

## Understanding Capacity Building Activities

When considering the focus of your MACC AmeriCorps\*VISTA proposal, first consider how the proposed project will improve education outcomes for children and students who live in poverty and then consider the specific capacity-building activities the VISTA will undertake in support these education outcomes. The table below is helpful for understanding the distinction between capacity building activities and direct service.

Service Activity	Description	Examples of VISTA Activities
<b>Community Assessment</b>	Environmental scan of community context and need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Help design a community assessment plan</li> <li>– Help complete a survey of neighborhood or a report of need/recommendations based on findings</li> <li>– Help incorporate into program service delivery</li> <li>– Help update community assessment to monitor the most pressing community challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Community awareness and engagement</b>	Expand community knowledge and support of the program effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Help complete a public relations media plan</li> <li>– Help conduct community outreach or organizing meetings</li> <li>– Help develop presentations, newspaper articles and PSAs</li> </ul>
<b>Expand/strengthen partnerships/networks</b>	Initiate efforts with other organizations, for example, through applying jointly for funding, collaborating on programming or referrals, sharing staff and resources, developing training and materials that are shared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify potential collaborators and plan informational meetings</li> <li>– Help improve communication about community projects among partner organizations</li> <li>– Help establish intra-organization systems (e.g. linked database, common forms)</li> <li>– Help develop commitments among collaborators to the project and formalize partnerships, e.g. MOUs, budgets</li> </ul>
<b>Financial resources</b>	Develop/expand a diversified funding stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop fundraising plan</li> <li>– Recruit fundraising committee</li> <li>– Help establish fundraising unit</li> <li>– Identify resources for fundraising</li> <li>– Help develop capital campaign or approach donors</li> <li>– Draft and submit proposals</li> <li>– Plan ongoing fundraising</li> </ul>
<b>Material development</b>	Improvement or expansion of materials that support programming (e.g. toolkits, curricula, worksheets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Assess current materials</li> <li>– Develop or modify materials to strengthen programming</li> <li>– Develop and/or training materials</li> <li>– Develop manuals</li> <li>– Train staff in the use of newly developed materials</li> </ul>

<b>Outreach</b>	Participant recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop an outreach plan for target beneficiaries/ participants</li> <li>– Help ensure program is relevant to potential participants</li> <li>– Develop/improve presentations, communication tools and methods of conducting outreach to potential participants</li> </ul>
<b>Performance measurement</b>	Assessing results of program offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Help develop or improve a performance management system for the anti-poverty programming</li> <li>– Help train staff to use performance management system routinely to continually improve measures</li> <li>– Help staff use findings from performance measurement efforts to inform improvements of existing and new program offerings</li> </ul>
<b>Program development and delivery</b>	Improvement or expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Help expand existing program or develop new program design</li> <li>– Help implementation of new/expanded program</li> </ul>
<b>Technology use</b>	Develop systems for organizational effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop, pilot, revise database (volunteer, client) or internal or external knowledge management system</li> <li>– Develop social media tools</li> <li>– Pilot new tools</li> <li>– Train staff to do updates and maintain database or knowledge management system</li> <li>– Develop on-going staff/volunteer/community technology resource</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer recruitment and management system</b>	Establish or expand pool of volunteers to assist with service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Help organization and other stakeholders recognize need for and use of volunteers</li> <li>– Help clarify volunteer roles</li> <li>– Develop volunteer generation plan</li> <li>– Develop partnerships for recruiting volunteers</li> <li>– Develop volunteer unit, volunteer manual/training/curriculum</li> <li>– Recruit/manage volunteers</li> <li>– Develop/pilot volunteer training</li> <li>– Develop volunteer intake/tracking/recognition system</li> <li>– Train staff to manage volunteer plan</li> <li>– Resource plan for ongoing support of systems (recognition, training, supervision)</li> </ul>