



Center for Community Partnerships

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February 21, 2013

Mr. Brian O'Connell
Redevelopment Authority
City of Racine

Dear Brian:

I am writing to request cost share support in the amount of \$22,000 for the two AmeriCorps VISTA members who will work to address economic development in the City of Racine from August 16, 2013-August 15, 2014. Provided through the federal Office of Community and National Community Service, these VISTAs are part of a team of seven VISTAs who will be placed in nonprofit and government agencies in Racine in the second year of the UW-Parkside VISTA Project.

The VISTA project is a partnership among UW-Parkside, the City of Racine and the Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency (RKCAA). Beginning in August, 2012, seven VISTAs have been working with as many as fifteen Racine nonprofit organizations. In year one of the three year project, efforts complement work already being done to empower low income populations by engaging a group of VISTAs to work in support of individual nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and partnerships that address economic development/employment. Over three years, the work of the VISTAs will build and strengthen systems; expand and enhance programming; and create an infrastructure that will allow for the sustainability of effective programs and partnerships.

This year, city funds have supported the SEED/RUGN/HALO VISTA and the Launch Box VISTA. In the first six months of the project, the VISTAs have developed and implemented outreach strategies, including brochures, social media and web presence, for both SEED and Launch Box. The Launch Box VISTA has worked to assist small business owners in finding resources. The SEED/RUGN/HALO VISTA has been instrumental in developing partnerships to support the HALO commercial kitchen, providing education about growing food in local gardens and hoop houses to small businesses related to local healthy food production as well as in planning and promoting a major March event that will connect local farmers and businesses.

The VISTAs who will start in August will carry on the work with SEED and Launch Box. One new VISTA will be co-assigned to Launch Box and to the City Planning Department. His/her responsibilities will include:

1. Supporting Launch Box promotion and outreach
2. Planning and implementing events including such events as Fast Pitch entrepreneur competition, and Preservation Workshops
3. Serving as Commercial Corridors Outreach liaison
4. Assisting with Brownfields Planning and Redevelopment

A second VISTA member will build on relationships and plans developed by this year's VISTA for SEED/RUGN/HALO VISTA. This work will include:

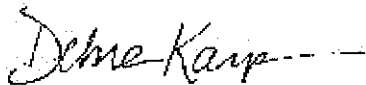
1. Assisting SEED to plan and implement an event that brings local farmers and producers together with restaurants, schools, food stores and other buyers of local, healthy food.
2. Bringing farmers and their value-added products made in the HALO Commercial Kitchen together with small business entrepreneurs who can make and sell their products
3. Working with local Urban Gardening initiatives to coordinate activities and apply for governmental and private grant applications to create jobs in the local food market
4. Providing education in growing food in the HALO hoop house and training in small business development and operations related to local healthy food production

We are looking forward to continuing our partnership into the second year of the UW-Parkside VISTA project. Although many of the nonprofit host agencies including Human Capital Development, RKCAA, and the Homeless Assistance Coalition have provided cost-share funding, city support has been instrumental in realizing this project. In the second year, we anticipate on-going cost share commitments from the VISTA sites; however, the \$22,000 in city funding remains a crucial piece of support. By providing \$22,000 to support two VISTAs, the City is actually receiving a value of \$44,354, which is the actual cost of two VISTA members.

We will be submitting our renewal to the Corporation for National and Community Service by April 30. We would appreciate knowing of your funding decision by then.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Debra Karp
Director of Community Engagement
University of Wisconsin-Parkside