



*Oklahoma* | **Campus Compact**

**Oklahoma Campus Compact  
AmeriCorps VISTA**

**Host-Site Application Packet**



**VISTA Project Cycle 2010-2013**

# Oklahoma Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA Host Site Application

Page

<b>PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Cost Share Requirement .....	5
<b>HOST SITE APPLICATION FORMS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>I. Site Information .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>II. Signatures .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>III. VISTA Assignment Description/s (VAD) .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Tutoring/Mentoring VAD (2011-2012) .....	11
Financial Literacy VAD (2011-2012) .....	13
Community Health Networks VAD (2011-2012) .....	15
<b>Narratives (Host Site Application sections IV-VII) .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>IV. Sustainability Plan .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>V. Stakeholder Support .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>VI. Organizational Capacity .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>VII. Recruitment .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PROGRAM ATTACHMENTS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VISTA Member Qualifications, Benefits, and Activities .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Action Plan: Tutoring / Mentoring .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Action Plan: Financial Literacy .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Action Plan: Community Health Networks .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Frequently-Asked Questions .....</b>	<b>26</b>

# Program Overview

## Oklahoma Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA, 2010-2013

**Grantmaking Agency:** Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

**Sponsor:** The Oklahoma Campus Compact (OkCC) of the Oklahoma State Regents  
for Higher Education

**Program Purpose:** AmeriCorps VISTA (hereinafter referred to as VISTA) is designed to create and expand programs that leverage human, financial, and material resources to increase the capacity of host organizations to serve populations affected by poverty. In 2010-2013, OkCC VISTA Members will serve their host communities by starting or expanding programs that:

- tutor or mentor students for college readiness
- teach financial literacy, or
- connect poverty-affected people with health care resources.

Because VISTA service emphasizes sustainability and capacity-building, OkCC VISTA Members will make extensive use of at least one of the following program-building activities:

- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Acquiring funding and resources
- Building relationships with partners
- Creating tools or documents

**Available Grants:** Funding for VISTA Member positions at institutions of higher education in Oklahoma (total of 15 positions). In exchange for a year of service, OkCC VISTAs earn a subsistence allowance, health insurance, FICA, *and* a post-service education award of \$5,550 to pay for college tuition or student loans, *or* a stipend of \$1,500. Members receive their living allowance biweekly through direct deposits from the Corporation for National & Community Service. Sites may host more than one VISTA Member.

**Start Date:** VISTA Members may begin service after August 14, 2010 (provided OkCC first receives notice that the grant has been awarded). Service must begin immediately after a CNCS-sponsored Pre-Service Orientation, an event which is normally scheduled monthly or bi-monthly. Supervisors are required to attend a Supervisor Orientation delivered by OkCC staff members (this may be done at the OkCC office or the Supervisor's campus office). Travel, lodging, and meals during required federal training for VISTA Members is arranged and paid for by CNCS. OkCC will also conduct a mandatory State Orientation and Training for VISTA Members.

**Duration:** Three years. OkCC must apply yearly for continuation. If the Corporation for National and Community Service approves OkCC's continuation requests, host sites that wish to continue participating in the grant may renew their participation, contingent on a satisfactory review of project sustainability and performance milestones. Sites not yet participating in the Program may apply for the next upcoming year (2011-2012 or 2012-2013) by completing this application (if you apply on this basis, contact the VISTA State Program Coordinator first to express your intent and check for updates to Performance Milestones). OkCC may apply for additional grants after this term expires (in August 2013); under other grants, OkCC

VISTA Members would have to be assigned to different projects addressing different community needs. Planning of future grant goals would take place in late 2012 / early 2013.

**Previous VISTA Program Participants (2007-2010):** Cameron University, Murray State College, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, Northeastern State University, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma State University – Oklahoma City, Rose State College, Tulsa Community College, University of Central Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Health Science Center, and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

**CNCS Obligation:**

1. Member cost-of-living allowance of \$10,296 (\$396 biweekly), Medical benefits.
2. Payroll Services.
3. Education Award of \$5,350 upon Completion of Year of Service, or Cash Award of \$1,500.
4. Pre-Service Orientation (includes reservations and costs for travel and hotel, and providing food at the Orientation site).
5. Child Care subsidies for income-eligible Members.
6. Website for posting VISTA Member positions nationally and processing all VISTA Member applications.

**OkCC State (Sponsor) Obligation:**

1. State Orientation and Training.
2. State Coordinator, Supervision, Technical Support, Etc.
3. Compliance with all CNCS Reporting Requirements.
4. Assist with Recruiting VISTA Members.
5. *Payment of cost-share to CNCS. (see pages 5-6)*

**Host Institution Obligation:**

1. Direct supervision for the VISTA Member.
2. Other training as necessary for the selected VISTA Member to accomplish project goals.
3. Office/Work Station; equipment, including computer, email access, phone with voice mail; supplies; parking; etc.
4. Reimbursement for travel (includes local mileage, expenses for use of university vehicle, etc) necessary for VISTA Member activities (Up to \$200/Year).
5. Orient VISTA Member to campus and community.
6. Assist in recruiting VISTA Members.
7. Monthly reports on VISTA Member activities.
8. *Payment of cost-share to OkCC. (see pages 5-6)*

**Note:** Since VISTA Members' cost-of-living allowance is based on regional poverty wage standards, institutions are encouraged (not required) to consider the additional provision of available housing and/or a meal plan.

**Campus VISTA programs should be designed to:**

- Serve the community by addressing local poverty.
- Build capacity (establish new programs, or expand existing ones).
- Be sustainable - continue serving the community after the grant ends and the VISTA member is gone.



## ***Cost Share Requirement***

The Oklahoma Campus Compact (OkCC) AmeriCorps VISTA program brings federally funded resources to campuses as investments to build capacity for sustainable campus/community engagement.

### **Support Provided for a VISTA Member**

\$20,000 per VISTA member

Includes End of Service Education Award of \$5,550

OkCC VISTA members commit to serve 1700 hours/year, 40 hours/week for a calendar year

- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides each VISTA member with a living allowance of \$10,704/year, and health insurance and FICA equivalent to \$228/month.
- Additional benefits for child care and relocation are available.
- CNCS provides an End of Service Education Award of \$5,550 that may be used for tuition or student loan payments, or an alternative Post Service Stipend of \$1,500.

### **Grant Requirement**

With the renewal of the AmeriCorps VISTA program 3-year grant OkCC will be required to pay at a minimum the total yearly cost of two VISTA members' living allowances: \$21,408.

### **The CNCS requires increased contribution for continued participation in the VISTA grant.**

- Contributions will be apportioned according to institution size as determined by enrollment, and tiered by the size categories used for Campus Compact dues.
- Campuses with more than one VISTA member will pay a discounted 25% contribution rate for each additional VISTA.

*Contributions are due with the Host Site Application. Refunds will be made to campuses that do not host VISTAs when the state total 12 VISTA slots are filled (refunds may not be available if all slots are not filled).*

Institution	2008-09 FTE	Required Cost Share for 1 VISTA	Required Cost Share for 2 VISTAs
<b>20,001+ FTE</b>			
University of Oklahoma	22,194	\$3,200	\$4,000
Oklahoma State University	19,845	\$3,200	\$4,000
<b>7,001-13,000 FTE</b>			
University of Central Oklahoma	12,169	\$2,300	\$2,876
Tulsa Community College	11,726	\$2,300	\$2,876
<b>3,001-7,000 FTE</b>			
Rose State College	4,702	\$1,100	\$1,376
Cameron University	4,231	\$1,100	\$1,376
Oklahoma City University	3,702	\$1,100	\$1,376
<b>0-3,000 FTE</b>			
Oral Roberts University	1,777	\$800	\$1,000
Murray State College	1,695	\$800	\$1,000
Northeastern Oklahoma A & M	1,570	\$800	\$1,000
Oklahoma Panhandle State University	1,092	\$800	\$1,000

**Older state Campus Compacts pay substantial cost shares to support their mature AmeriCorps VISTA programs:**

- Kansas - \$5,000 per VISTA to support 3 cost shares (total 8 VISTA/7 years in program)
- Kentucky - \$5,000 per campus to support 5 cost shares (total 16 VISTA/4 years in program)
- North Carolina - \$2,000 to \$5,000 based on time in program per VISTA to support 2 cost shares (total 30 VISTA/7years in program)
- South Carolina - \$2,500 added to membership dues to support 4 cost shares (total 18 VISTA/4 years in program)



*Oklahoma* | **Campus Compact**

**Oklahoma Campus Compact  
AmeriCorps VISTA**

**Host Site Application Forms**



**VISTA Project Cycle 2010-2013**

Oklahoma Campus Compact  
AmeriCorps VISTA

# Host Site Application

(complete all blanks, including signatures)

## I. Site Information

<b>Site Supervisor:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>City/State/Zip Code:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>E-mail address:</b>	
<b>Phone number:</b>	
<b>Fax number:</b>	
<b>Number of VISTA Members Requested:</b>	
<b>Cost share amount required for this campus:</b>	
<b>Action Plans Selected:</b> <i>(One VISTA Member may not work on more than one plan)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tutoring/Mentoring</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Financial Literacy</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Community Health Networks</b>
<b>Will your institution provide housing or a meal plan? Please specify.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Housing</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meal plan</b>

## II. Signatures

The signatures below indicate that all necessary parties on the campus have read, understand, and are willing to abide by the program stipulations as presented in these documents, and that (should OkCC be awarded the VISTA grant, and approve the campus' host site application) all necessary parties on the campus will sign an official Memorandum of Understanding (to be generated by the Corporation for National and Community Service upon the award of this grant to OkCC). *The cost share contribution required must be remitted prior to enrollment of a VISTA Member.*

<b>Site Supervisor (include title)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Site Supervisor's Supervisor (include title)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Institution President</b>	<b>Date</b>

### OkCC Contacts:

Ms. Gina Wekke, Ex. Dir., Oklahoma Campus Compact and Asst. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education 655 Research Parkway, Suite 200 Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3603 <b>Phone:</b> 405-225-9142 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gwekke@osrhe.edu">gwekke@osrhe.edu</a> <b>Fax:</b> 405-225-9230 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.okhighered.org">http://www.okhighered.org</a>	Ms. Debbie Terlip, Asst. Dir., Oklahoma Campus Compact and Student Relations Liaison Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education 655 Research Parkway, Suite 200 Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3603 <b>Phone:</b> 405-225-9128 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:dterlip@osrhe.edu">dterlip@osrhe.edu</a> <b>Fax:</b> 405-225-9230 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.okhighered.org">http://www.okhighered.org</a>	Mr. Steve Godecke, OkCC VISTA State Program Coordinator Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education 655 Research Parkway, Suite 200 Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3603 <b>Phone:</b> 405-225-9228 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:sgodecke@osrhe.edu">sgodecke@osrhe.edu</a> <b>Fax:</b> 405-225-9230 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.okhighered.org">http://www.okhighered.org</a>
--	--	---

### **III. VISTA Assignment Description/s (VAD)**

Use the included forms (*see pages 11-16*) to submit one individual VAD per VISTA position requested.

In each VAD:

- Address only one Action Plan (do not assign one VISTA to work on more than one Action Plan)
- Address each Performance Milestone from the campus' chosen Action Plan/s through clearly associated Activities and Steps (identify relevant Performance Milestones in the left column).
- Present Activities and Steps in language that highlights understanding of the Need and Goals described in the campus' chosen Action Plan.
- Emphasize the VISTA's focus on capacity-building through strong inclusion of one or more of the following:
  - Volunteer recruitment and training
  - Acquiring funding and resources
  - Building relationships with partners
  - Creating tools or documents
- Ensure that progression of Steps logically leads to completion of Activities.
- Include target time periods for completion of each Activity. Dates should form a reasonable timeline for the work of one person over one year. You may wish to use service quarters as target time periods, since it is difficult to predict what time of year a member will be recruited and begin service.
- Be clear and specific: the application reviewer should understand what s/he would be expected to do if s/he became your VISTA Member.

## Tutoring/Mentoring VAD (2011-2012)

<b>VISTA Project: Oklahoma Campus Compact VISTA Project</b> <b>VISTA Member Name:</b>		
<b>Site Name:</b>	<b>Assignment Area:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**Goal:**  
 To better serve Oklahoma’s low-income and at-risk students, OkCC VISTAs will initiate or expand tutoring, mentoring, or related academic support programs for these students. This support will close knowledge and skill gaps between low-income or at-risk students and their peers, leaving them better prepared for success in post-secondary education, with improved chances for escaping the cycle of poverty.

**Performance Milestones**

1. The project will serve 975 low-income or at-risk Oklahoma students.
2. Fifty-five percent of served students participate in a tutor or mentor program for at least 8 weeks [target % will increase for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> years].
3. Instructors will report that fifty-five percent of served students show improvements in academic performance and/or behavior [target % will increase for 3rd year].

Performance Milestone	Activities	Planned Period of Work
	<b>Activity 1:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 1 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 1 Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 2:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 2 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 2 Completed (date):</b> _____

	<b>Activity 3:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 3 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 3 Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 4:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 4 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 4 Completed (date):</b> _____

## Financial Literacy VAD (2011-2012)

<b>VISTA Project: Oklahoma Campus Compact VISTA Project</b> <b>VISTA Member Name:</b>		
<b>Site Name:</b>	<b>Assignment Area:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**Goal:**

To reduce poverty and debt in Oklahoma, OkCC VISTAs will initiate or expand financial literacy programs that educate residents and students, enabling them to manage their money more effectively.

**Performance Milestones**

1. The project will serve 175 low-income or at-risk Oklahoma individuals. [target # will increase for 3<sup>rd</sup> year].
2. Fifty-five percent of clients complete a financial literacy education program. [target % will increase for 3<sup>rd</sup> year].
3. Fifty-one percent of participants completing the program will report improvements in levels of credit card debt or savings since beginning the financial literacy program [target % will increase for 3<sup>rd</sup> year].

Performance Milestone	Activities	Planned Period of Work
	<b>Activity 1:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 1 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 1 Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 2:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 2 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 2 Completed (date):</b> _____

	<b>Activity 3:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 3 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 3 Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 4:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 4 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 4 Completed (date):</b> _____

## Community Health Networks VAD (2011-2012)

<b>VISTA Project: Oklahoma Campus Compact VISTA Project</b>			<b>VISTA Member Name:</b>		
<b>Site Name:</b>		<b>Assignment Area:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

**Goal:**

To improve the health status of Oklahoma’s low-income communities, OkCC VISTAs will catalog the free and low-cost health care resources that are readily available to these communities. VISTAs will then partner with state and local social services, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, or other appropriate organizations (including referrals to or partnership with 2-1-1) to increase community health awareness and use of free and low-cost health care resources. Activities to increase awareness and use of resources may include educational presentations, activities, and health fairs, creation and distribution of public service announcements, distribution of health literature, establishment of referrer relationships, and other education and network-building.

In addition, OkCC VISTAs will conduct a Community Health Assessment to better determine the health needs of their host communities, and identify barriers that interfere with low-income populations’ access to appropriate health care. The Assessment will identify unmet needs and recommend actions to improve access to health care services. Findings from the Assessment will be used to set goals and plan future health action in the community, including (if applicable) planning for future AmeriCorps members.

**Performance Milestones**

1. At least 3,300 residents from host communities will receive information or health services as a direct or indirect result of the VISTAs’ service (includes recipients of health education and health care resource information). [Target # will increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year]
2. At least 25% of served residents will report increased knowledge of free or low-cost health care resources available to them. [Target % will increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year]
3. Each host site will complete a Community Health Assessment during the first year of participation.
4. At least 25% of served residents will report improved access to health care services. [Target % will increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year]

Performance Milestone	Activities	Planned Period of Work
	<b>Activity 1:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 1 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 1</b>

		<b>Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 2:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 2 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 2 Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 3:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 3 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 3 Completed (date):</b> _____
	<b>Activity 4:</b> Step 1: Step 2: Step 3:	
	Activity 4 Summary of Accomplishments (VISTA: Complete this line monthly to update your progress):	<b>Activity 4 Completed (date):</b> _____

## **Narratives (Host Site Application sections IV-VII)**

For each section (IV-VII) below, submit a narrative which addresses all associated questions, and describes your campus' ability to comply with any requirements listed. *Most narratives can be successfully addressed within ½ page to 1 page, single-spaced.* Campuses which have not previously hosted OkCC VISTA Members may ignore the 3 questions about previous VISTA projects.

### **IV. Sustainability Plan**

Describe your plans to institutionalize the projects created or expanded by the VISTA/s. Knowing that the VISTA/s involvement ends by August 2013, what will you do *this year* to prepare the project to continue without VISTAs?

**(If your campus has previously hosted an OkCC VISTA):**

- Describe steps taken to ensure the sustainability of previous VISTA projects.
- Describe the current status of previous VISTA projects: are projects still serving the community? Have projects struggled to continue without VISTA assistance? If so, can any lessons learned be applied to new VISTA projects?

### **V. Stakeholder Support**

Describe the project roles and responsibilities of key individuals or groups involved

- If community partners are involved, please provide letters of support from the partner organizations

### **VI. Organizational Capacity**

Describe what institutional capacity exists to support each AmeriCorps VISTA position.

- AmeriCorps VISTA members must be given *all* of the following:
  - Secure office/desk space with office supplies
  - Designated on-site supervisor responsible for daily supervision and the completion of reporting and evaluation requirements including review of monthly reports and completion of four quarterly VISTA performance evaluations
  - Daily access to phone and private voicemail
  - Daily access to computer with internet and email account on host site domain (.edu)
  - Access to fax, photocopier, and printer
- Describe any additional support that the organization or its partners will provide (i.e.: housing, assistance in locating appropriate housing, meal plan, or other support offered). *Additional support is optional but highly beneficial to VISTA recruitment, retention, and morale.*
- Please give a short description of the on-site supervisor's current duties, and experience with service or civic engagement.

**(If your campus has previously hosted an OkCC VISTA)**

- Describe what was provided for the AmeriCorps VISTA in the past year(s) and delineate modifications, if any, for the upcoming year.

### **VII. Recruitment**

Describe how the campus plans to recruit for the OkCC AmeriCorps VISTA position.

- Describe specific methods of reaching graduating students who have strong records of community service or civic engagement.



*Oklahoma* | **Campus Compact**

**Oklahoma Campus Compact  
AmeriCorps VISTA**

**Program Attachments**



**VISTA Project Cycle 2010-2013**

## ***VISTA Member Qualifications, Benefits, and Activities***

### **Oklahoma Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA**

OkCC VISTA partners should be interested in capacity building activities, including the establishment or expansion of community service or education programs focused on meeting a community need identified in a current OkCC VISTA Action Plan. OkCC VISTA Members spend a year of service on college campuses collaborating with students, faculty, staff and community partners, supporting community service and service-learning programs, and developing strong campus-community partnerships that focus on anti-poverty outcomes.

#### **OkCC VISTA Member Requirements and Qualifications**

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident.
- Associate's or higher degree.
- Full-time commitment – no outside employment; any course enrollment requires advance discussion with supervisor and is limited to part-time student status (less than 12 credit hours).
- Valid driver's license and access to a vehicle preferred.
- Demonstrated commitment to and experience in community service or service-learning.
- Experience working with college students.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including conflict resolution and public speaking.
- Strong skills in project and multi-task management, leadership, planning, and time management.
- Computer literacy: familiar with internet, email, and Microsoft Office.
- Complete online application with two professional references (not friends or relatives) submitted through <https://my.americorps.gov> . Background check will be conducted upon application. Fingerprints will be taken at Pre-Service Orientation.

#### **VISTA Benefits**

In exchange for a year of full-time service, OkCC VISTAs earn the following benefits:

- Living allowance, paid biweekly (\$10,296/year; \$396 biweekly – before state and federal taxes)
- Education Award of \$5,550 or End-of-Service Stipend of \$1,500 after completion of full term of service
- Distance-based reimbursement for relocating VISTAs (moving 50 miles or more) up to \$550.
- Health coverage with no monthly premium (excludes pre-existing conditions).
- Deferral of *eligible*\* student loans, plus 1 year of interest repaid upon completion of service.
- Noncompetitive eligibility for federal government jobs up to 1 year after service ends.
- Childcare assistance subsidies (eligibility based on household income).

*\*(ask OkCC's VISTA State Program Coordinator for help determining your loan's eligibility!)*

#### **Oklahoma Member Activities**

These may vary from campus to campus, and include:

- Attending OkCC VISTA meetings for training, reflection, and team building (required).
- Community needs assessment, community asset mapping, or convening other community forums.
- Developing infrastructure for partnerships among campuses, community members, and community organizations addressing anti-poverty outcomes.
- Evaluation and reporting of campus service programs.
- Recruiting and coordinating placement of students as volunteers with local community agencies.
- Creating project manuals, "how-to" guides, or training documents for future volunteers or staff.



Oklahoma | Campus Compact



## **Action Plan:**

### **Tutoring / Mentoring**

#### **Community Need:**

Oklahoma's students urgently need better preparation for higher education. They are entering college without essential knowledge and skills. 2008-2009 data show at least three in ten college freshmen in Oklahoma need remedial courses each year - 79% at community colleges, and 17% at regional universities (1). This preparation gap makes the path to success too difficult for many students, who give up on their own education after only one year. Only 47% of community college students, and 63% of freshmen at four-year institutions, return for their second year. Oklahoma ranks last in the nation in 1<sup>st</sup>-to-2<sup>nd</sup> year retention at 4-year schools (2).

Tutoring and mentoring programs have become a key strategy for improving academic success. Nicola Goren, Acting CEO of the Corporation for National & Community Service, has said, "Our nation's success depends on helping every child succeed in school and reach his or her full potential in life. Mentoring strengthens our nation's economic and social well-being by influencing the life choices of young people with the help of a caring adult."(3) This strategy is well-supported by studies and surveys. Findings from dozens of independent evaluations of tutoring programs show that tutoring has positive effects on the performance and attitudes of students as well as tutors (4). For example, tutored students are likely to earn higher scores on assessments of language-related skills (5). Mentoring is equally beneficial, improving parental relationships, rates of unexcused absence, and perceptions of scholastic competence. (6)

- (1) Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Annual Student Remediation Report, February 2009.
- (2) National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education - "Measuring Up 2008: The State Report Card on Higher Education."
- (3) Corporation for National & Community Service, "National Service Agency, Harvard, and MENTOR Kick Off 9th Annual Mentoring Month," January 2010.
- (4) Cohen, P., Kulik, J., & Kulik, C. (1982). "Education outcomes of tutoring: A meta-analysis of findings." American Educational Research Journal, 19(2), 237-248.
- (5) Ritter, G., Barnett, J., Denny, G., & Albin, G. (2009). "The Effectiveness of Volunteer Tutoring Programs for Elementary and Middle School Students: A Meta-Analysis." Review of Educational Research, 79(1), 3-38.

(6) Rhodes, J., Grossman, J., & Resche, N. (2000). "Agents of change: Pathways through which mentoring relationships influence adolescents' academic adjustment." *Child Development*, 71(6), 1662-1671.

**Goal:**

To better serve Oklahoma's low-income and at-risk students, OkCC VISTAs will initiate or expand tutoring, mentoring, or related academic support programs for these students. This support will close knowledge and skill gaps between low-income or at-risk students and their peers, leaving them better prepared for success in post-secondary education, with improved chances for escaping the cycle of poverty.

**Performance Milestones:**

**Reported to Corporation for National & Community Service**

1. The project will serve 975 low-income or at-risk Oklahoma students.
2. Fifty-five percent of served students participate in a tutor or mentor program for at least 8 weeks [target % will increase for 3<sup>rd</sup> year].
3. Instructors will report that fifty-five percent of served students show improvements in academic performance and/or behavior [target % will increase for 3<sup>rd</sup> year].



Oklahoma | Campus Compact



## ***Action Plan: Financial Literacy***

### ***Community Need:***

The current economic recession's origin in unsound lending practices has called much-needed attention to a growing national crisis for America: personal debt and financial mismanagement. Oklahomans, like other Americans, do not receive the education they need to use their resources wisely and avoid getting trapped in debt.

Twenty-six percent of American adults (more than 58 million) admit to not paying all of their bills on time (for African-Americans, this number is at 51 percent). In a recent 12-month period, 15 percent of adults, or nearly 34 million people, were late making a credit card payment and 8 percent (18 million people) have missed a payment entirely. More than 13 million carry credit card debt of \$10,000 or more from month to month (1).

Based on 2007 data, an estimated 4 million more Americans would fall below the poverty line if their debt was subtracted from their annual income. This is 1.5% of American adults. Twenty-four years earlier, only 0.2% of American adults fell into this vulnerable group (2). This situation has likely worsened further since 2007 due to recession and increased unemployment.

The poverty rate among Oklahoma primary and secondary students (as measured by eligibility for free or reduced cost lunch) was 56.25% in 2008-2009 (or 362,697 of 644,758 students). (3) The state has mandated the inclusion of financial literacy in the secondary school curriculum, but the first group of students receiving this education is the high school graduating class of 2014. (4) It is important to provide financial education for those students currently in the system who would otherwise go unserved and be at risk for remaining in poverty and passing it on to their children.

By college, most students are already on their way to dangerous levels of debt. Half of undergraduates have 4 or more credit cards. 82% carry balances (and so incur finance charges) on their credit cards each month. The mean average balance is \$3,173. 84% of undergraduates indicated they needed more education on financial management topics. 60% experienced surprise at how high their balance had grown, and 40% said they have charged items knowing they didn't have the money to pay the bill. (5) Our students are asking for financial literacy help. Oklahoma Campus Compact seeks to offer inclusive financial literacy programming open to anyone interested in improving their money-management

knowledge and skills. However, it is at the critical juncture of college that OkCC is best able to mobilize resources and partnerships for financial education.

- (1) National Foundation for Credit Counseling, “2009 Financial Literacy Survey Topline Report and Datasheet” (<http://www.nfcc.org/NewsRoom/FinancialLiteracy/files/2009FinancialLiteracySurvey.pdf>)
- (2) Pressman, Steven and Scott, Robert; Monmouth University NJ, June 2009 editions of Review of Social Economy and Journal of Economic Issues
- (3) Oklahoma State Department of Education, Low Income Report, 2008-2009.
- (4) Section 2.B, 70 O.S. § 11-103.6h
- (5) Sallie Mae, “How Undergraduate Students Use Credit Cards,” 2009

**Goal:**

To reduce poverty and debt in Oklahoma, OkCC VISTAs will initiate or expand financial literacy programs that educate residents and students, enabling them to manage their money more effectively.

**Performance Milestones:**

**Reported to Corporation for National & Community Service**

- 1. The project will serve 42 low-income or at-risk Oklahoma individuals.

**Reported within OkCC**

- 2. Fifty percent of clients complete a financial literacy education program. [target % will increase for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> years].
- 3. For all 3 years of the project, participating sites will survey individuals served. Individuals will self-report their level of debt or savings. By 3<sup>rd</sup> year of project, participants completing the program will show improvements in levels of debt (excluding student loans) or savings since beginning the financial literacy program.



Oklahoma | Campus Compact



## **Action Plan:**

### **Community Health Networks**

#### **Community Need:**

The health status of the state of Oklahoma presents a unique opportunity to fight poverty through community-building and health education initiatives. Poverty's interrelationship with poor health is documented; research has shown that "health disparities are often a result of poverty, but the opposite also holds true. Poor health leads to higher medical expenditures and reduces the potential to work and earn, perpetuating the cycle of poverty."<sup>(1)</sup> Children living in poverty are at increased risk for many adverse conditions including learning disabilities, mental health problems, asthma, and obesity <sup>(2)</sup>.

Oklahoma has demonstrated consistently high health needs compared to other states in national rankings on health-related issues. In the 2010 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, a measurement of physical, mental, and social health, Oklahoma ranked 39<sup>th</sup> overall, with poor performances in several specific categories. The state was 41<sup>st</sup> in "basic access" (a measure of people's attitudes about their communities and access to medicine and health care, safe places to exercise, and affordable and healthy food), 45<sup>th</sup> in physical health, and 49<sup>th</sup> in healthy behavior. <sup>(3)</sup>

Oklahoma also performed poorly in the United Health Foundation of America's 2009 Health Rankings Report – it was the only state whose overall score (used to determine the Rankings) has not improved since 1990. Oklahoma's rank dropped to 49<sup>th</sup> in this report as well, while the percentage of children in poverty increased to 21.8% and the prevalence of obesity rose from 11.6% to 30.9%. The report named a high prevalence of smoking, high rate of preventable hospitalizations, high prevalence of obesity, and high rate of deaths from cardiovascular disease as challenges for the state <sup>(4)</sup>. Oklahoma is expected to have the highest obesity rate in the country by 2018; this would lead to an estimated \$3.2 billion in obesity-related health care costs (approximately \$1,207 per adult) <sup>(5)</sup>.

Although the provision of free and low-cost care is vital to addressing community health needs, it will take more than the availability of care to solve health problems in low-income populations. This was illustrated by a study of a free dental care program serving both urban and rural children, which found that "among these children with unmet dental needs, the provision of free preventive dental care was insufficient to remove the disparities in utilization and did not consistently result in high utilization through follow-up." The researchers observed that under-utilization was predicted by low caregiver education levels, distance to the dental clinic, and non-white race <sup>(6)</sup>. In addition to improved health education, the facilitation of contact with a broader array of resources (such as transportation, and health professionals who are familiar with concerns unique to non-white ethnic groups) may be important to meet some communities' needs. OkCC campuses participating under this plan will implement such measures where appropriate.

- (1) Thomas, Stephen B.; and Quinn, Sandra Crouse; "Poverty and Elimination of Urban Health Disparities: Challenge and Opportunity," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 2008.
- (2) Conroy, Kathleen; Sandel, Megan; and Zuckerman, Barry; "Poverty Grown Up: How Childhood Socioeconomic Status Impacts Adult Health," Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, Vol. 31, No. 2, February-March 2010
- (3) Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, 2010
- (4) Health Rankings Report, United Health Foundation of America, 2009
- (5) United Health Foundation, American Public Health Association, Partnership for Prevention; "The Future Costs of Obesity: National and State Estimates of the Impact of Obesity on Direct Health Care Expenses," 2009
- (6) Maserejian, Nancy Nairi; Trachtenberg, Felicia; Link, Carol; Tavares, Mary; "Underutilization of Dental Care When It Is Freely Available: A Prospective Study of the New England Children's Amalgam Trial," Journal of Public Health Dentistry, Vol. 68, No. 3, January 2008

**Goal:**

To improve the health status of Oklahoma’s low-income communities, OkCC VISTAs will catalog the free and low-cost health care resources that are readily available to these communities. VISTAs will then partner with state and local social services, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, or other appropriate organizations (including referrals to or partnership with 2-1-1) to increase community health awareness and use of free and low-cost health care resources. Activities to increase awareness and use of resources may include educational presentations, activities, and health fairs, creation and distribution of public service announcements, distribution of health literature, establishment of referrer relationships, and other education and network-building.

In addition, OkCC VISTAs will conduct a Community Health Assessment to better determine the health needs of their host communities, and identify barriers that interfere with low-income populations’ access to appropriate health care. The Assessment will identify unmet needs and recommend actions to improve access to health care services. Findings from the Assessment will be used to set goals and plan future health action in the community, including (if applicable) planning for future AmeriCorps members.

**Performance Milestones:**

**Reported to Corporation for National & Community Service**

1. At least 3,300 residents from host communities will receive information or health services as a direct or indirect result of the VISTAs’ service (includes recipients of health education and health care resource information). [Target # will increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year]
2. At least 25% of served residents will report increased knowledge of free or low-cost health care resources available to them. [Target % will increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year]

**Reported within OkCC**

3. Each host site will complete a Community Health Assessment during the first year of participation..
4. At least 25% of served residents will report improved access to health care services. [Target % will increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year]

## Frequently-Asked Questions

**Q: Is the OkCC VISTA project limited to public institutions of higher education?**

A: *No, any Oklahoma Campus Compact member may apply.*

**Q: Are institutions limited to hosting only one VISTA member?**

A: *No. The only limits on the number of VISTA members that can be hosted are the number available to OkCC, and the institution's ability to satisfy supervision and reporting requirements, and provide appropriate service plans, tasks, office facilities and equipment.*

**Q: Must the host site provide a full-time supervisor?**

A: *No. While one person must be identified as the site supervisor to provide the supervision, attend the required federal and state training either with or before the VISTA, and manage the reporting requirements, this duty may be in addition to other duties for that individual.*

**Q: How will the success of the VISTA program at our site be evaluated?**

A: *Each campus chooses one of the three available OkCC VISTA Action Plans (see pages 20-25) for each of its VISTAs, and has consulted with partners and the OkCC VISTA State Program Coordinator regarding how many people the campus expects to serve under the plans the campus is interested in. Campuses selected to host OkCC VISTAs are expected to serve the number of area residents given as an estimate to the Program Coordinator, and to meet additional capacity and effectiveness targets as specified in the Performance Milestones under each Action Plan. The aggregate performance of the OkCC VISTA Program will be evaluated by CNCS based on statewide totals; if one VISTA site under-performs, OkCC may show unsatisfactory results unless other VISTA sites exceed their Milestones. If the OkCC VISTA Program continues to be awarded VISTA Members by CNCS, renewal of a campus' VISTA host site status will be contingent upon OkCC's satisfactory review of a variety of factors including compliance with AmeriCorps VISTA policies, Performance Milestone results, project sustainability, and quality of monthly reports.*

**Q: If the grant is of 3-year duration, why are VISTA Members described in terms of 1 year of service?**

A: *Although we intend the Program to span 3 years, all AmeriCorps sponsors must apply annually to continue their grants. Continuation of the Program may be likely, but is never guaranteed until the grant application process is complete and an award notice is received. Also, because the living allowance is deliberately set to enable the VISTA member to subsist close to a poverty level, committing to a year of VISTA service is often a serious personal sacrifice. Although VISTA Members may serve more than 1 year, programs do not ask applicants for a greater 'up front' time commitment.*

**Q: Can the education award of \$5,350 be applied to student loans owed?**

A: *Yes, the education award can be applied to **qualified** loans. VISTA also provides for student loan forbearance for students wishing to spend a year in service. Interest that accumulates on qualified loans during the year of service will be repaid by the National Service Trust. **Loans that were not made by a state agency, loans that were not funded by the federal government (under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, or Titles VII or VIII of the Public Health Service Act), or loans that have been consolidated through a private company, may not qualify. Commercially-funded loans may not qualify.** The National Service Trust runs a hotline at 888-507-5962 weekdays from 8am-6pm EST, to answer questions about the education award. Additional information is available at the Encorps national service resource site: <http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/edaward>*

**Q: Can the local campus select the person it chooses for the VISTA position/s?**

A: *While the host site supervisor plays a vital role in selection, all candidates must use the OkCC recruitment process, which includes OkCC approval and submission of an online application through the AmeriCorps On-Line System process ( <https://my.americorps.gov> ) in order to be considered for a VISTA position. Candidates recommended by the site supervisors will be screened by OkCC, and assisted in completing an application. No candidate's selection will be finalized by OkCC until a VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) – a specially formatted document which provides a description and timeline of how the VISTA will meet state goals – has been received and approved by OkCC, and a purchase order has been received to pay the campus' cost share.*

**Q: How much latitude will the local campus have with regard to the VISTA member's duties and assignments?**

A: *While the institution will determine the local needs and exercise on-site supervision within the framework of the Action Plan/s, the following considerations should be kept in mind: VISTA members are intended to build infrastructure and capacity to address poverty in the host community. VISTA members are not to perform direct service, and not to be used as an administrative stopgap (ie, spending significant time on clerical work, especially clerical work that is not directly related to their anti-poverty projects). VISTA members are not students; they should be treated as professionals. Finally, OkCC is required to ensure compliance with the above provisions through formal and informal site visits, and evaluation tools including formal site visit questions, evaluation of the site's progress in its VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), and monthly reports.*

**Q: May the institution provide the VISTA member with a school-owned car, as opposed to reimbursement of the member for local travel in a privately-owned vehicle?**

A: *Yes. If the institution does not supply a vehicle, it should specify the need for access to a private vehicle in the position qualifications and written documents provided to applicants, and also during the interview. If private transportation is utilized, reimbursement (up to \$200 per year) is required for any travel necessary to complete the VISTA Member's assignment.*

**Q: What is the process for determining the schedule for supervisor and VISTA member attendance at the federally-required training?**

A: *The supervisor must attend the training either prior to or with the VISTA member. No VISTA member may be supervised by someone who has not attended the federal orientation. The VISTA member may not begin service until the member has completed the federal Pre-Service Orientation.*

### **Resources for Further Information**

<http://www.americorps.gov>

<http://encorps.nationalservicerresources.org>

*Questions? Contact:*

*Steve Godecke, OkCC VISTA State Program Coordinator*

[sgodecke@osrhe.edu](mailto:sgodecke@osrhe.edu)

405-225-9228

Or

*Debbie Terlip, OkCC Assistant Director*

[dterlip@osrhe.edu](mailto:dterlip@osrhe.edu)

405-225-9128