



## VISTA MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Organization Name:**

City of Billings, Community Development Division

**VISTA Project Name:**

**Community Garden and Food Security Initiative**

### **Organization Description**

The City of Billings Community Development Division receives federal entitlement funding through the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership programs to carry out a variety of local community projects designed to increase access to housing, create a sustainable community and promote neighborhood revitalization. Community Development Division facilitates the initiatives of the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness to increase overall collaborative efforts and resources to assist the homeless in our community. The City of Billings Community Development Division formed the Billings Metro VISTA Project (MVP) in 2009 as a means of increasing efforts to mobilize local resources and give people in poverty the tools they need to help themselves.

### **VISTA Project Goal**

The goal of this project is to help people improve their lives and the community through establishing a network of community gardens and raising awareness of healthy local food systems. Community gardens and community food security programs are essential components in helping families and individuals save money, access affordable and nutritious food, learn valuable skills and build community. Through a community capacity-building approach, we will work in partnership with individuals, community groups, and agencies to help people gain the skills, resources and support needed to develop and sustain community gardens, garden based programming, and facilitate access to healthy food security initiatives.

### **Required Qualifications**

- Committed for one-year service to this National Service program
- Experience or desire to gain knowledge of-and assist in disseminating information about gardening, nutrition, sustainability, and community food systems.
- Possess basic understanding of strategic planning, community organization and community development/empowerment
- Ability to communicate effectively (both written and orally) and to work both independently and as part of a team
- Ability to establish and maintain effective, cooperative working relationships.
- Computer skills and knowledge of some software (WORD, Excel, Power Point, etc.)
- Ability to work with diverse generations, incomes and cultures

### ***Key Duties & Roles***

- Assess community needs.
- Research best practice models regarding community gardens and community food security programs.
- Extend outreach efforts to community groups, agencies, businesses and individuals.
- Coordinate efforts to establish a network of community gardens and improve access to community food initiatives.
- Encourage local partners and community members to share ideas, talents and resources.
- Facilitate community meetings, design charette processes, and informational/educational programming.
- Initiate development of garden based programming necessary to launch project.
- Develop and facilitate implementation of garden management plan.
- Implement community food security initiative based on community need.
- Document and evaluate programs.

### ***Key Objectives to be met through the fulfillment of the Key Duties and Roles***

The City of Billings Community Garden and Food Security Initiative will increase access to affordable and nutritious food for individuals and/or families of all social-economic backgrounds, with a focus on improving access for low-income individuals/families. The efforts of this VISTA member will result in at least two new services for a minimum of 25 new clients and generate 25 volunteers and financial resources totaling approximately \$5,000.

## AmeriCorps VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

<b>COMMUNITY GARDEN</b> <i>City of Billings</i>		
<b>VISTA Project:</b> Billings Metro Vista Project (Billings MVP)	<b>VISTA Member Name:</b> To be determined	
<b>Site Supervisor:</b> Lynda Woods	<b>Site Name / Physical Address:</b> 510 North Broadway, Billings, MT 59101	
<b>Project Period:</b> July 18, 2010 through July 30, 2011	<b>Quarter One:</b> July - September	<b>Quarter Three:</b> January - March
	<b>Quarter Two:</b> October - December	<b>Quarter Four:</b> April - June
<b>Assignment Area:</b> Community Garden	<b>Date:</b> March 8, 2010	
<b>VISTA Project Plan Goal One</b>		
<p>The goal of this project is to help people improve their lives and the community through gardening and healthy local food systems. Through a community capacity-building approach, we will work in partnership with individuals, community groups, and agencies to help people gain the skills, resources and support needed to develop and sustain community gardens, garden based programming, and facilitate access to healthy food security initiatives.</p>		
<b>VISTA Member Activities and Steps Checklist</b>		<b>Planned Period of Work</b>
<b>Activity One</b>	<b>Perform a needs assessment and establish collaboration with individuals, agencies and community groups.</b>	<b>Quarter One: July – Sept 2010</b>
<b>Step One</b>	Perform a needs assessment to identify needs in the community regarding community gardens and access to food security programs.	Q1
<b>Step Two</b>	Identify local partners, develop alliances and cultivate relationships with service agencies, church groups, community garden groups, extension agencies, and/or interested individuals and groups	Q1
<b>Step Three</b>	Facilitate the creation of a grassroots committee interested in launching a network of community gardens and improving access to community food initiatives.	Q1
<b>Step Four</b>	Working with the committee, set outcome-based goals and create a mission statement that drives and supports the project.	Q1
<b>Step Five</b>	Research best practices models for community gardens and community food security programs such as SHARE.	Q1
<b>Step Six</b>	Evaluate location options for community gardens. Evaluation to include ownership, past land uses, soil testing, and availability of water.	Q1
<b>Activity One Comments / Summary of Accomplishments:</b>		<b>Activity Completed</b>
<b>Activity Two</b>	<b>Develop resources for establishment of gardens and implementation of programming and for future sustainability.</b>	<b>Oct – Dec 2010</b>
<b>Step One</b>	Develop infrastructure and fiscal support for the project. Design and implement fundraising activities to ensure project sustainability.	Q2
<b>Step Two</b>	Facilitate informational meetings in the community to expand capacity and to	Q2

	stimulate interest in the community gardens and community food security network programs.	
<b>Step Three</b>	Secure location of demonstration garden site(s). Acquire necessary lease agreement.	Q2
<b>Step Four</b>	Begin design charrette process developing layout of bed areas, water/irrigation system, drainage, tool/equipment storage, disabled access, etc.	Q2-Q3
<b>Step Five</b>	Initiate development of programming necessary to launch project. Recruit local experts to do a series of presentation on community building, gardening techniques, production, nutrition, food systems, etc.	Q2
<b>Activity Two Comments/Summary of Accomplishments:</b>		<b>Activity Completed</b>
<b>Activity Three</b>	<b>Establish a demonstration garden(s) and a community food security initiative as catalysts for community engagement.</b>	<b>Jan – Mar 2011</b>
<b>Step One</b>	Develop garden management plan including rules, policies, insurance, resources, tool/machinery use, weed control, composting, signage, sources of technical assistance etc.	Q3
<b>Step Two</b>	Coordinate resources to prepare and develop the demonstration site. Recruit volunteers and engage local partners to implement garden design and layout through a series of work days. Establish sources for plants, tool and soil amendments.	Q3
<b>Step Three</b>	Advertise the garden and recruit gardeners. Hold participant information sessions for potential gardeners. Communicate rules and policies, garden missions, community work days and garden schedule.	Q3
<b>Step Four</b>	Implement community food security initiative based on best practices models and community needs for people of all socio-economic backgrounds.	Q3
<b>Activity Three Comments / Summary of Accomplishments:</b>		<b>Activity Completed</b>
<b>Activity Four</b>	<b>Develop and support the implementation of the demonstration garden(s) and encourage community involvement in food security initiatives.</b>	<b>Apr – Jun 2011</b>
<b>Step One</b>	Assist with the implementation of the garden plan, encourage gardeners, participate in planting, and work closely with local partners and volunteers to establish the demonstration garden(s).	Q4
<b>Step Two</b>	Develop media campaign to illuminate garden implementation. Hold public tours.	Q4
<b>Step Three</b>	Actively participate in monthly food distribution process.	Q4
<b>Step Four</b>	Explore options for garden-based job training and entrepreneurial initiatives	Q4
<b>Step Five</b>	Assess program implementation and make recommendations for improvements based on findings. Document garden progress and community activities. Recognize support from local officials, partners, organization, volunteers and businesses.	Q4
<b>Activity Four Comments / Summary of Accomplishments:</b>		<b>Activity Completed</b>

## VISTA Project Plan Goals

*For each of the following seven (7) performance milestones, please project a targeted number that the proposed VISTA Project is expected to reach.*

<b>Performance Milestones</b>	<b>Targeted Number</b>
The number of successful capacity building efforts that are a direct result of the implementation of a Community Strategic Plan.	<b>2</b>
Number of additional individuals / clients served through community sites.	<b>25</b>
Number of new / improved services provided to individuals / clients served through community sites.	<b>2</b>
Number of Community Volunteers that will be recruited and trained	<b>25</b>
Amount of Financial Resources that will be generated	<b>\$5,000</b>
Number of Community Assessments that will be completed	<b>2</b>
Number of Community groups/boards that will be developed and/or supported	<b>1</b>
Number of Strategic Plans that will be created and/or implemented	<b>1</b>