



AMERICORPS VISTA OPPORTUNITY

DETAILS:

- Placement with Stepping Stones of Dunn County in Menomonie, Wisconsin
- 40 hours a week
- Starting August 2nd, 2021
- One-year placement
- Benefits of AmeriCorps VISTA membership — <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/vista/benefits>
- Contact: Jill Seichter — communityconnect@steppingstonesdc.org

GOAL OF THE AMERICORPS VISTA PLACEMENT:

Stepping Stones of Dunn County has three major focus areas: Food Pantry, Emergency Shelter and Volunteer Services. We are the primary service-provider for the food insecure and homeless in Menomonie and Dunn County, Wisconsin.

We have identified several expansion areas including increasing outreach and services to underserved populations—with a focus on rural communities, members of the Hmong community and members of the Hispanic community.

- Rural Communities—Two-thirds of the population of Dunn County lives outside of the city of Menomonie but, as the population center, Menomonie currently receives the majority of the programming and funding for the county.
- The Hmong Community—As the largest minority population in the county, there is not only increased food insecurity and poverty, but also cultural and structural barriers to services.
- The Hispanic Community—As the fastest-growing minority population in the county, the need for services is increasing year-over-year. In addition to structural barriers, there are trust issues with government and non-government service agencies.

Within a broader effort of building capacity to provide for the underserved in Dunn County, the aim of the VISTA position will be to establish community relationships, assess areas of need, and build structures for communication that will sustain beyond the year-term of the placement.

BENEFITS OF SERVICE:

The member will benefit from their experience developing an outreach campaign for underserved populations. The member will serve with a small team of dedicated individuals to expand our capacity for service. Being that Stepping Stones of Dunn County provides food, shelter and volunteer services, the breadth of experience will be applicable to many career directions in the non-profit sector, or human services. Experience in establishing contacts in underserved populations, community engagement, qualitative and quantitative need assessment, program evaluation and improvement, and communications will improve not only the community, but the capabilities of the VISTA member as well.

AMERICORPS VISTA POSITION OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:

Objective One—proactively and respectfully establish relationships between Stepping Stones and community leaders, representatives and agencies of underserved populations. **(8/2/2021 – 6/1/2022)**—**Member Activities:**

1. Activity One—Familiarization
 - a. General orientation with Stepping Stones
 - b. One week spent familiarizing with each of our programs: Food Pantry, Shelter Program and Community Connections/Volunteer Services
2. Activity Two—Contact
 - a. Establish initial contact list through Stepping Stones personnel and partner agencies as a starting-point
 - b. Make initial communications, build and update network contact list including positions and agencies of new community resources and leaders
 - c. Request listening sessions, meetings and/or permission to attend established meetings
3. Activity Three—Meeting
 - a. Work with Executive Director and program coordinators to prioritize outreach efforts
 - b. Schedule meetings and community engagement sessions, including attendance by at least one other Stepping Stones representative

Objective Two—use established relationships to assess community needs in underserved populations. **(9/1/2021 – 8/1/2022)**—**Member Activities:**

1. Activity One—Engagement
 - a. Attend meetings and listening sessions and establish relationships, lines of communication and initial discussions of need
2. Activity Two—Assessment
 - a. Compile qualitative assessments of types and areas of need from engagements and follow-up interviews with leaders and community members
 - b. Create and issue quantitative surveys, where appropriate, to determine types and levels of need in rural, Hmong and Hispanic communities
3. Activity Three—Prescription
 - a. Work with Executive Director and Program Coordinators to prioritize identified need in underserved communities
 - b. Participate in program-improvement discussions, aimed at meeting prioritized need identified in underserved populations

Objective Three— build structures for communication that will sustain beyond the year-term of the placement. **(10/1/2021 – 8/1/2022)**—**Member Activities:**

1. Activity One—Connections
 - a. Work with Community Connections coordinator to update contact lists for volunteers/service-providers from rural, Hmong and Hispanic communities
 - b. Work with Pantry coordinator to update and expand primary contacts for food need and distribution in rural, Hmong and Hispanic communities
2. Activity Two—Communications
 - a. Work with Communications/Development Coordinator to create email templates and SOPs for outreach
 - b. Establish 'Post-All' SOPs for social media updates/notifications
 - c. Identify resources for continued translation of updated service notifications for Hmong and Spanish-speaking communities