

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) Template

Title:

AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate, Children's HealthWatch at Boston Medical Center

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project:

Children's HealthWatch has extensive research that demonstrates the impact of poverty and hunger on health. Informed by this evidence, we focus on solutions to support families with low incomes, so leaders and decision makers can prevent and mitigate these circumstances. However, the challenge of regularly and effectively communicating this research with stakeholders and decision makers through social media and traditional media outlets, as well as the capacity for comprehensive communications strategies, has impeded the impact of our research.

The Children's HealthWatch AmeriCorps VISTA program will expand current Children's HealthWatch efforts by leveraging the expertise of a VISTA volunteer to strategically design and implement an effective communications strategy rooted in racial equity that will ultimately build long-term sustainability within our organization and address hunger and poverty in the US. The AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate will work closely with and under the guidance of the Children's HealthWatch leadership team to strengthen our organization-wide communications, strategic communications, and promote equity in all aspects of the organization's communications work.

Objective 1: Communications support – organization wide communications

The AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate will support the work of the Program Manager and the Engagement, Equity, and Inclusion Associate to continue to build and implement a multi-faceted strategic anti-hunger and anti-poverty communications framework to help advance the organization's mission and integrate equity in all aspects of Children's HealthWatch communications. Member activities will focus on generating fresh and engaging content for all Children's HealthWatch external communications, in collaboration with teams across the organization.

The member will effectively and efficiently communicate our research findings, used to drive evidence-based interventions and policies that strengthen communities by alleviating economic hardship and building healthy futures. Specific activities include:

Member Activities:

1. Organizational communications strategy
 - a. Work with key Children's HealthWatch staff to update and track a checklist of communication tools that will be deployed for publication dissemination, event promotion, and campaign amplification
 - b. Research the effectiveness of various social media platforms and communication strategies, and present recommendations to the team
 - c. Expand our communications to consistently include news and advocacy alerts from all five Children's HealthWatch sites on our social media accounts and email alerts

2. Support continued development and implementation of a multi-faceted strategic

communications framework to help advance the organization's mission to reduce poverty and hunger among families with low incomes and integrate equity in all aspects of Children's HealthWatch communications, including building the capacity of the Children's HealthWatch website, blog, social media, and email

- a. Monitor relevant state-level news and advocacy opportunities in Massachusetts, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota
 - b. Assist staff with communications strategy and planning across a variety of platforms (social media accounts, website, webinar series, etc.) to rapidly share new publications, alerts, and information
 - c. Coordinate with the Children's HealthWatch team to update a system/calendar for the writing and dissemination of blogs and other communications
 - d. Coordinate the blog by collaborating on written posts from Children's HealthWatch staff and PIs as well as key external stakeholders and partners
 - e. Periodically update the website to optimize functionality and content and help strategize ways to improve user experience and clarity of information (e.g. create content for an advocacy page; update landing page; improve search function; sort works to increase accessibility)
 - f. Expand audience engagement through email communications by creating targeted audience lists on MailChimp
 - g. Coordinate creation of short videos to accompany and explain the main findings in our publications, and create graphics for social media
 - h. Support social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) by implementing social media campaigns and strategies for engaging our audience
 - i. Contribute to communications efforts of multiple coalitions Children's HealthWatch is part of to increase the impact and dissemination of Children's HealthWatch research findings
 - j. Work with Children's HealthWatch team to draft press releases and other media pieces for new reports and research
3. Sustainability of Children's HealthWatch Communications efforts
- a. Track key performance metrics and create monthly reports to recap and evaluate results of communication strategies
 - b. Coordinate communications progress tracking and monitor quality metrics for internal strategic planning and to evaluate communications strategies and campaigns and improve their reach and effectiveness
 - c. Maintain an up-to-date press list and refine the organization's outreach strategies to various media outlets, in coordination with the BMC Communications department

Objective 2: Communications support – Targeted strategic communications

The AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate will support the work of the Program Manager and the Engagement, Equity, and Inclusion Associate to continue to build organizational capacity to engage new audiences, share our work in new ways, and integrate equity in all aspects of Children's HealthWatch strategic communications. This project and role will fill a critical gap in our team and contribute significantly to our capacity to disseminate our research findings and communicate the health equity-related implications of meaningfully reducing hunger and poverty to a diverse array of external stakeholders. Member activities will include:

Member Activities:

1. Contribute to the planning of Children's HealthWatch events, including our annual advancing equity series, including town halls and our annual fundraising event

- a. Promote events via social media, website, and email
2. Support the management of funder and donor communications/relations
 - a. Research effective communication strategies/language to increase regular donations
 - b. Help develop a formal fundraising campaign, including social media, for the annual event
 - c. Implement social media strategy
 - d. Support new approaches to donor funding appeals
 - e. Research and recommend potential media partnerships that will connect with new audiences and potential funders