partner agencies related to meeting health, food and other related service needs of low income communities.

1. Cooperate with supervisor and other staff and volunteers in the food bank and partner agencies to become familiar with the range of services available to clients. Review documentation and assessment materials created by the previous VISTA member to build on the previous year's work and goals.
2. In conjunction with supervisor and with the help of the VISTA program team at Feeding Texas, develop a research plan to guide a needs assessment that includes goals and objectives of the research. Goals may include:
 - a) Utilizing the Y1 and Y2 VISTA Community Assessment Projects, identify and highlight food deserts or service area gaps where access to healthy food is impeded, especially those which can be targeted for Mobile Market access.
 - b) Investigate current plans and model for the new Mobile Market program at the food bank. Collect information on best practices related to mobile distributions, prioritizing the client choice mobile distribution model, as needed to supplement current food bank knowledge.
 - c) Identify other existing models and best practices addressing areas related to assessment topics (mobile pantries, local partner agencies, drop sites, etc.) as needed to supplement existing knowledge. Utilize contacts at other Texas food banks and national food banks through the Feeding America network to seek information and resources.
 - d) Seek feedback and information directly from community stakeholders (may include clients, agency staff or volunteers, and other community service partners) about Mobile Market concepts or other solutions whenever possible to assist in determining desirability, support, and practicality of proposed programs and solutions.
3. Complete and synthesize research to develop recommendations on how to fill the gaps with new or strengthened community partnerships to support Mobile Markets and other solutions to service gaps as appropriate. Make recommendations for action based on both established practices identified in research, sustainability practicality, and assessment of readiness and goodness of fit of all partners.
 - a) Provide supervisor with a formal report that establishes the problem, presents findings, justifies conclusions, and makes appropriate recommendations. Seek support from staff and Feeding Texas to create, edit, and finalize this report.
 - b) Propose necessary next steps to prepare for implantation of best practices or

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 30% of time to be spent on this objective)

Use findings and recommendations of research to create and begin implementing a plan of action that will build social capital and infrastructure necessary to support sustainable avenues to increased food access for low income communities. Develop plans for and support expansion of Mobile Market program.

1. Create a long-term plan of action, logic model, timeline, etc. to build guidelines for the project tasks, and descriptions of roles necessary to guide project success.
 - a) Identify what materials or resources are necessary to create or obtain for

implementation, and means for obtaining them.

- b) Develop best practices Processes and Procedures manual for Mobile Markets; including how to guides for Host Sites, Partner Agencies, Volunteer groups, etc. Include finalized documents and data collection processes.

2. Conduct a SWOT or similar analysis for current and potential Mobile Market host sites to provide individualized recommendations and plans for success.

3. Create an evaluation plan or outline to identify essential factors to be monitored over the life of the project or program.

- a) Work with staff at the food bank, as well as Feeding Texas staff to ensure effective evaluation strategies and appropriate metrics are applied

4. Begin to establish community relationships and partnerships as necessary to create practical plans for next steps, and to set strong relational foundations for the food bank and potentially future VISTAs to continue this project.

5. Maintain clear and organized legacy documents throughout the service year to ensure processes are clear, replicable, and sustainable.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: 20% of time to be spent on this objective)

Engage community members and clients in client empowerment/story banking initiative to inform conversations around the causes and effects of food insecurity, and expand community knowledge and support for the anti-hunger efforts.

Member Activities:

1. Gather clients' input and stories through a statewide StoryBank Texas project.
 - a. Conduct individual interviews with clients to learn their story and get their feedback as appropriate on food bank programs, services, and potential partnerships.
 - b. Intentionally gather stories from diverse audiences in orders to diversify the stories in the story bank, especially focusing on rural areas.
2. Assess methods for seeking active client involvement and feedback in project design, implementation, and evaluation. Develop ways to include client voice during the service year. Work with the Client Voices Coordinator at Feeding Texas to develop appropriate questions and methods that will integrate StoryBank Texas activities into your work plan in a way that appropriately supports and feeds project activities.
3. Provide feedback to Feeding Texas on story banking initiative and client empowerment groups in order to identify challenges and best practices.
4. Develop tools and materials that are informed by client input, whenever possible.
5. Identify where inclusion of client voice is possible within food bank and the community.

6. Train staff, community members, and clients on new partnerships/resources/services and on story banking/client engagement techniques/efforts.

