

## 2017 – 2018 PACC\*VISTA Leader

**Institution Name:** Pennsylvania Campus Compact

**Host Site Supervisor:** [BDatesman@paccompact.org](mailto:BDatesman@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 2017-2018 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: Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunities and Veterans and 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, build capacity for future VISTAs by coordinating VISTA Alumni, and a support existing regional networks in exploring opportunities and capacity for collaborative VISTA projects.

### 2017 – 2018 PACC\*VISTA EDUCATION ABSTRACTS: K-12 Readiness & Success

**Institution Name:** Albright College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Dr. Mary McGee; [mmcgee@albright.edu](mailto:mmcgee@albright.edu)

**Year 1**

The Albright College and Northeast Middle School Partnership aims to increase academic skills and success in children attending Northeast Middle School. The AmeriCorps\*VISTA will be responsible for the development and improvement of after-school tutoring and mentoring programs for Northeast students, drawing on resources provided by Albright College and Mentors for Berks Youth (MBY). MBY is committed to developing students' academic readiness and potential for post-secondary success by providing one-on-one mentorships with college students and community members. Through increased mentoring, tutoring, parental involvement, and community engagement, which the VISTA will coordinate and the Partnership program will promote, we expect the academic achievement for at-risk students in grades 6-7 to increase. Developing confidence and academic skills through enhanced programming, Northeast students will be better prepared to engage with their community.

**Institution Name:** Alvernia University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Jess Umbenhauer; [jessica.umbenhauer@alvernia.edu](mailto:jessica.umbenhauer@alvernia.edu)

**Year 2**

The Millmont-Alvernia Educational Partnership aims to increase academic success in children attending Millmont Elementary School through improved parent involvement, community engagement, and increased 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 Millmont-Alvernia Educational Partnership will work to build a strong educational foundation in students' skills that will ultimately increase the likelihood of continued student success in later years. The AmeriCorps\*VISTA member will serve as a liaison between Millmont Elementary School and Alvernia University to help cultivate parent and family engagement, develop new community and school based partnership events, and help provide resources and support for expanded in- and after-school tutoring and mentoring programs. The VISTA member will recruit and manage Alvernia student volunteers and faculty, in addition to 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:** Alvernia University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Jess Umbenhauer; [jessica.umbenhauer@alvernia.edu](mailto:jessica.umbenhauer@alvernia.edu)

**Year 2**

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 that will ultimately increase the likelihood of continued student success in later years. The AmeriCorps\*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, increase parent and family engagement, 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\*VISTA will create great opportunities for children in the City of Reading.

**Institution Name:** Messiah College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Don Murk; [dmurk@messiah.edu](mailto:dmurk@messiah.edu)

**Year 2**

The VISTA will work to improve early childhood school readiness by building the capacity of community partners to deliver educational programs that effectively reach parents and caregivers. Over a three-year period, this project will resource and equip parents with the knowledge and skills needed to support their student's academic efforts through the establishment of an early childhood education program and curriculum for school readiness. Research demonstrates that as barriers to school readiness are broken down, the likelihood increases for students to escape poverty through improved academic achievement, which better positions students on a pathway to higher education.

This project will build the capacity of community organizations (e.g. Salvation Army) to effectively reach parents and caregivers of K-4 children at Downey Elementary School located in Harrisburg, PA. By directing educational programming to parents and caregivers, new opportunities will be

created for parents to meet around shared values (e.g. improving opportunities for their children to succeed). When these shared values are celebrated, and access to new knowledge and resources are created, it can inspire and empower parents to work together, which in turn can result in a collective social power that can bond the community together changing the community climate around the school.

**Institution Name:** University of Pennsylvania

**Host Site Supervisor:** Jen Chu; [jenx@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:jenx@sas.upenn.edu)

**Year 1**

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships VISTA will work to assist the Comegys School to implement the Young Quakers Community Athletics (YQCA) program. YQCA is a University-Assisted initiative that galvanizes Penn student and partners to mentor and engage students in sports activities that promote goal-setting, task persistence, healthy lifestyle and increased graduation rates and college and career access channels. The VISTA will recruit, train and coordinate undergraduate, graduate, and professional school student volunteers to mentor and engage students and families. Volunteers will implement afterschool academically-enriching direct service to students, provide social-emotional support to elementary and middle school-aged youth.

**Institution Name:** University of Pittsburgh

**Host Site Supervisor:** Misti McKeehen; [misti@pitt.edu](mailto:misti@pitt.edu)

**Year 1**

The Education VISTA housed within the Office of PittServes will complete a year of service focused on the increase of youth literacy rates and create mentoring and tutoring relationships to enhance the University of Pittsburgh's reach into local communities. Focusing on educational attainment, this position will have a lasting impact on a minimum of 100 youth who will be paired in 1-to-1 relationships in local afterschool programs and through community based agencies. By recruiting, training, and supporting college students to serve in these volunteer roles, the AmeriCorps\*VISTA placed in the Office of PittServes will have a lasting impact on youth in the Pittsburgh region.

**Institution Name:** Susquehanna University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Pam Frontino; [frontino@susqu.edu](mailto:frontino@susqu.edu)

**Year 2**

Building upon the accomplishments and progress set by the first year VISTA, the second year Susquehanna University Youth Engagement VISTA will continue efforts to solidify and continue the partnership between the University and the Snyder County Regional Engagement Center (REC), slated to open in May of 2017. The REC is being established based on current community need. By responding to community need, the VISTA will continue to build capacity for the REC by identifying and collaborating with numerous community partners while providing tutoring, educational, and skill building programs for youth in grades K-12. These programs will include a teen mentoring program, a very successful and enthusiastically embraced project, established by the first year VISTA during the fall of 2016. The second year VISTA will continue to recruit and support volunteers that are interested in the programming offered at the REC. The VISTA will also

assist with researching and applying for grants that will help sustain the work being done at the REC, as well as that of the first year VISTA.

**Institution Name:** West Chester University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Kate Colyer, [kcolyer@wcupa.edu](mailto:kcolyer@wcupa.edu)

**Year 3**

West Chester University's America Reads program aims to improve academic performance, social skill development, and self-esteem of disadvantaged youth in Chester County through establishing and continuously improving mutually beneficial relationships with community agencies already serving these youth. The VISTA manages and recruits a diverse team of WCU students to serve as site leaders and mentors. Additionally, the VISTA coordinates mentor orientation and workshops, as well as creates a video and transitional manual for future leadership of the program. The VISTA will also help coordinate the Advisory Council, which serves as a steering committee for the review of assessment results as well as a collective voice for strengthening program goals. Through the VISTA's service to enhance efforts to address America Reads' primary focus of K-12 Readiness and Success, the program will impact the community and fulfill the anti-poverty goals of the AmeriCorps PACC\*VISTA program by increasing access to vital academic enrichment resources and increasing youths' exposure to the importance of higher education.

**Institution Name:** Wilson College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Mary Beth Williams; [marybeth.williams@wilson.edu](mailto:marybeth.williams@wilson.edu)

**Year 2**

At Wilson College the VISTA will continue to lead the development of the Learning Campus program which provides academic support through after-school tutoring the children of immigrant and migratory farm workers in the Chambersburg area. For the first six years, the program evolved to the point that it needed a formal structure, educational curriculum, and tutor direction instead of dependence on student volunteers. During the past year, the VISTA created a framework for the program, and in the next year, the VISTA will use this framework to fully develop a sustainable program that will continually expand the number of tutors and grow the capacity of the program which will be tied to the PA Core Standards and continually evolve to meet the needs of the children of migrant workers and Wilson College.

This tutoring program currently provides literacy and math enrichment services twice each week throughout the school year to 12-20 K-5 children within the Migrant Education Program of the Lincoln Intermediate Unit. In addition, 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. Aside from coordinating the logistics of the program, the VISTA will seek further community engagement opportunities within the migrant and seasonal farm worker community for Wilson College students via the contacts in Franklin County that the Learning Campus program provides. The overall purpose of this program is to expose children who have not dreamed about higher education to college life.

**2017-2018 PACC\*VISTA EDUCATION ABSTRACTS:  
Post-Secondary Access & Success**

**Institution Name:** Cabrini University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Ray Ward; [rew68@cabrini.edu](mailto:rew68@cabrini.edu)

**Year 2**

Norristown, a New Latino Disapora town in Montgomery County, PA, 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. Led by the Romance Languages department, the project pairs Cabrini University students with local Latino students—mainly immigrants. Although the official Cabrini program is only one semester, most of the participants form multi-semester relationship, spanning an entire middle- or high-school career.

Each week of the school year, between 20 and 35 students from Cabrini College meet with High School students. Cabrini students act as mentors to the Latino students, helping them with homework, fitting in at their schools, or adjusting to life in the Norristown area. The focus is often on tutoring and homework help, but the common threads in building the relationships are language help, cultural integration, navigating middle- and high-school, and college aspiration.

**Institution Name:** Cedar Crest College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Jonathan Squire, [jjsqire@cedarcrest.edu](mailto:jjsqire@cedarcrest.edu)

**Year 2**

Allentown, PA is the third largest city in Pennsylvania. The Allentown School District serves the city proper with 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. The fields in which these degrees are in also shows incredible divides across disciplines as the proportions of women to men vary. Cedar Crest College wants to help fill this gap through the HOLA! Science program with a dedicated and enthusiastic VISTA member.

The VISTA member will coordinate this program to engage students from the local school district in workshops, field trips, Science Olympiad, and other experiences. The 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. The VISTA member will also have the opportunity to work with current Cedar Crest college students as they mentor the high school students through the twists and turns of high school and college. Additionally, the VISTA will work with the families of these students demystifying the college application process and helping them think through all the possibilities available to students so that they can achieve their goals. This is a great opportunity that brings together local schools, community members and Cedar Crest College as we support passionate students though high school and into their higher educational experiences.

**Institution Name:** Gettysburg College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Gretchen Natter; [gnatter@gettysburg.edu](mailto:gnatter@gettysburg.edu)

**Year 3**

With the aim of increasing readiness for and access to post-secondary opportunities for migrant students and English language learners, the PACC\*VISTA will support Adams County families in understanding and accessing post-secondary educational opportunities. The 250 migrant children and English language learners in Adams County face a myriad of obstacles in accessing and completing their educational goals. They are often cited as the most educationally disadvantaged subgroup of school children in this country due to frequent moves, employment at young age, lack of peer groups, lack of health care and challenges within academia. There are few social services which have bilingual and bicultural professional staff that are cognizant of effective deterrents for this particular population, especially at the high school level. Developing and delivering resources which specifically target the needs and situations for this population dismantles access barriers. By working in partnership with Lincoln Intermediate Unit (LIU) #12 Migrant Education/21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) and Gettysburg College, the PACC\*VISTA will support 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in the program by recruiting, training and supporting 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 for parents and students, 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. Other activities include grant-writing, focus group/assessment implementation and program curriculum refinement.

**Institution Name:** King's College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Paul Lindenmuth; [paullindenmuth@kings.edu](mailto:paullindenmuth@kings.edu)

**Year 2**

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, whom generally come from families living below poverty level in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. The program is focused on providing opportunities for these individuals, which addresses building positive relationships, job interviewing skills, the possibility of attaining higher education and issues of the juvenile offender who may be from a low socio-economic background and unable to pay the monetary sanctions of the court. At times the mentoring program may be completed in lieu of receiving sentencing and paying court-imposed penalties. The program also provides each participating youth a free meal at the end of each session. It is particularly needed by the community since there are no similar projects that provide the above services for first-time non-violent juvenile offenders.

The 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. These general goals will involve contacting the various referring agencies, assisting with various outreach activities, contacting parents and volunteers, developing program activities, participating in staff meetings, and

participating in testing and assessment. These essential elements will afford the VISTA member an enriching experience and allow King's to continue to expand upon the program.

**Institution Name:** Millersville University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Melissa Wardwell; [melissa.wardwell@millersville.edu](mailto:melissa.wardwell@millersville.edu)

**Year 2**

This VISTA project will provide College and Career Readiness support for economically disadvantaged School District of Lancaster students at J.P. McCaskey High School, including students enrolled in the district's Cyber Program and Phoenix Academy. The project will increase the capacity of the school district and the Lancaster Partnership Program to provide 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade J. P. McCaskey high school students with college-readiness programming, specifically in the area of career exploration and planning, with an emphasis on STEM career options. The VISTA will collect information on existing resources and ongoing needs through collaboration with district stakeholders, offer a career exploration and planning curriculum, and recruit and select Millersville student volunteers to implement the curriculum by delivering workshops and activities to the high school students in order to further their exploration of careers and preparation for college. The project will enhance support for the students to explore new and emerging careers as well as current career fields. The VISTA will supervise a core group of 12-15 Millersville student Tornado Career Corps volunteers, preferably those who are McCaskey graduates, and work closely with the district's College and Career Readiness Coordinator. As a result, the high school students will be better informed and better prepared to link their studies to college majors and real-world career options for college and career success post-graduation.

**Institution Name:** Penn State Berks

**Host Site Supervisor:** Guadalupe Kasper; [gur10@psu.edu](mailto:gur10@psu.edu)

**Year 1**

The Penn State Educational Partnership Program (PEPP) is an after-school program in the Reading School District (RSD) whereby Penn State (PS) Berks students are placed as PEPP Learning Assistants (PLAs), or tutors/mentors, to encourage and prepare RSD PEPP participants to pursue higher education. PLAs are recruited from all majors at PS Berks including service-learning curriculum. PEPP tracks approximately 150-200 RSD 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, RSD PEPP participants are exposed to the college process, have opportunities to explore potential careers, and work one-on-one with PS Berks students. The PEPP VISTA Project will be an effort to support the current Program by enhancing the existing partnership efforts; collaborating PEPP's efforts with the local community; and developing a more sustainable infrastructure within the partnership. The VISTA project will enable PEPP to affect a larger and more targeted population of students from the RSD. The project will also aid in the development of a more fixed "student-pipeline" structure that allows PEPP to continue its work and makes the PEPP process for RSD students—to move from middle school, to high school, to college—seamless. The VISTA project will also support the work of the PLAs by developing an accessible clearinghouse of archived activities that PLAs can regularly reference at all PEPP sites to engage PEPP RSD participants and keep them on-task during PEPP.

**Institution Name:** University of Pennsylvania

**Host Site Supervisor:** Joe Brand; [jbrandr@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:jbrandr@sas.upenn.edu)

**Year 2**

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships VISTA will work to assist West Philadelphia and Sayre public high schools as they implement Internship to Employment Pathway Program. This program is part of the Netter Center's University- Assisted Post-Secondary Success initiative that galvanizes Penn partners and local stakeholders to continue development of internships, work experience and career access channels for students. This VISTA position is designed to increase youth access to employment and career exploration, in addition to college access opportunities. This project matches the Netter Center's University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) to the need of students in West Philadelphia. UACS are public schools and universities working together in a way that advances the teaching, learning, research, service, and civic development of all their students. The Netter Center has over twenty years of experience in supporting UACS and has replicated this model nationally. This program is designed to create a synergy among the School District of Philadelphia, local businesses, community stakeholders and students in order to increase access points for students and potential employers to engage in an effort to increase employability of high school students.

In response to both Sayre and West Philadelphia High School students need for greater preparedness for the workplace and greater access to work experiences, the VISTA Project will expand access for students through this initiative by mobilizing and aligning employment and internship resources within the University-Assisted Community School model.

**Institution Name:** University of Pennsylvania

**Host Site Supervisor:** Candace Eaton; [eatonc@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:eatonc@sas.upenn.edu)

**Year 1**

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships GEAR UP VISTA will work to assist West Philadelphia high school to implement the GEAR UP program. The GEAR UP Program provides academic and related support services to eligible low-income students to help them obtain a secondary school diploma and to prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education. As a part of GEAR UP, the Netter Center works to galvanize university students and partners to mentor and engage HS students in activities that promote goal-setting, task persistence, increased graduation rates and college and career access channels. The VISTA will recruit, train and coordinate volunteers and other university resources. These college student volunteers will implement school-day and afterschool academically-enriching direct service to students, provide social-emotional support to youth and support programming that more deeply engages families in their students' education.

**2017 - 2018 PACC\*VISTA HEALTHY FUTURES ABSTRACTS:  
Nutritious Food Access & Education**

**Institution Name:** Alvernia University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Alicia Sprow; [alicia.sprow@alvernia.edu](mailto:alicia.sprow@alvernia.edu)

**Year 2**

Alvernia University is looking for a team player interested in working on issues concerning food access for low-income families in the City of Reading. 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 and developing a framework to enable the system to function effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal to reduce food insecurity in the Greater Reading Area. In the first year of this AmeriCorps PACC\*VISTA project cycle, the Alvernia University Healthy Futures VISTA member will be working closely with the project partners to: 1) engage and organize all partners involved in the local food system within the Greater Reading area; 2) work with regional partners to pilot two projects that will constitute the initial phase of the Regional Food Systems Project: Local Food Marketplace and Mobile Food Pantry; and 4) work with the Regional Reading Food Policy Action Council, Alvernia University, community partners, and the neighboring community to begin developing a framework to ensure the sustainability of the Regional Food Systems Project. The VISTA will receive daily support from his/her VISTA supervisor, regular support from Redesign Reading (the primary community partner), and access to professional development resources.

**Institution Name:** Desales University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Jaime Gerhart; [jaime.gerhart@desales.edu](mailto:jaime.gerhart@desales.edu)

**Year 3**

The 2017-2018 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. Luke's, and providing community health programs for after-school; 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 works with a team of DeSales, Raub Middle School, St. Luke's and community members to formulate an assessment tools, collect data, and review the Community Health Education Works (CHEW!) to ensure the success and sustainability of the program. The PACC\*VISTA works closely with a DeSales University Student Advisory board that will builds the CHEW manual and a programmatic infrastructure that will allow students to be engaged in leadership roles.

**Institution Name:** Franklin and Marshall College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Lisa Wolfe; [lisa.wolfe@fandm.edu](mailto:lisa.wolfe@fandm.edu)

**Year 3**

Lancaster County resettles more refugees per capita than any other city in the United States. Understanding how to navigate the complex network of social, health and educational services that are available is critical for the newly arriving refugee and immigrant families to thrive in their new community. The F&M PACC\*VISTA will work with the Refugee Center and Community School at Reynolds Middle School to help optimize the utilization of volunteers to deliver their core services, such as, cultural navigation, medical care, Power Packs distribution, a school uniform bank, adult ESL and citizenship classes and extended day and summer programming for the middle school

students. Additionally, the VISTA will work to ensure the entire Reynolds Middle School community (not just the refugee families) understands how to access the health related services provided by the on-site health center.

**Institution Name:** Penn State Berks

**Host Site Supervisor:** James Shankweiler; [jshankweiler@hotmail.com](mailto:jshankweiler@hotmail.com)

**Year 2**

This VISTA project seeks to improve health outcomes of residents in the City of Reading, Pennsylvania by fostering better nutrition and increasing physical activity. Our core strategic approach includes increasing education, changing perspectives, improving economic development, and building a grassroots movement. The project's shorter-term strategy is to work collectively with community organizations and entrepreneurs to improve food access and affordability for the benefit of City residents. In the longer term, we seek to bring about behavior and community change using an extensive network of grassroots agents and subject matter experts to resolve the root causes of poor nutrition. Partnering with ReDesign Reading, we are working to expand the services of a seasonal, outdoor farmer's market which connects local farmers to downtown city residents; partnering with several community members, we are developing a framework which identifies and supports neighborhood change agents. In Year 2 of the project, the VISTA will continue managing these initiatives, as well as others, to complete a stream of incremental accomplishments that take us to our end goals.

**Institution Name:** Shippensburg University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Javita Thompson; [JL.Thompson@ship.edu](mailto:JL.Thompson@ship.edu)

**Year 3**

Shippensburg University's Healthy Futures: Nutritious Food Access and Education 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 VISTA will be involved in organizing, outreach, research, information and training related to at least the following projects:

- Enhance infrastructure coordinate volunteer management systems for Shippensburg Produce Outreach (SPO) food distribution and the Shippensburg Community Resource Coalition (SCRC).
- Oversee the administration of bringing awareness and access of health services and social services for Shippensburg Produce Outreach (SPO) the community.
- Conduct outreach, research and informational efforts involving other health care projects to Franklin and Cumberland counties aimed at improving coverage, access and quality of care.
- Build community awareness and engagement of 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:** University of Pittsburgh

**Host Site Supervisor:** Erika Ninos; [eln25@pitt.edu](mailto:eln25@pitt.edu)

**Year 3**

The Pitt Pantry PACC\*VISTA is at the center of a dynamic campus and community food web. The VISTA will work towards long term program sustainability while helping to reinforce the connection between our campus food systems, healthy eating and physical activity programs in our community partner sites through increased community and campus engagement. The VISTA will work through the Office of PittServes and our community partners to build a strong, connected corps of volunteers to support food access and recovery programs and deliver healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) programs throughout Allegheny County.

The VISTA's primary duty is as the connector between unused and donated food and campus and community members who are in need. The VISTA will recruit and assess volunteers for leadership and service roles and monitor their placement and training within community partner sites and campus organizations. The VISTA will build capacity assisting campus and community partners in developing and identifying resources for students and community members dealing with food insecurity; assessing and adapting an ongoing needs assessment of our clients and program processes; and work with our partners to deploy a health and wellness curriculum that can be implemented within the Pitt Pantry and in community partner sites.

The project's long-term outcome is that University students and local residents have increased access to and an understanding of healthy food options- and that they are empowered as active participants in a strong healthy food web that includes food access, nutrition education and waste minimization through food recovery.

**Institution Name:** West Chester University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Kate Colyer; [KColyer@wcupa.edu](mailto:KColyer@wcupa.edu)

**Year 2**

The West Chester University (WCU) 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. Through mutually beneficial partnerships with the Chester County Food Bank and Assisting the Community Together in Faith, this pantry serves the immediate hunger needs of university students struggling with financial hardships, while also providing access to additional resources such as toiletries, school supplies, professional attire, and winter attire. The VISTA member is responsible for developing guidelines and policies to structure the overall operation of the food pantry as well as identifying key resources to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the WCU Resource Pantry. These resources include managing a diverse team of student volunteers and Federal Work Study (FWS) students, grants and other funding opportunities, educational and marketing materials, and reciprocal relationships with community agencies.

**2017 - 2018 PACC \*VISTA HEALTHY FUTURES ABSTRACTS:  
Access to Health Care**

**Institution Name:** Northampton Community College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Maryann Haytmanek; [mhaytmanek@northampton.edu](mailto:mhaytmanek@northampton.edu)

## Year 1

Northampton Community College (NCC) is creating a program designed to increase awareness of and access to mental/behavioral health care for its students, especially those with no or inadequate health care. Because mental/behavioral coverage is one of the ten essential benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), increased numbers of people with coverage have begun to create a strain on the already burdened mental/behavioral health system. This seems to fly in the face of the stigma surrounding mental/behavioral health, however, statistics show that there is an increase in demand for services, and a stagnant number of providers. These research figures are borne out both locally and nationally.

Therefore, we propose a three-pronged approach to addressing the need for our low-income student population. First, working with NCC staff, the VISTA will help to develop and present an educational/awareness program to help alleviate that stigma. Second, the VISTA will work with NCC's counseling staff to update its directory of local providers and facilitate a series of ongoing networking sessions with local providers of mental/behavioral health services. Third, the VISTA will become conversant with local community need, and replicate NCC's program in the local community advocacy efforts to build stronger recognition and action.

**Institution Name:** Washington and Jefferson College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Justin Dandoy; [jdandoy@washjeff.edu](mailto:jdandoy@washjeff.edu)

## Year 3

The Volunteer Community Health Coach Program (VCHCP) is an in-home care program coordinated at Washington & Jefferson College (W&J). Community Health Coaches will be W&J student volunteers, trained and supported by Jefferson Hospital of the Allegheny Health Network 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. 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.

## 2017-2018 PACC\*VISTA ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ABSTRACTS

**Institution Name:** Community College of Allegheny College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Rick Adams; [radams@ccac.edu](mailto:radams@ccac.edu)

## Year 2

CCAC's VISTA project is designed to increase the college's ability to assist low-income students who receive federal work-study funds by increasing their earnings while simultaneously improving the lives of those living in poverty through the students' work-study positions that service the community. More specifically, the Year 1 VISTA has created a new America Reads program at CCAC's Allegheny Campus. America Reads is a Community Service Federal Work-Study program wherein work-study eligible college students tutor elementary students in literacy skills. This

national initiative was created by President Clinton's administration to address the fact that 40% of children were not reading at a basic reading level by the end of third grade. America Reads provides a community service to elementary students at no charge to the community, while increasing the financial stability for the college tutors through their work-study wages.

**Institution Name:** Drexel University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Ryan O'Connor; [rjo45@drexel.edu](mailto:rjo45@drexel.edu)

**Year 2**

UConnect is an information and referral service connecting Philadelphia residents to various resources and programs in the community. These resources fall into a range of sectors, including housing, employment, food and clothing, and public benefits, to name a few. We pair trained Drexel student volunteers, called Navigators, to work one-on-one with community members to conduct needs assessments, make goal plans, and devise steps to help members accomplish those goals. In some cases, the referral process can be completed within one appointment itself (e.g. when searching for food and clothing assistance programs). However, in some other sectors, such as housing and employment, our students work with members for several sessions at a stretch, searching for different apartments with them on housing program websites, applying for jobs with them online, or going through resumes line by line to make sure they reflect the members writing them as effectively and competitively as possible. It is the belief of UConnect that everyone should have access to the resources they need to accomplish their goals, and our mission as an organization is to help people obtain that access to those resources so that they may succeed in whichever path they choose. In addition to sharing resources with community members, UConnect facilitates the forming of bonds between students and members of the community, strengthening ties between Drexel and its surrounding neighborhoods.

**Institution Name:** Lock Haven University

**Host Site Supervisor:** Lauren Wright; [law3363@lhup.edu](mailto:law3363@lhup.edu)

**Year 2**

The Year 2 VISTA will continue the progress of combatting the cycle of poverty through identified affordable and safe housing option programs for vulnerable community members in need of assistance in Lycoming (small city) and Clinton Counties (rural). Funding has recently been granted to the region, and additional funding sources are being connected for supportive housing programs, but the challenge is connecting community member feedback with multiple agency collaboration to best solve and implement our current housing needs. The PACC VISTA's role is crucial in assisting our region with closing the gaps for community members to access affordable housing options, and to strengthen supportive housing programs. In Lycoming, the PACC\*VISTA would further support the progress of connecting landlords, agencies, and connecting resources to include supportive housing and long-term leasing programs for community members transitioning out of the prison system with re-entry housing options. In Clinton County, the data being gathered by the current VISTA is providing essential information about gaps in affordable housing, and a need for additional housing resources and programs. Clinton County ranks second highest (out of 15 counties) for per-capita unsheltered individuals, and community members have limited access to affordable housing programs, housing counseling and financial, and the county has a hidden homeless population adding to the multiple barriers and gaps to housing stability.

## 2017-2018 PACC\*VISTA VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES ABSTRACTS

**Institution Name:** Albright College

**Host Site Supervisor:** Tracy Gray Hayes; [tghayes@albright.edu](mailto:tghayes@albright.edu)

**Year 2**

“A call to action in the war on poverty” is how the editor of the Reading Eagle views Reading’s ranking among the poorest cities in the U.S. For three years, Reading has ranked as the seventh poorest city in the U.S. with a population of 65,000 or more. This year’s census reports that 59,383 living in poverty in Berks County, 59% of them were living in the city of Reading, a median household income was \$24,230. And where 38.8% of residents live below poverty.

Low skill, low pay and modest education inhibit residents from rising out of low-income status. As the community comes together to implement the necessary changes to fight poverty, members agree that changing the community’s competency through education is necessary. There are 29,256 Berks County veterans and families. As with the general population, those living in low income, high-poverty areas are less likely to further their education.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill offers higher education and training benefits to veterans, service members and families; there are additional education and training programs or increased benefits for active duty and reservist, their survivors and dependents. According to the 2010 National Survey of Veterans, Active Duty service members, demobilized National Guard & Reserve Members, family members and surviving spouses 72.8% are not aware of VA education or training benefits and/or do not know how to apply for benefits.

As a part of the Joining Forces Program, the AmeriCorps\*VISTA will continue to create a veteran-friendly educational model for institutions of higher education. The program will target military personnel and families in Reading, Berks County and surrounding counties to increase awareness of higher education and use of education as a path to economic stability; provide essential support services to ensure success; strengthen existing relationships in the community and develop new ones in support of veteran education.