

2016-2017 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 2016-2017 PACC*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. **Thirty positions and one VISTA Leader position** are available in the 2016-2017 program year in four main focus areas: *Education: K-12 Readiness & Success and Post-Secondary Readiness & Success; Healthy Futures: Nutritious Food Access & Education and Access to Health Care; Economic Opportunity, 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 2016-2017 project abstracts listed in ABC order by focus area.

Interested in Applying? 2016-2017 PACC*VISTA term of service: July 25 2016 - July 24, 2017 which includes a mandatory Pre-Service Orientation led by PACC and CNCS beginning on July 18, 2016.

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

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

2016-17 PACC*VISTA benefits include:

- Annual living allowance of \$11,676 or \$12,312
- End of Service Award - Education Award of \$5,775 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 meetings)
- 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

2016-2017 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 30 AmeriCorps*VISTAs in the 2016-2017 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 four focus areas: *Economic Opportunity, Education, Healthy Futures, and Veterans & Military Families*. 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, create and implement digital marketing strategy and communications initiatives for PACC, build capacity for future VISTAs by coordinating VISTA Alumni, and support regional networks in exploring opportunities and capacity for collaborative VISTA projects.

2016-2017 PACC*VISTA EDUCATION ABSTRACTS: K-12 Readiness & Success

Institution Name and Project Year: Albright College, Year 3

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

Albright College and 13th and Union Elementary School Partnership has existed since 2004. The Partnership has thrived for twelve years! Over the last two years, we've instituted new tutoring, mentoring and teacher assistant programs. Each week, there are approximately 50 Albright students at 13th and Union Elementary providing various services. We've also been successful at bringing together various agencies in the community by providing leadership. The 3rd year PACC*VISTA will continue to meet with the local agencies while encouraging someone in the group to take over the leadership. The neighborhood depends on the services that the agencies provide. The school community depends on the Albright volunteers to help the students succeed in school. Sustaining these programs will allow the students and their families to succeed in the second poorest city in the country.

Institution Name and Project Year: Alvernia University, Year 1

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

The Tyson-Schoener Educational Outreach Project aims to increase academic success in children attending Tyson-Schoener Elementary School through school-based mentoring and tutoring, increased parent involvement, and community engagement. The Tyson-Schoener Educational Outreach Project will work to build a strong educational foundation in students' skills, which will ultimately increase the likelihood of continued student success in later years. The AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA member will serve as a liaison between Tyson-Schoener Elementary School and Alvernia University to help provide resources and support for expanded in- and after-school tutoring and mentoring programs, re-establish a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and develop new community and school based partnership events. With such a high population of low-income and economically disadvantaged students, there is plenty of opportunity for Alvernia University to lend a hand to the Reading School

District. While the district has many great initiatives underway, they are continuously looking for partnerships that will allow their students to make their hopes and dreams a reality. This new partnership between Alvernia, Tyson-Schoener Elementary School and AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA will create great opportunities for children in the City of Reading.

Institution Name and Project Year: Alvernia University, Year 1

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

The Alvernia-Millmont Educational Partnership aims to increase academic success in children attending Millmont Elementary School through improved parent involvement, community engagement, and school based mentoring and tutoring. Millmont Elementary School, one of 13 elementary schools in the Reading School District, is located within walking distance of Alvernia's campus and provides an ideal opportunity for the University to direct resources to improve the lives of the students. The Alvernia-Millmont Educational Partnership will work to build a strong educational foundation in students' skills, which will ultimately increase the likelihood of continued student success in later years. The AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA member will serve as a liaison between Millmont Elementary School and Alvernia University to help re-establish a Parent-Teacher Organization, develop new community and school based partnership events, and help provide resources and support for expanded after-school tutoring and mentoring programs. The PACC*VISTA member will recruit and manage Alvernia student volunteers and faculty, as well as community members and organizations as part of this project as well as collect and analyze data to continue to drive positive program improvements and sustainability.

Institution Name and Project Year: Messiah College, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Donald Murk, dmurk@messiah.edu

Engaging community members, businesses, and organizations as partners in children's education can improve the learning community in many ways. Working with community partners Messiah College along with the Salvation Army hopes to be able to expand the learning opportunities available to parents so that they can better prepare their children for success in school. The purpose of the *Harrisburg Parent-Community Partners (HPCP)* project is to improve early childhood school readiness by building the capacity of community partners to deliver educational programs that effectively reach parents and caregivers, equipping parents of K-4 Downey students with the knowledge and skills needed to best position their children to be ready to learn.

Institution Name and Project Year: Susquehanna University, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Brent Papson; papson@susqu.edu

The Susquehanna University Youth Engagement Project will help catalyze a new partnership between the University and the Snyder County Coalition for Kids (SCC4K) to bring a vibrant and sustainable community center to the Selinsgrove area. Responding to community need and expressed desires, the program will build capacity for the Regional Engagement Center (R.E.C) by identifying and collaborating with numerous community partners to provide tutoring, educational, and skill building programs for youth in grades K-12. With the Susquehanna campus, all 4 schools in the Selinsgrove district and the R.E.C. all within less of a mile of each other, the Youth Engagement AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA will be completely immersed in both the Selinsgrove and the Susquehanna Communities.

Institution Name and Project Year: West Chester University, Year 2

Host Site Supervisor Name: Jamie Williams, JWilliams3@wcupa.edu

West Chester University's *America Reads* program is an academic enrichment program that aims to establish and continuously improve mutually beneficial relationships with community agencies serving disadvantaged youth in Chester County. The 2016-17 PACC*VISTA America Reads Coordinator will recruit, train, and manage for the program. Through the America Reads, WCU college students are recruited, trained, and managed to serve as mentors in local childcare and afterschool programs. These college students comprise a diverse team of mentors that provide guidance and support to youth in order to improve youth academic performance, social skill development, and overall self-esteem.

Institution Name and Project Year: Wilson College, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor Name: Mary Beth Williams, marybeth.williams@wilson.edu

Wilson College is partnering with Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12 for the *Learning Campus Project* to provide academic support through after-school tutoring to the children of immigrant and migratory farm workers in the Chambersburg area. This tutoring program currently provides literacy and math enrichment services twice each week throughout the school year to 30-35 Kindergarten through fifth grade children within the Migrant Education Program of the Lincoln Intermediate Unit. The AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA will recruit, train, and manage tutors and grow the capacity of the program into a sustainable and academically sound opportunity for children. The program is intended to build connections for these elementary school students across all areas of the college with hands-on enrichment activities provided by college academic departments such as those at the campus farm and science labs. The overall purpose of this program is to expose children who have not dreamed about higher education to college life.

2016-2017 PACC*VISTA EDUCATION ABSTRACTS: Post-Secondary Access & Success

Institution Name and Project Year: Alvernia University, Year 3

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

The Reading Collegiate Scholars Program is a post-secondary readiness and success program for high school students in partnership with the Reading School District. The AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA member will be responsible for coordinating the Reading Collegiate Scholars Program and will spend time interacting with Alvernia University student volunteers, program participants, families and, increasingly in the third year, the administration of the University to help transition to a fully sustainable solution for continued management of the program. The Pennsylvania Department of Education states that 68% of Reading High School graduates required remedial courses in math or reading before being able to enroll in college courses. The high rate of students who need additional instruction suggests that there is a real need to make sure that high school students have the tools, resources and support to graduate from high school and be successful in a post-secondary educational opportunity to increase their chances for success in a professional career. The Reading Collegiate Scholars Program is poised to make a positive impact on high school students in the City of Reading through tutoring, mentoring and support in applying to post-secondary educational opportunities.

Institution Name and Project Year: Cabrini College, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Tom Southard, ts849@cabrini.edu

Norristown has received a large number of Latino immigrants over the last twenty years. The Latino population has grown from 3% in 1990 to almost 30% in 2015. In 2009, Cabrini College and the Norristown Area School District partnered to raise the Latino graduation rate at Norristown Area High School and to increase the number of Latino students applying to college. With weekly mentors from Cabrini at Norristown schools, local students, predominantly immigrants, received mentorship, tutoring, cultural integration, and language skills. The PACC*VISTA will work with Cabrini and the local community to assess the needs of the *Norristown Latino Mentoring Program*, to seek out and implement best practices, and to find additional funding and resource opportunities.

Institution Name and Project Year: Cedar Crest College, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Jonathan Squire, jjsquire@cedarcrest.edu

Allentown, PA is the third largest city in Pennsylvania. The Allentown School District serves 17,000 students, of which 70% identify as Hispanic. Women in the United States received 50% of engineering and science bachelor's degrees, according to the National Science Foundation in 2015. However, the disparity between racial groups within this number is much larger as only 17% of those degrees will go to Latina women, 3.5% of STEM degrees overall. Cedar Crest College wants to help fill this gap through the HOLA! Science program with a dedicated and enthusiastic PACC*VISTA member. *HOLA! Science* is a program developed by Cedar Crest College that connects young women in Allentown with science mentor from 9th to 12th grade. The PACC*VISTA member will coordinate this program to engage students from the local school district in workshops, field trips, Science Olympiad, and other experiences. The PACC*VISTA will connect with the community to find opportunities for students to follow their passions as well as helping with the college admissions process and building skills that will help the students succeed once in college.

Institution Name and Project Year: Gettysburg College, Year 2

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

Post-Secondary Readiness & Success for Migrant & English Language Learners in Adams County program will continue to support immigrant and migrant families throughout Adams County in understanding and accessing post-secondary educational opportunities through a Post-Secondary Readiness and Success program. 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 and community-based 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, providing information and support to fulfill requirements and access higher education.

Institution Name and Project Year: King's College, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Paul Lindenmuth, paullindenmuth@kings.edu

The Luzerne County Juvenile Justice College Mentoring Program at King's College is an innovative peer-mentoring program that is designed for at-risk youth and first-time non-violent juvenile offenders of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania who mostly come from families living below the poverty level. The program addresses building positive relationships, job interviewing skills, and the possibility of attaining higher education. The program also addresses issues of the juvenile offender who may be from a low socio-economic background and unable to pay the monetary sanctions of the court. The program may be completed in lieu of receiving sentencing and paying court-imposed penalties. The PACC*VISTA member will be involved in expanding the program's capacity to recruit and retain participants and volunteers; improving programming; broadening relationships with the agencies that refer to the program; assisting in assessment; and ensuring sustainability by creating recruitment and programming instruments for the future.

Institution Name and Project Year: Millersville University, Year 1

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

The 2016-2017 PACC*VISTA *Career Corps* Coordinator will work with the Lancaster Partnership Program and the School District of Lancaster on a project to provide McCaskey High School students with college and career readiness programming, specifically in the area of career exploration and planning, with an emphasis on STEM career options. The PACC*VISTA will build the capacity of the community partners to serve high school students by recruiting, training and managing Millersville University student volunteers to serve as career educators and deliver a career exploration curriculum. The PACC*VISTA will be a member of the University's Civic and Community Engagement team and will be responsible for overall program management, volunteer training, recruitment, career education curriculum delivery and long-term sustainability of the Career Corps.

Institution Name and Project Year: Pennsylvania State University Berks Campus, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor Name: Guadalupe Kasper, gur10@psu.edu

The *Penn State Educational Partnership Program, PEPP*, is an after-school program in the Reading School District whereby Penn State Berks students are placed as PEPP Learning Assistants, or tutors/mentors, to encourage and prepare Reading School District PEPP participants to pursue higher education. PEPP tracks approximately 150-200 Reading School District PEPP participants throughout their membership in the program from grades six to twelve to ensure that students are prepared for college. Along this college-bound pathway, Reading School District PEPP participants are exposed to the college process, have opportunities to explore potential careers, and work one-on-one with Penn State Berks students. The PEPP VISTA Project will be an effort to support the current Program by working to enhance the existing partnership efforts; to aid in collaborating PEPP's efforts with the local community; and to develop a more sustainable infrastructure within the partnership. The PACC*VISTA project will enable PEPP to expand its reach to affect more participants and allow for enhanced community and family partnerships. The PACC*VISTA Project will also allow PEPP to create a more seamless pipeline of college-bound students in Reading who will go on to be successful in college while developing their allegiance to the local area and provide more opportunities for upward economic mobility.

Institution Name and Project Year: Philadelphia University, Year 2

Host Site Supervisor: Louise McShane, McShaneL@philau.edu

Philadelphia University will expand on its partnership with local agencies to improve Post-Secondary Readiness & Success through *Go Ph.A.R.* This initiative focuses on offering workshops, campus visits, assistance with college applications & test preparation. The primary high school in the area served has a reported rate of 50% of the 4 year cohort graduating (based on the class of 2013). This Post-Secondary Readiness & Success program will utilize a VISTA to provide quality information on various college and/or career opportunities and goals for local middle & high school students. An increase in post-secondary readiness will have a positive impact on our community by resulting in more high school graduates prepared to achieve their post-secondary goals.

Institution Name and Project Year: University of Pennsylvania, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Bianca White, whbianca@sas.upenn.edu

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships is offering a unique opportunity for a PACC*VISTA to assist two West Philadelphia public high schools as they implement *College Access and Career Readiness Program*. This project is an opportunity to strengthen the community by organizing volunteers from various Penn departments who will be able to promote college and career exploration and support development of work readiness skill building in students. Additionally, this PACC*VISTA position will work in the local West Philadelphia community to develop relationships with potential employers and encourage them to join the CACR Employment Bank, which will provide a bridge for students to access internships from local businesses and organizations.

2016-2017 PACC*VISTA HEALTHY FUTURES ABSTRACTS: Nutritious Food Access & Education

Institution Name and Project Year: Alvernia University, Year 1

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

The Regional Food Systems Project is designed to gather resources from the Alvernia University community, Redesign Reading, and other key nonprofit organizations to assist in analyzing the current state of the local food system. This information will inform the development of a framework to enable the system to function effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal to reduce food insecurity in the Greater Reading Area. The recent Greater Berks Food Bank Report indicated that 41% of households in the City of Reading have very low food security, which increases their risk of being hungry and lacking access to nutritious and affordable food options. The Reading Community Needs Assessment (2013) identified a number of issues, gaps, and structural problems that are currently affecting the regional food system, and highlighted the need to increase access to affordable, nutritious food resources to underserved communities in the City of Reading. In the first year of this AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA project cycle, the Alvernia University Healthy Futures PACC*VISTA member will work closely with the Regional Reading Food Policy Action Council, Alvernia University, community partners, and the neighboring community to engage and organize all partners involved in the local food system and begin developing a framework to ensure the sustainability of the Regional Food Systems Project.

Institution Name and Project Year: Pennsylvania State University Berks Campus, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor Name: Jim Shankweiler, jshankweiler@hotmail.com

Penn State Berks is partnering with Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center for the *Healthy Living Project* to improve health outcomes in the City of Reading by improving nutrition and physical activity. In this multi-faceted project, we seek to take on the root causes of poor nutrition that are manifested by lack of availability of nutritious foods, unaffordability, lack of food preservation and preparation equipment, and lack of knowledge about both nutrition and food preparation. The PACC*VISTA will assist in defining the current state of nutrition in the City and identifying root causes thereof. The PACC*VISTA will also take leadership in creating a repository of resources (knowledge and services) already provided by social service agencies across the city. The ultimate goal of this project is to see quantified, positive movement in metrics that the medical community regard as indicators of good health.

Institution Name and Project Year: Shippensburg University of PA, Year 2

Host Site Supervisor: Ms. Victoria M. Kerr, ymbuchbauer@ship.edu

In the 2014 Shippensburg Pennsylvania Community Assessment, the poverty rate in Shippensburg was 19.75%, (2008-2012). This rate is higher than the poverty rate statewide, which was 13.06% during the same time period. The Assessment helped recognize there is a need in the Shippensburg Community to increase awareness of existing social services and increase the number of youth programs within the area. Shippensburg University's *Healthy Futures: Nutritious Food Access and Education* PACC*VISTA is involved in several efforts to improve and bring awareness and access of health and social services to the Franklin and Cumberland Pennsylvania counties. Working with the Shippensburg Produce Outreach (SPO) and Shippensburg Community Resource Coalition (SCRC), the PACC*VISTA will be involved in organizing, outreach, research, information and training related to various projects that build community awareness and engagement of the SPO and SCRC. The PACC*VISTA will ensure resources and sustainability is met by developing key partnerships within the community, local farmers, as well with other organizations in Franklin and Cumberland counties.

Institution Name and Project Year: University of Pennsylvania, Year 3

Host Site Supervisor: Bianca White, whbianca@sas.upenn.edu

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships is offering a unique opportunity for a PACC*VISTA to assist two West Philadelphia K-8 public schools as they implement a *University-Assisted Coordinated School Health Program*. This project is an opportunity to generate service to West Philadelphia schools and the Penn academic community by providing structured supports to schools in an effort to improve health education and wellness in the school. The program galvanizes Penn undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students and volunteers to create a synergy among health education, physical education, nutrition education, and other health promotions in order to create a healthy school environment.

Institution Name and Project Year: University of Pittsburgh, Year 2

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

The Pitt Pantry's goal is to ensure that University students and local residents have increased access to healthy food options and broader knowledge of resources available to them within Allegheny County. The project leverages community based organizations, residents, students, and community leaders to fill a pressing need in our community as we work to build dynamic and sustainable "healthy futures" programming that is responsive to our community members needs and interests. The *PittServes*

PACC*VISTA will work with the Office of PittServes and our community partners to address resource gaps within our University and local community through the operation of an on campus food pantry and through our involvement with our community partners' Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) program.

Institution Name and Project Year: West Chester University of Pennsylvania, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor Name: Jamie Williams, JWilliams3@wcupa.edu

The *West Chester University Resource Pantry* project is a collaborative initiative between the Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs and Financial Aid that aims to address issues of food insecurity and poverty faced by university students. By building mutually beneficial partnerships with local churches, the Chester County Food Bank, and Assisting the Community Together in Faith, this pantry will serve the immediate hunger needs of university students struggling with financial hardships, while also providing access to additional resources such as toiletries, school supplies, and professional/winter attire. The Resource Pantry will work with several departments across campus to host financial literacy, life skills, and professional development workshops for students utilizing the services of the pantry.

2016-2017 PACC *VISTA HEALTHY FUTURES ABSTRACTS: Access to Health Care

Institution Name and Project Year: DeSales University, Year 2

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

The 2016-2017 DeSales University PACC*VISTA will work to increase access to health care at Raub Middle School in the Allentown School District through the *Community Health Education Works! (CHEW!)* program, the PACC*VISTA will work closely with Raub Middle School and Saint Luke's Health Network to provide and support wellness programs for students and their families. These programs include physical fitness and dietary projects, vision and hearing mobiles, and wellness days. The PACC*VISTA will recruit, train, and lead DeSales University volunteers from nursing, exercise science, medical studies, physician assistant, and physical therapy majors to build community health projects with St. Luke's at Raub Middle School.

Institution Name and Project Year: Franklin & Marshall College, Year 2

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

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 County Refugee Coalition, a network of over 10 community organizations, to launch a community school with a focus on refugees. The *Reynolds Community School and Refugee*

Center provides crucial integrative services for refugees and their families, bringing together resources and community partnerships. In year two, the PACC*VISTA will build capacity of the Reynolds Community School by building infrastructure by data tracking, mobilizing volunteers, and expanding programs and partnerships. Through these tasks, the PACC*VISTA will accelerate the development of the Community School to optimize refugee resettlement and foster a healthier community.

Institution Name and Project Year: Washington & Jefferson College, Year 2

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

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 physicians, and administrators. The Washington & Jefferson College PACC*VISTA will be responsible for developing, enhancing and expanding the *Volunteer Community Health Coach Program (VCHCP)*. 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. The patients who are discharged from hospital services are continually readmitted at high costs to the individuals and those providing care to the patients. There is a community need to improve the health of the local population while at the same time diminishing the costs of healthcare related expenses for the community members who need it most.

2016-2017 PACC*VISTA ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ABSTRACTS:

Institution Name and Project Year: Drexel University, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Regina Gendusa, rmg93@drexel.edu

UConnect is a program of the Lindy Center for Civic Engagement providing Information, Referral and Follow-up (IRF) services to the local community. UConnect pairs trained volunteers, called Navigators, with community members in need of support connecting to local programs, services, and other resources and opportunities that can help move their life forward. In addition to providing IRF services, our volunteer Navigators will advocate for our neighbors, learning along the way about the injustices that so many face. This two-pronged approach provides for a welcoming space where everyone gives, receives and learns from each other.

Institution Name: Lock Haven University, Year 1

Host Site Supervisor: Lauren Wright, law3363@lhup.edu

The PACC*VISTA will pave the way for affordable and safe housing options to serve community members living below poverty levels to low income households in both Clinton and Lycoming Counties with a partnership with the Lycoming-Clinton Counties Commission for Community Action (STEP), Inc. The PACC*VISTA will ensure individuals and families are informed partners in accessing utility bill support programs, energy efficiency audits and improvements to lower utility bills and use energy

wisely, weatherization enhancement services, and housing option support services to assist with breaking the cycle of poverty. The PACC*VISTA will leave a legacy of expanded projects and partnerships that will conclude as self-sustaining programs and tangible resources to help with a long term solution to combatting poverty in the region.

2016-2017 PACC*VISTA VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES ABSTRACTS:

Institution Name and Project Year: Albright College, Year 2

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

The *Albright College Joining Forces Program* seeks to continue to develop the successful model that articulates education benefits available to veterans and their families in Berks, Lebanon and Montgomery Counties, 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. In year two of the Joining Forces Program, the AmeriCorps PACC*VISTA will continue to develop and strengthen the established working relationships with community partners, as well as associations, organizations, and agencies within the counties that provide services to veterans and their families.

Institution Name and Project Year: Wilkes University, Year 3

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

The *Inter-Organizational Veteran Educational Support Team Program (INVEST)* is designed specifically to mitigate the research identified risk factors that hinder veteran persistence in higher education. In the past year INVEST has helped veterans attain their post-secondary educational goals through a supportive social and therapeutic safety net, veteran to veteran assistance programs, and educational forums about VA entitlements. In year three, the INVEST PACC*VISTA will offer workshops focusing on VA entitlements, College readiness courses, Career planning assistance, and social outreach.