

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

VISTA Member Job Title: Rollins College VISTA for Community Outreach & Collective Impact

Sponsoring Organization: University of Central Florida
Project Name: OSI AmeriCorps VISTA Project **Project**
Number: 3425872
Project Period: February 24, 2017 – February 23, 2018

Subsite Name (if applicable): Rollins College Center for Leadership & Community Engagement (CLCE)
Meredith Hein, Director
1000 Holt Avenue – 2789, Winter Park, FL 32789
Supervision responsibilities estimated at 10% of full-time effort

Focus Area(s)
Primary: Education
Secondary: Economic Opportunity

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: The mission of Rollins College’s Center for Leadership and Community Engagement (CLCE) is to foster, encourage, and promote student, faculty, and staff involvement within local and global communities. Through service-learning courses, community-based learning opportunities, leadership development, community service, and innovative programs, events, and resources, CLCE is deeply committed to fostering a lifelong commitment to social justice, civic engagement, and social responsibility within every member of the Rollins College community.

Within Central Florida, resources dedicated to educating children continue to decline. Orange County Public Schools continue to face budget cuts, which most frequently impact schools in the most historically underserved communities. In addition, a troubling report recently issued by the Central Florida Regional Commission on Homelessness found that 26,000 children within our tri-county area spent part of 2014 homeless. That’s one out of every 17 kids in Central Florida, beating the national average from the U.S. Department of Education, which estimates that one out of every 30 children is homeless, as reported by the Orlando Sentinel. Orange County reported serving more than 6,700 homeless students in 2014 — the highest homeless student population in the state.

The Rollins CLCE maintains partnerships with multiple local educational and community-based agencies and serves as a conduit for the Rollins community to work closely with the greater Central Florida community to begin to explore and address these issues of homelessness, education/college awareness, hunger, and poverty. However, the need to implement change and provide support through volunteers severely outweighs the opportunities we have been able to provide. The VISTA will play a critical role in CLCE’s efforts to increase the number of students, staff, and faculty working hand-in-hand with low-income communities in Central Florida through education, direct service, and advocacy.

Supporting CLCE’s new initiative to elevate collective impact within Central Florida, the VISTA will work alongside our community partners to build capacity and address the needs of our communities through the creation of deeper more meaningful, sustainable, community-driven solutions through a collaborative regional agenda. The VISTA will also be exposed to and immersed in hand-on experiences in theory and practice of both

academic and student affairs as it relates to fostering active citizenship in others. The VISTA will work to facilitate partnerships with various community organizations, assess the needs of these organizations, and serve as a liaison to pair these needs with various constituents both within the Rollins College community and through the development of larger community impact models.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: March 1st, 2017 – February 28th, 2018): Create a sustainable working model to enhance the newly re-envisioned Rollins Pathways to College program through increased Rollins student engagement and community partnerships. The Pathways program is designed to meet the needs of underserved K-12 students in the community who may not ordinarily be exposed to the idea of higher education. Using an awareness to preparedness model, the goal of the program is to help K-12 students feel empowered and realize that attending college is an achievable goal. More specifically, the hope is to teach younger students the importance of college and to prepare older students for their future matriculation to college.

Member Activities:

Step 1: The VISTA will expand and strengthen K-12 mentoring programs to increase student retention, development, and learning. Rollins has developed a model with a long-standing community partner, Fern Creek Elementary, which is a Title I K-5 public school with more than 80% of its students eligible for free or reduced lunch and with approximately 24% of its student body considered homeless. The VISTA will a) collaborate with administrators from other high need/Title I K-12 schools in Central Florida to offer mentor training sessions throughout the academic year; b) track trained and accepted mentors to hold them accountable for the time that they allot to the mentor experience; c) recruit new Rollins faculty, staff, and students to increase the opportunity for volunteer and on-site programming.

Step 2: The VISTA will strengthen and sustain the Winter Park 9th Grade Center Tutoring Program to increase student retention, development, and learning. Rollins students will tutor 9th grade students to ease the transition from middle school to high school. Tutors work with 9th graders to strengthen their learning strategies in algebra, English, social studies, and science. The VISTA will a) track trained and accepted tutors to better hold tutors accountable for the time that they allot to tutor; and b) recruit new Rollins faculty, staff, and students to increase the opportunity for volunteer and on-site programming.

Step 3: The VISTA will partner with local community agencies to connect Rollins students, faculty, and staff to mentor, tutor, and serve as role models for historically underserved children and youth within the local Central Florida community. Rollins has developed partnerships with organizations such as New Image Youth Center, Central Florida Boys & Girls Clubs, and Pace Center for Girls.

Step 4: The VISTA will identify and implement appropriate data collection tools to measure the impact of the *Pathways* program on Rollins students, faculty, and staff, and on K-12 students served in the community.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: March 1st, 2017 – February 28th, 2018):

Work with identified community partners to develop a strategic plan for collective impact, in collaboration with Rollins faculty, staff, students, alumni, local community

leaders, business owners, community members, government officials, etc.

Member Activities:

Step 1: The VISTA will create opportunities for shared spaces and facilitate conversations on collective impact within the local community.

Step 2: The VISTA will identify and implement appropriate data collection tools to collect, track, and share information regarding complex cultural and social issues facing the Central Florida community.

Step 3: The VISTA will work with CLCE staff to support the development of a collective impact infrastructure to create a big picture, goal-oriented action plan that establishes specific strategies, stakeholder commitments, and ongoing accountability mechanisms.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: March 1st, 2017 – February 28th, 2018*):

Serve as the Rollins College liaison for Central Florida community non-profits that focus on impact areas related to poverty, hunger, homelessness, affordable housing, refugee support, human rights, and access to education in order to build capacity and develop mutually beneficial partnerships.

Member Activities:

Step 1: The VISTA will serve as the volunteer manager for Rollins College's community members' service, involvement, and education opportunities with Habitat for Humanity of Winter Park and Maitland.

Step 2: The VISTA will coordinate Rollins College's efforts in the annual Feed the Need campaign, which is an unprecedented communitywide effort to raise funds, in-kind donations and awareness for Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida.

Step 3: The VISTA will serve as the chair of the Rollins Refugees in Residence Program in which Rollins College serves as transitional housing for a refugee family on campus, coordinating volunteer involvement, monitoring needs assessment and asset acquisition, as well as improving programmatic effectiveness to support and educate on issues surrounding the low-income refugee immigrant community in partnership with Catholic Charities of Central Florida.

Step 4: The VISTA will conduct community partner needs' assessments and audits of community engagement impact through Community Engagement courses, service-learning experiences, civic engagement, and community-based research opportunities, programming, and events that will directly involve members of the Rollins community with pressing issues in the local and global community.

Step 5: The VISTA will leverage partnerships with not-for-profits and government organizations to generate new opportunities to engage Rollins College students, faculty, and staff

Step 6: The VISTA will identify and implement appropriate data collection methods to better monitor the needs and impacts of Rollins College's strategic partnerships.