



AmeriCorps VISTA

Spokane County United Way manages the selection and support of AmeriCorps VISTA projects and members in Spokane County in coordination with AmeriCorps. Currently we host a VISTA Leader, 14 projects and the Summer Associates program in our community. By supporting VISTA projects, we strengthen local programs that align with our vision for a more educated, healthier and prosperous community.

Benefits of AmeriCorps VISTA

For Individuals

In their year of service VISTA members:

- Serve full-time to build capacity in local organizations
- Increase marketable skills and experience
- Earn a valuable education award
- Join peer learning community with other AmeriCorps members in our program

For Local Nonprofits

- Develop new programs to respond to emerging community needs
- Improve capacity of existing programs
- Increase access to financial resources and program volunteers
- Receive assistance (FTE position) for 3 years to address defined needs
- Participate in professional development opportunities with other AmeriCorps project supervisors

For Our Community

- Connects people and programs to each other
- Focuses resources on the most marginalized
- Creates visible and long-lasting change

Completed Project Highlights

A VISTA project helped launch **The Kitchen at Second Harvest**, which gives people the tools to take their health into their own hands through nutrition education and hands-on cooking lessons. Volunteers lead delivery of cooking, nutrition, food budgeting and food safety and sanitation messages with community members living with low incomes or experiencing food insecurity. Last year, volunteers donated 1,400 hours to Nutrition Education.

The free tax site at **Spokane County United Way** was started by a VISTA member in 2011. It now uses almost 100 community volunteers to prepare taxes for more than 800 low-income households annually, returning over \$1.2 million to these households in refunds and credits.



AmeriCorps



Spokane County United Way

The foundation for **Volunteer Spokane**, an online portal for finding and connecting people to volunteer opportunities, started as a VISTA project. In 2018, there were 2,522 responses to opportunities posted by over 350 nonprofits on volunteerspokane.org.

Continuing and Upcoming Projects for August 2021

* denotes new projects beginning in August 2021

Education

- ***Excelerate Success, VISTA Summer Associates:*** VISTA Summer Associates increase capacity at summer meal sites by coordinating drop-in programs for youth including STEM, literacy, art and recreation activities. In summer 2020, Summer Associates will serve at Spokane County Library District, West Central Community Center, The ZoNE Project, and Spokane Parks & Recreation to fight summer learning loss and improve access to meals and enrichment activities for low-income youth in Spokane.
- ***Lumen High School:*** creating resources to support post-secondary success of Lumen High School students.
- ****Odyssey Youth Movement:*** creating a network of student clubs and trusted adults in Spokane schools that will support safe and affirming spaces and experiences for LGBTQ+ youth throughout their school year.
- ****Spokane County United Way:*** developing an equitable out-of-school-time program model for youth in Spokane's West Central neighborhood

Financial Stability

- ***Spokane Tribe of Indians:*** developing an action plan to improve basic infrastructure on the Spokane Indian Reservation.
- ***Whitworth University's Dornsife Center for Community Engagement:*** assessing housing needs and supporting development of affordable housing in West Central Spokane.
- ***Spokane Resource Center:*** identifying and developing partnerships and resources to support financial literacy programming for Spokane residents.
- ****Mujeres in Action:*** developing 24/7 Spanish-language hotline for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to remove barriers to accessing care and support.

Health

- ***Gonzaga University, Center for Community Engagement:*** identifying and developing partnerships to strengthen community and improve resident health in Northeast Spokane.
- ***Spokane Public Defender's Office:*** building a case management program to support clients at Spokane Municipal Community Court.