VISTA members Addressing Ohio’s Addiction Epidemic

In an effort to develop an innovative response to the opioid epidemic and leverage new partnerships, the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities has worked with the Corporation for National and Community Services to develop an AmeriCorps VISTA project designed to support community responses to the opioid and addiction epidemic in Ohio.

Through the “Addressing Ohio’s Opioid Epidemic” VISTA program, OACBHA works with Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards, statewide partner organizations, and local universities to place VISTA members throughout Ohio to help address the opioid and addiction epidemic in communities throughout the state. For this project, ADAMH Boards, statewide partner organizations, and local universities serve as project sub-sites that host a VISTA member who is completing a year of national service. The OACBHA VISTA project seeks to strengthen county and community efforts to combat the opioid epidemic in Ohio. VISTA members contribute to the goals of the project by performing activities such as developing community outreach plans; developing educational materials and trainings; researching best practices; building partnerships with other community organizations; and researching and writing grants to support community efforts over the course of their service year.

Addressing Ohio’s Opioid Epidemic - VISTA Project

The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities serves as a project sponsor for an AmeriCorps VISTA project, in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

VISTA members serving as part of this project are working with community organizations to:

- Develop community outreach opportunities for organizations to engage people in their communities by: conducting meetings with local partners to determine the educational needs of the community related to the opioid epidemic; developing a schedule of programs and activities designed to engage and inform the community; and evaluating the programs and their impact.

- Research and write educational materials and papers related to opioid addiction, promising prevention approaches, treatment, and recovery supports as directed by their site supervisor by: researching the topic under discussion; determining the data needs and surveying local and state entities as necessary; and developing written materials to be shared with community members.

- Build partnerships with other community organizations working to address the opiate epidemic by: supporting the implementation of the County Hubs to Combat Opioid Addiction; gathering data to support local activities; and coordinating information distribution amongst statewide and local organizations involved in addressing the opioid epidemic.

- Conduct philanthropic research on potential supporters for community organizations working to address the opioid epidemic and assist in the development and grant processes by: conducting research into possible grants to support local activities; gathering appropriate data necessary to write successful grant requests; and working with sub-site leadership and staff to develop grant proposals.
What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

*AmeriCorps VISTA*

AmeriCorps VISTA members build capacity in nonprofit organizations and public agencies to help them more effectively generate the commitment of private sector resources, encourage volunteer service at the local level, and empower individuals and communities. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full time for one-year terms. AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members bring passion and perseverance where the need is greatest. VISTA members serve as a catalyst for change, living and working alongside community members to meet our nation’s most pressing challenges and advance local solutions.

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full time (~40 hours/week) for one full year at a community organization (nonprofit, college/university, local government office, etc.) on anti-poverty projects. AmeriCorps VISTA members work on projects that build the capacity of their organization. Projects can vary and are not limited to: developing outreach and marketing campaigns, building a social media presence, creating a program database, writing grants, managing a program in its first year, and recruiting volunteers.

*Lifting People Out of Poverty Since 1965*

AmeriCorps VISTA members bring passion and perseverance where the need is greatest: to organizations that help eradicate poverty. Since 1965, over 220,000 VISTA members have served with the mission to strengthen organizations that alleviate poverty. VISTA serves in each of the 50 U.S. States and in all U.S. Territories. VISTA members go where they are needed and make a difference through volunteering and the mobilization of resources.

*Responding to the Opioid Crisis*

Nationwide, AmeriCorps VISTA has 80 active projects that address opioid addiction and recovery with 102 actively serving members. A portion of these members are serving with the “Addressing Ohio’s Opioid Epidemic” project.