



2015-2016 PA Campus Compact AmeriCorps*VISTA Project Abstracts

In conjunction with the PA State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Pennsylvania Campus Compact (PACC) is pleased to announce the following 2015-2016 AmeriCorps*VISTA opportunities. With the main goal of eradicating poverty and building long-term capacity for communities, PACC*VISTA members serve across Pennsylvania at institutions of higher education and respective community partners. **Twenty-seven positions and one VISTA Leader position** are available in the 2015-2016 program year in three main focus areas: *Education: K-12 Readiness & Success and Post-Secondary Readiness & Success; Healthy Futures: Nutritious Food Access & Education and Access to Health Care; and Veterans and Military Families.*

For additional information about PACC or the overarching PACC*VISTA program, please visit our website at www.paccompact.org or contact Sarah Garnitz at sgarnitz@paccompact.org. For more information about specific service opportunities, please see the 2015-2016 project abstracts listed in ABC order by focus area.

Interested in Applying? 2015-2016 PACC*VISTA term of service: July 24, 2015 - July 22, 2016 which includes a mandatory Pre-Service Orientation led by PACC and CNCS beginning on July 19, 2015.

To apply for a PACC*VISTA position, click here:

<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/publicRequestSearch.do> and search for “PACC” under “Program Name”

2015-16 PACC*VISTA benefits include:

- Annual living allowance of \$11,676 or \$12,312
- End of Service Award - Education Award of \$5,730 or Cash Stipend of \$1,500 – with successful completion of service term
- Healthcare Allowance to AmeriCorps*VISTA members who maintain health insurance. Member must be covered by health insurance that meets Affordable Care Act requirements or will be subject to a fee.
- Relocation support and child care benefits, if eligible
- Professional development and support from PA Campus Compact (3 overnight retreats, regular conference calls and emails, site visits, and regional get-togethers)
- Additional resources may be provided by specific institution or project such as housing, meal plan, transportation pass, and tuition remission on a class within the institution

2015-2016 PACC*VISTA Leader

Institution Name: PA Campus Compact

Host Site Supervisor: Sarah Garnitz; sgarnitz@paccompact.org

Aligned with our mission of strengthening communities through campus-community partnerships and promoting education for informed civic engagement, Pennsylvania Campus Compact (PACC) will support 27 AmeriCorps*VISTAs in the 2015-2016 program year. Placed at institutions of higher education across the state, PACC AmeriCorps*VISTAs support high-impact, innovative and sustainable projects that meet compelling community needs and seek to eradicate poverty in both urban and rural Pennsylvanian communities. Projects will fall within one of three focus areas: Education, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families. The PACC*VISTA Leader will be an experienced VISTA, having completed at least one year of VISTA service. The VISTA Leader will have a different living allowance and benefits than other PACC*VISTAs. Working collaboratively with PACC staff, the PACC*VISTA Leader will be key to the PACC AmeriCorps*VISTA success and will create explicit tools and provide implicit support to ensure that AmeriCorps*VISTAs both create long-term capacity for communities and have a meaningful service and member experience. More tangibly, the PACC*VISTA Leader will coordinate tools for member development and project assessment, build capacity for future VISTAs by coordinating VISTA Alumni, and a support existing regional networks in exploring opportunities and capacity for collaborative VISTA projects.

2015-2016 PACC*VISTA EDUCATION ABSTRACTS: K-12 Readiness & Success

Institution Name: Albright College

Host Site Supervisor: Dorothea Miller; dmiller@alb.edu

Lead! Learn to lead at a professional level as you work with college students, teaching staff and community leaders. As an Albright VISTA, you will work with elementary age students, their teachers and administration, College faculty and community groups who partner with the college. You'll train volunteers, talk to local businesses and help to organize community events. Albright College is looking for an organized, dynamic individual who wants to grow their leadership skills. We are offering a well-rounded, varied experience that includes training volunteers/mentors, organizing community groups and creating plans to sustain all of the above.

Institution Name: Drexel University

Host Site Supervisor: Katie Regetta; kab356@drexel.edu

The *Phillip B. Lindy Inner-City Public School Program at Drexel University* ("Lindy Scholars Program") aims to level the playing field in public education by increasing academic achievement and expanding the social horizons for middle school students living in Drexel's West Philadelphia vicinity. The Lindy Scholars Program has undergone many fundamental changes related to vision, curriculum, staffing, and tracking systems throughout its six-year history. As the program is in a period of transition, the goal of the VISTA will be to provide sustainable systems and to contribute

to a unified program mission. A major priority for the VISTA will be to create systems to manage and track students after graduation from the program. The program is looking for a creative, enthusiastic individual to join the team during this exciting time!

Institution Name: Messiah College

Host Site Supervisor: Chad Frey; CFrey@messiah.edu

As part of a nationally recognized *Together For Tomorrow* (TFT) service-learning partnership between Messiah College and the Harrisburg School District, the 2015-2016 Messiah College PACC-VISTA will build capacity at Downey Elementary School to improve attendance, behavior, class completion as well as future college access and employment opportunities for children in K-4th grades. The VISTA will work to bring Downey teachers, community leaders and Messiah College educators together in order to marshal their resources through collective impact and sustain programs that are measurably improving the academic achievement of at-risk students.

Institution Name: Millersville University

Host Site Supervisor: Melissa Wardwell; melissa.wardwell@millersville.edu

The 2015-2016 PACC*VISTA *Project Cygnet* Coordinator will work with existing and new community partners, including the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the School District of Lancaster, on a project to enhance after-school enrichment services and increase the academic success of at-risk K-12 students. The PACC*VISTA will build the capacity of community partners to serve K-12 students by recruiting, training and managing Millersville University student volunteers to serve as mentors and tutors in after-school programs in the School District of Lancaster. The PACC*VISTA will be a member of the University's Civic and Community Engagement team and assist with overall program management, volunteer training, recruitment and sustainability of Project Cygnet.

Institution Name: West Chester University

Host Site Supervisor: Jodi Roth-Saks and Jamie Williams; JRoth@wcupa.edu or JWilliams3@wcupa.edu

The PACC*VISTA will join a vibrant campus and community partnership that aims to serve disadvantaged youth in Chester County. The PACC*VISTA will oversee the *America Reads* program, an academic enrichment program that increases youths' exposure to the importance of education while building skills that help ensure academic success. The VISTA member will work collaboratively with multiple community partners and stakeholders. In addition to addressing academic goals, America Reads positions WCU students from low-income households and/or underrepresented populations to be mentors and further emphasize the importance of continuing education. These WCU volunteers serve as role models to disadvantaged youth in hopes of improving self-esteem and confidence. The PACC* VISTA will be responsible for recruiting, training, and providing workshops for WCU mentors and tutors. The PACC*VISTA will also supervise student leaders, manage

community partnerships, collaborate with Financial Aid to assist with the placement of students receiving Federal Work Study funds for participating in the America Reads program, and work with the community Advisory Council. The PACC *VISTA will also have the opportunity to facilitate outreach efforts to the West Chester Area School District to expand the America Reads program.

2015-2016 PACC*VISTA EDUCATION ABSTRACTS: Post-Secondary Access & Success

Institution Name: Alvernia University

Host Site Supervisor: Jessica Umbenhauer, jessica.umbenhauer@alvernia.edu

Abstract:

The VISTA member will be responsible for the implementation of the *Reading Collegiate Scholars* Program, a college access opportunity for mainly first-generation college students attending high school in the City of Reading. The VISTA member will act as a liaison between Alvernia University, the Reading School District, and other involved community partners to plan regular college readiness programming relevant to participants and families, both at the high school and on Alvernia University's campus. The VISTA will also be responsible for recruiting and training volunteers, using a college-positive model for Alvernia University students, faculty and staff. The VISTA member will also be responsible for data collection and tracking to analyze for future program improvements and to ensure the sustainability of the Reading Collegiate Scholars Program.

Institution Name: Cedar Crest College

Host Site Supervisor: Mary Alice Ozechoski, mozechos@cedarcrest.edu

Abstract:

Cedar Crest College seeks a VISTA member who, in partnership with the Allentown School District in Allentown, PA and community agencies, will launch our "*HOLA! Science*" program. The VISTA will work as a project manager to help the College identify a cohort of Hispanic girls from the two Allentown High Schools who have shown an interest in STEM related studies. Working with a strong community advisory council as well as staff, faculty and student volunteers at the College, the VISTA will develop a multi-faceted program that will provide mentors, tutors and a calendar of fun and educational programs to maintain the girls' interest in science and educate their families about the college admissions process. Our objective for the VISTA is increasing the number of Latinas who go on to pursue STEM majors in College

Institution Name: Drexel University

Host Site Supervisor: Kelly Sheard, kas553@drexel.edu

Abstract:

The College Access Center is the result of a dynamic collaboration with the Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Education's Connect2 College initiative and Drexel's Lindy Center for Civic Engagement. *Connect2College* aims to recruit and train community centers and institutions to provide basic college access services throughout various neighborhoods in the city. Working as satellite centers,

these sites work to educate students on 5 college access activities; College Searches, College Applications, Filling out the FAFSA, Scholarship Searches, and Writing your College Essay. The VISTA will develop and manage the implementation of college access programming, including; recruiting high school students, developing pertinent relationships in the community, working with Let's Get Ready SAT Prep program to recruit and train student volunteers to teach SAT Prep classes, and developing workshops and events aimed at applying to and success within college. The VISTA has the unique opportunity to work with a range of constituents, including local teens, community partners, college access program providers and a supportive office team!

Institution Name: Gettysburg College

Host Site Supervisor: Gretchen Carlson Natter, gnatter@gettysburg.edu

Abstract:

The PACC*VISTA will support immigrant and migrant families throughout Adams County in understanding and accessing post-secondary educational opportunities. By working in partnership with Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12 Migrant Education/21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) and Gettysburg College, the PACC*VISTA will support 8th-12th grade students enrolled in the program by recruiting college student mentors and fostering institutional connections to help achieve their post-secondary educational goals. The PACC*VISTA will create the infrastructure to facilitate workshops, fieldtrips, clinics and conferences that will expose the high school students to opportunities and provide information and support to fulfill requirements and access higher education opportunities.

Institution Name: Lock Haven University

Host Site Supervisor Name: Lauren Wright; law3363@lhup.edu

Abstract:

The central region of Pennsylvania looks forward to continuing to benefit from having a PACC*VISTA to combat poverty through creating self-sustaining programming for post-secondary access and success. The PACC* VISTA will help strengthen the communities of Clinton, Lycoming, and Clearfield Counties to create and expand services for obtaining higher education goals for economically disadvantaged youth, military, and veterans. The PACC* VISTA will be a vital member of the community in providing the needed community resources of: bridging area school districts and college partnerships, creating self-sustaining outreach workshops, recruiting and mentoring volunteers for a remote on-line tutoring and mentoring program, creating community resource directories and connecting with nonprofit resources and agencies. The PACC*VISTA will assist community partnerships in expanding and building the regional services and support systems needed to combat barriers to higher education access and success.

Institution Name: Philadelphia University

Host Site Supervisor: Mary Ann Ernesto, ernestom@philau.edu

Abstract:

Philadelphia University will expand on its partnership level with local agencies (Mifflin, St. James, Cook-Wissahickon, E.W. Rhodes, Roxborough High School & Northern Children's Services) to improve *Post-Secondary Readiness & Success*. Philadelphia University currently has an ongoing relationship with each of these agencies through the Philadelphia University Mentoring Program (PUMP-up), a tutoring & mentoring program geared towards academic success & achievement. This new initiative will have a focus on preparing students for Post-Secondary Readiness & Success through offering workshops, campus visits, assistance with college applications & test preparation. The AmeriCorps *VISTA would be responsible for the development of Post-Secondary Readiness & Success related workshops, recruiting & training volunteers from the campus & community & working with our university as well as other local colleges/universities to provide ongoing resources for the population served. The primary high school in the area served has a reported rate of 50% of the four year cohort graduating (based on the class of 2013). This Post-Secondary Readiness & Success program will work to increase the number of high school students who graduate & make them aware of post-secondary opportunities as well as help them achieve goals for their lives after high school. An increase in graduation rates & post-secondary readiness will have a positive impact on our community by having an end result of more individuals with a high school degree & better prepared to be successful in achieving their post-secondary goals. We plan on reviewing the number of sites served after year one & based on prior experience working with these & similar sites over the last few year, have found a promising practice to be to cast a wide net at first & solidify the best matches as relationships develop. On a regular basis, the VISTA will be doing site visits/communication with sites, researching outside agencies/individuals to partner with for leading one time or more regular programs, such as Philly Goes 2 College, through the mayor's office (financial aid workshops, college application preparation, campus visits, career preparation, resume review as well as other projects that may be identified with our partner sites).

Institution Name: Temple University

Host Site Supervisor Name: Barbara Ferman; bferman@temple.edu

Abstract:

We are seeking a VISTA to help us develop a *College Access/Career Readiness* component that will prepare high school students for success in their post- secondary academic and/or career pursuits. This is a logical next step in our programming continuum of afterschool, credit bearing internship, media production and paid employment opportunities for high school students. Developing this component will involve research and data collection activities on needs, existing resources and gaps between the two. To collect this information, the VISTA will reach out to students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors and college admissions officers. The VISTA will then use this information to develop curriculum materials for preparing high school students for postsecondary academic pursuits. We anticipate piloting at least 2 workshops in year one. The VISTA will engage in similar activities around the job application and retention processes, reaching out to employees and job readiness programs. As with the college access piece, this research will inform curriculum-

building activities. We anticipate piloting at least 2 workshops in year one. This work will lay the foundation for a comprehensive College Access and Career Readiness program by year three. We believe that better information and preparation will enable more students to get into college and that a deeper understanding of the college experience will help them to stay in college. Similarly, the job readiness piece will enable more students to gain valuable work experience while also earning money that can be put towards their college expenses.

2015-2016 PACC*VISTA HEALTHY FUTURES ABSTRACTS: Nutritious Food Access & Education

Institution Name: Alvernia University

Host Site Supervisor: Alicia Sprow; alicia.sprow@alvernia.edu

Abstract:

Alvernia University is looking for a team player interested in working on issues surrounding food access. The *Alvernia Sustainable Food Access Project* is designed to increase access to nutritious food resources for underserved communities in the City of Reading. The program aims to gather resources from the Alvernia University community and nonprofit organizations to provide educational programs on access to nutritious food resources for children and adults in underserved communities within the City of Reading, revitalize existing urban gardens, and maintain a one-acre farm as part of Alvernia's Bog Turtle Creek Farm Project. In the third and final year of this AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA project cycle, the Alvernia University Healthy Futures VISTA member will assist in continuing to strengthen the infrastructure currently being developed to ensure the ongoing success of the Alvernia Sustainable Food Access Project. This will include: 1) helping Alvernia University and the community partners secure and train a volunteer base that will continue to develop and facilitate nutrition education programming in local urban elementary schools, promote community gardens, and help maintain the one-acre farm; 2) assisting with the development of the Reading Food Policy Council to organize the various partners involved in increasing food access to underserved communities in the City of Reading, 3) continuing to help explore and apply for funding opportunities to sustain the Alvernia Sustainable Food Access Project; and 4) helping to finalize the procedure through which the project partners will collect, assess, and report on data that will lead to improving and sustaining the Alvernia Sustainable Food Access Project. The VISTA will receive daily support from his/her VISTA supervisor and access to professional development resources.

Institution Name: Bucknell University

Host Site Supervisor: Lynn Pierson, lcp008@bucknell.edu

Abstract:

Do issues of hunger, sustainability, and food justice interest you? Located in a beautiful central Pennsylvania, the *Bucknell University Food Program Coordinator* at Bucknell University will work with an established community garden, hot meal program, and snack pack program. The VISTA will assist in the development of new nutritional programming that will be presented to the community through summer camps, cooking demonstrations, and free workshops at the public library. He or she will direct the expansion of the variety of plants that we grow. Our VISTA will do this by working

alongside our botanists to plan the cultivation of a berry patch, asparagus plot, and a sugar maple stand. In addition, the VISTA will work with Bucknell students to develop a stand-alone daylong program at the garden that can be offered to summer camp groups. We are looking for an enthusiastic individual who is motivated to make substantial change to the welfare of community members.

Institution Name: Shippensburg University of PA
Host Site Supervisor: James D'Amico; jfdamico@ship.edu

Abstract:

The AmeriCorps*VISTA will oversee the administration of providing more community outreach and comprehensive services for healthy food distribution for Shippensburg Produce Outreach (SPO) clients. This will include developing interactive healthy cooking and living workshops that community members will be able to attend as well as creating and executing a print, online, and social media campaign. The AmeriCorps*VISTA will build community awareness and enhance engagement in the Shippensburg Produce Outreach (SPO) and Shippensburg Community Resource Coalition (SCRC) that will ensure resources and sustainability by developing key partnerships within the community, local farmers, as well with other organizations in Franklin and Cumberland counties.

Institution Name: Slippery Rock University of PA
Host Site Supervisor: Laurel Dagnon, Laurel.dagnon@sru.edu

Abstract:

The *New Castle Bread Basket Program* will to help provide students in need with a dependable source of food over the weekends. For many students at New Castle Area School District, Friday is not a good day, because they know that their next meal may not be until Monday at school. The New Castle Area School District is the 7th poorest school district in the Commonwealth. Over 75% of New Castle Area School District's students qualify for a free & reduced breakfast in lunch since they are identified as living below the federal poverty guidelines. Hunger affects children in the classroom; they have difficulty focusing and this impacts achievement. The New Castle Bread Basket Program will work to remain a sustainable and reliable program to provide the students in need with dependable, weekend meals. Every Friday, students in need, will receive a bag of food and snacks to eat over the weekend. Having a dependable source of food over the weekends, our students can look forward to Friday and return to school on Monday ready to learn. The VISTA will be responsible for the following activities 1) Review current organizational structure of the program and identify strengths and weaknesses. Understanding that budget cuts threaten the future of this program, the VISTA will work to create an organizational structure to ensure the continued implementation, efficiency, and sustainability of the program.; 2) Increase the number of students that have the option to participate; 3) Increase the number of local residents that assist with the program

Institution Name: Susquehanna University

Host Site Supervisor: Jay Helmer, helmer@susqu.edu

Abstract:

Susquehanna University seeks an energetic, creative leader to serve as the *Food Justice/Healthy Futures* PACC AmeriCorps*VISTA. The AmeriCorps*VISTA work with students, faculty, staff, and community members to develop infrastructure at the Campus Garden by increasing food production for donation. Through the Garden, the VISTA will strengthen the University's partnership with Community partners including soup kitchens and homeless shelters by growing fresh produce that can be donated, and coordinating volunteers at these organizations. Working closely with student organization, Community Food Action Team, The VISTA will have significant opportunities to develop programming both on and off campus. The VISTA will help to train and develop student leaders as we transition to a student-led model.

Institution Name: University of Pennsylvania

Host Site Supervisor: Ashley Session, sessiona@sas.upenn.edu

Abstract:

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships VISTA will assist The Huey School in West Philadelphia as they continue to implement a *University-Assisted Coordinated School Health Program*. The Netter Center has over twenty years of experience in supporting University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) and has replicated this model nationally. UACS are public schools and universities working together in a way that advances community development and the teaching, learning, research, service, and civic engagement of students of all ages. The University-Assisted Coordinated School Health Program is designed to implement the Centers for Disease Control's program for improving health outcomes for students by aligning the health programs that may already exist in a school to create a comprehensive school health program that serves the needs of the school community. Our VISTA will support the implementation of a University-Assisted Coordinated School Health Program by addressing the following objectives: 1) developing an asset map and resource recruitment plan, 2) recruiting undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students to support the program, 3) establishing systems for effective professional development and evaluation, and 4) creating a communication system that will provide information to and gather feedback from all stakeholder groups, as well as help institutionalize program activities.

Institution Name: University of Pittsburgh

Host Site Supervisor: Erika Ninos, eln25@pitt.edu

Abstract:

The PACC*VISTA will work with Office of PittServes at the University of Pittsburgh and our community partners (the Collegiate YMCA and Bellefield Presbyterian Church) to provide the leadership necessary to ensure that our entire student population has access to nutritious food through the implementation of a student-operated food pantry. The *Pitt Pantry* will also seek to

provide crisis support to other community members in need. The PACC*VISTA will be responsible for building the Pitt Pantry volunteer program; recruiting, training and maintaining the volunteers for the Pitt Pantry, building capacity through outreach to campus and community partners to develop and identify resources for students dealing with food insecurity on campus, creating and adapting an ongoing needs assessment of our Pitt Pantry clients, creative direct marketing of the Pitt Pantry programs to the student population and working with campus partners to create a curriculum that can be implemented within the Pitt Pantry that will focus on; healthy eating tips and behaviors, physical activity and wellness and budget conscious food shopping. The PACC*VISTA will collaborate with the Collegiate YMCA and the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, as well as, with partners across the University of Pittsburgh campus to build dynamic and sustainable “healthy futures” programming that is responsive to clients’ needs and interests.

2015-2016 PACC *VISTA HEALTHY FUTURES ABSTRACTS: Access to Health Care

Institution Name: DeSales University

Host Site Supervisor Name: Jaime Gerhart, Jaime.gerhart@desales.edu

Abstract:

The 2015-2016 DeSales University PACC*VISTA will work to increase access to health care at Raub Middle School in the Allentown School District. The PACC*VISTA will work closely with Raub Middle School and Saint Luke’s Health Network to provide and support wellness programs; such as physical fitness and dietary projects, supporting the vision and hearing mobiles for St. Lukes, and planning a Wellness Day; for the children and their families. The PACC*VISTA will recruit, train, and manage the DeSales University volunteers to build projects with St. Luke’s at Raub Middle School. DeSales University will provide St. Luke's with Community Health volunteers from our Division of Healthcare who will aid in: Connecting students to dental services, vision services, medical services; providing food assistance (or referrals for food assistance); and providing clothing assistance. The PACC*VISTA will work with a team of DeSales, Raub Middle School, St. Luke’s and community members to formulate an assessment tool, collect data, and review the Community Health Project to ensure the success and sustainability of the program. The PACC*VISTA will form a DeSales University Student Advisory board that will build a Community Health manual and a programmatic infrastructure that will allow students to be engaged in leadership roles.

Institution Name: Franklin & Marshall College

Host Site Supervisor: Julie Rhoads, jrhoads@fandm.edu

Abstract:

The F&M PACC*VISTA will be placed at Reynolds Middle School in support of a unique, collaborative approach to address the needs of the Lancaster refugee community. Each year, Lancaster resettles approximately 500-700 refugees from countries such as Bhutan, Burma, Somalia, and Democratic Republic of Congo. Franklin & Marshall has partnered with Reynolds Middle School and the Lancaster Country Refugee Coalition, a network of over 10 community organizations, to launch a community school with a focus on refugees. The Reynolds Community School will provide crucial

integrative services for refugees and their families. The community school will serve as center or “hub” of services for refugee families; the approach focuses on both the location and the coordination of partnerships and services. While the scope of services planned at the community school will be broad, one of the initial foci will be access to health care through the establishment of an on-site health clinic. Responsibilities will include working with community partners and the refugee community to conduct an in-depth needs assessment, data collection, volunteer recruitment and management, and planning and promotion of community school activities. Through these tasks, the VISTA will build the capacity of the program, which will accelerate the development of the Community School to optimize refugee resettlement and foster a healthier community.

Institution Name: Northampton Community College

Host Site Supervisor Name: Maryann Haytmanek, mhaytmanek@northampton.edu

Abstract:

Year Two of Northampton Community College’s VISTA project will continue Affordable Care Act and Medicaid outreach and expand the embedding of the work of the former Benefits Access Initiative (now SpartanAid). The VISTA member will work directly with the Community School Directors at two local elementary schools to develop on-site programming that will provide health care information to the families of the students and include other public benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and other appropriate resources. In addition, the VISTA member and students will act as a liaison with Northampton’s New Choices Career Development program to refer parents who are interested in career and job training opportunities. Much of the VISTA work in year two will be to mobilize the campus community, especially Student Affairs staff and Student Life staff and students to embed these services as a means of ensuring sustainability of these services beyond the period of the VISTA work. The VISTA member will expand the current campus-based student group, INFO-ACA, by creating an ongoing student association to assist Northampton’s low-income students to access affordable health care through the Affordable Care Act or Medicaid and any other appropriate public benefits. The student association will support the VISTA member in implementing programming on campus and in the partner Community Schools. We anticipate that students from Northampton’s new Associate of Applied Science degree in Public Health and Social Work degree programs will be a primary source to recruit students for the group as well as to provide a rich resource for service learning students devoted to these activities.

Institution Name: Washington & Jefferson College

Host Site Supervisor: Justin P. Dandoy; jdandoy@washjeff.edu

The Washington & Jefferson College PACC*VISTA will be responsible for developing, enhancing and expanding the *Volunteer Community Health Coach Program (VCHCP)*. This in-home care program will be coordinated at Washington & Jefferson College (W&J) and the Community Health Coaches will be W&J student volunteers, trained and supported by Jefferson Hospital of the Allegheny Health Network (and partnering medical centers) physicians, and administrators. The goal of the VCHCP is to support individuals in local communities with personal health and wellness plans upon their

dismissal from the hospital and enroll in the Community Care Network. These plans would prevent avoidable and costly hospital readmissions for the patients. In the city of Washington, PA, 24% of the population has had an income below the poverty level within the last 12 months, and 13.5% of the population in Washington is uninsured, with both numbers being above the state levels. The cost of repeated, unnecessary healthcare expenditures has a direct effect on these populations. The VISTA and the Health Coaches will address these costs. The VISTA will research and assess additional resources for patients, and develop the structure and mechanisms for providing these resources to the patients. Throughout his or her term of service, the VISTA will work directly with the student Volunteer Community Health Coaches in an advisory role, recruiting future health coaches, helping them to understand the process, connect them with their clients, and provide them with the support to succeed in their relationship with their clients. The VISTA will support the coaches through both group and individual guidance. Finally, the VISTA will assist in the development of a future administrative structure for the project that will promote program sustainability.

2015-2016 PACC*VISTA VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES ABSTRACTS:

Institution Name: Albright College

Host Site Supervisor: Tracy Gray Hayes; tghayes@albright.edu

Abstract:

The *Albright College Joining Forces Program* seeks to develop a model that clearly articulates education benefits available to veterans and their families in Reading and Berks County, how to access those benefits as well as the support systems necessary to succeed, so they can use higher education as a path to economic stability. The model will allow the Albright College AmeriCorps*VISTA to develop sustainable, working relationships with our community partners and share the resources with other institutions in higher education. The current state of Albright College in reaching, selecting and supporting veterans and their families will also be assessed. The AmeriCorps*VISTA will be responsible for creating and revising policies, procedures and documents to align with guidelines for veteran friendly institutions.

Institution Name: Keystone College

Host Site Supervisor Name: Wendy Kramer; wendy.kramer@keystone.edu

Abstract:

Our *Dog Tags to Desktops* program is the premier program in Northeast Pennsylvania coordinating outreach to military members and their families through providing one-on-one assistance regardless of their need but primarily focusing on the impact of higher education. Our next Program Coordinator has a great team already established who are willing to provide advice, support and insight. You will oversee coordinating network opportunities within respective communities (both civilian and veteran) in the region, keep us 'in the news' via a strong social media presence, secure additional funding, and implement a mentor program. This mentor piece is critical to the success of the veteran during and following involvement with our program. American Corporate Partners, a

national veteran mentor network has already agreed to work with our participants but we are also finding that former student-veterans of Keystone College would like to also give back and they have agreed to become mentors at a local level. Although we are located in a rural corner of Pennsylvania, we have made great strides to support our community partners, enlisted a growing number of volunteers and continue to collaborate with veteran support agencies throughout the region. We need you to help us sustain what we have started and take our program to the next level.

Institution Name: Marywood University

Host Site Supervisor: Lauren Williams; lwilliams@marywood.edu

Abstract:

The 2015-2016 Marywood University PACC*VISTA will continue to develop and coordinate an innovative, education-focused initiative to fight poverty. The *Renewal Veteran Education and Transition Services* program empowers veterans and their spouses by providing them with increased access to educational opportunities, skill-building workshops, and professional development. The project will provide free courses in the areas of Math, Academic Writing and transitional resources to military, veterans and their spouses in the local community through the use of current and former Marywood University faculty, teachers from local school districts and qualified community volunteers. R-VETS will provide a certificate of satisfactory completion to veterans who successfully complete the program, which can then be submitted to Marywood University upon application for admission. The PACC*VISTA member will play an important role in our effort to build relationships with community veterans interested in post-secondary education and beyond.

Institution Name: Wilkes University

Host Site Supervisor Name: Megan Boone Valkenburg; megan.boone@wilkes.edu

Abstract:

The 2015-2016 Wilkes VISTA project will assist veterans in translating their military skills into successful classroom performance and progress. Early implementation of the tutoring program among student veterans is the key to successful academic intervention, ensuring support and cultivating success. At this point, no veterans are utilizing the traditional learning services offered by the Wilkes Learning Center. In order to encourage student veterans to utilize the Learning Center's services, the advisory council and VISTA will work with Wilkes' Writing Center, Learning Center, and student tutors to create and track an intensive English and Math, one-on-one tutoring program that encompasses both face-to-face interaction (in the Veteran Center) and online formats (fundamentally important for our non-traditionally aged veterans). A goal of the program is to eventually have successful student veterans who have completed the tutoring program, mentor tutors for incoming veterans. In addition, the VISTA will support the Veteran's Council to energize the veterans-helping-veterans program which includes the Veterans' Oral History project. This project enhances the opportunities for veterans to connect, network, and participate in philanthropic giving to the Homeless Veterans' Support Network in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties.