

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium - Rural Energy Initiative VISTA - Year 1

Sponsoring Organization: Rural Alaska Community Action Program

Project Name: Rural Alaska Community Action Program

Project Number: 06VSPAK006

Project Period: 09/06/2015 - 09/03/2016

Site Name (if applicable): Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortuim

Focus Area(s)

Primary: Healthy Futures

Secondary: Economic Opportunity

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: With poverty levels of sometimes more than 40% of a rural AK community's population, many communities cannot afford access to clean water and sewer. This project will increase access to affordable sanitation services in rural AK communities with high rates of poverty. By identifying the problems and needs as well as how people understand their current sanitation service connections; the VISTA will build community capacity by developing training methods specifically for each of the four communities and empower each rural community to reduce costs of operating community. This project will reduce poverty in communities that are served by reducing cost of delivered water and sewer services through outreach and education.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: February '16 – June '16*)

A. Needs Assessment - Identify the needs in the four low-income rural Alaskan communities by assessing the existing home service connections' operations practices through a collection of on-site interviews and comparison with energy and water usage data.

Member Activity: 1. The VISTA will increase knowledge of Alaska Native culture, and cross cultural communication. Through orientation at ANTHC and the field site visits, the VISTA will collect stories of homeowners and other local stake holders to begin to build a working knowledge of piped water and sewer delivery systems installed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

Member Activity: 2. The VISTA will visit four communities that have recently connected piped water and sewer systems and conduct water and sewer use assessment with the homeowners hoping to identify each village's local barriers of operating the water and sewer service connections properly. This work includes photo documentation and interviews with homeowners. To prepare for field site visits, the VISTA will work with ANTHC staff to introduce the project and yourself to community leaders and develop site visit forms, and utility record release forms.

Member Activity: 3. The VISTA will collect quantitative water/sewer usage data from community water and sewer system utilities and quantitative energy usage data from Alaska Village Electrical Cooperative or other local utility providers to the problems of homeowners residing in the four low income Alaska communities.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: July, '16-October '16*)

B. Analyze data and develop best practices - Identify the need of the homeowner water and sewer operation and create a best practices training methods for each rural community by using qualitative and quantitative data collected from the communities.

Member Activity: 1. The VISTA will use the qualitative (site visit) and quantitative (utility) data to develop a report on how the system is functioning in rural households. This analysis will serve to identify the T&TA needs of the community members and create a baseline to compare against the education intervention for efficacy.

Member Activity: 2. The VISTA will share collected data with ANTHC engineers or other Subject Matter Experts (SME) to identify operational best practices and areas for improvement for each community surveyed. The Member will then compare operations practices in each community and work with SMEs to identify what conditions led to best practices or systems running sub-optimally.

Member Activity: 3. The VISTA will work with the ANTHC staff to develop best practices training method for each of the four communities to address the knowledge gap between the homeowners and their existing water and sewer operating system.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: November '16 – February '17*)

C. Develop training materials, pamphlets, curricula or other messaging instruments aimed at increasing homeowner, stakeholder and operator knowledge of their water/sewer system and increasing health benefits of the low income rural communities by having reliable access to clean water.

Member Activity: 1. The VISTA will use needs and best practices identified in the community surveys to develop educational materials, curricula, or trainings focused on the health benefits of improving water and sewer operations in the four rural communities.

Member Activity: 2. The VISTA will then work with water/sewer engineers to gauge the relevancy of the training specifically focusing on whether the proposed interventions will work in each community. The VISTA will also conduct assessments with community members testing if the training is relevant to them as individuals.

Member Activity: 3. Once the training assessments are complete, the VISTA will launch the community training initiative in all four communities, in order to best meet the needs of the audience this could be community wide training or one on one targeted homeowner training.

Member Activity: 4. The VISTA will conduct an evaluation to test the efficacy of the training modules through pre/post surveys, audience interviewing, or empirical (utility) data if available. The assessment will provide feedback on how the four communities increased their awareness of how to reduce energy usage through proper operation of the water operating system.

Member Activity: 4. Finally, the VISTA will ensure the sustainability of this project by analyzing the results of the assessment in a report to the ANTHC staff. The purpose of the report is to help them better serve the needs Alaska rural communities and to make Alaska Natives the healthiest people in the world.