

Community Change Specialist II

Join a project that values the resilience and capacity of people with low-income to build skills and social connections to move out of poverty and that engages the middle class and community leaders in this effort. If chosen you will be part of the six person VISTA team that will work with agency leadership and staff to carry out a variety of activities to end hunger and poverty in our community. We are committed to making your VISTA experience meaningful, challenging and enjoyable.

Thirty-seven million Americans live below the official poverty line. Millions more struggle each month to pay for basic necessities or run out of savings when they lose their job or have a health emergency. Poverty imposes enormous costs on society in the lost potential of children, lower worker productivity and earnings, poor health, increased crime, and broken neighborhoods. We believe that the responsibility to end poverty lies with all sectors and social classes.

We use the concepts found in Bridges Out of Poverty presented in partnership with publisher aha! Process, Inc and DeVol & Associates, LLC. These concepts train people of all classes, races, sectors and political persuasions in the work of ending poverty and building communities. Bridges provides an accurate understanding of poverty and class creating a way for relationships of mutual trust, respect and understanding to form between people of all income levels.

The Bridges curriculum and principles is used within our Circles initiative. The Circles Utah initiative at CASFB is part of a national initiative (Circles USA). We work to move families who come from intergenerational poverty, out of poverty. Circles is a progressive model grounded in research that suggests low-income families must have strong social capital and connections within their communities in order to improve their economic situation. The program works with families living in poverty to build skills and social connections that benefit both those living in poverty as well as those in the middle and wealthy classes.

There are two Bridges Out of Poverty Community Change VISTA positions. The VISTAs will be involved in moving CASFB's service area, specifically, the Provo/Orem Utah area, toward being a Bridges community. A Bridges community is one where every resident understands the impact and issues of poverty and becomes engaged in their own circles of influence to bring about community change to address those issues.

CASFB regularly conducts 'poverty simulations'. These events are designed to educate everyone, from policy makers and community leaders to everyday citizens about the day to day realities of life with a shortage of resources and an abundance of stress. During the 3 hour simulations participants role-play the lives of low-income families. Although the event uses 'play' money and other props, fictional scenarios and time limits, poverty simulations are not a game. They are a simulation tool that enables participants to view poverty from different angles in an experiential setting, giving participants new tools and understanding for impacting change in the community.

The second Bridges Community Change VISTA will build Bridges partnerships in the community. The purpose of this VISTA is to work at changing institutions in the community so there is better understanding and more opportunities for those living in poverty.

Job Description:

1. Work with Utah Valley University (UVU) to assist them in retaining low-income students by:
 - a. Providing information and advocating UVU's student retention program to include Bridges.

- b. Making available Bridges Out of Poverty to students in poverty and working to have Bridges curriculum accredited for a course.
 - c. Creating and advocating a Bridges Out of Poverty course for those who are not in poverty.
 - d. Assist in teaching Bridges Out of Poverty to students, faculty and administration.
2. Create a partnership with the Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce
 - a. Research and identify businesses that would benefit from Bridges training.
 - b. Work to create a job pipeline for Circle leaders.
3. Cities and Counties
 - a. Assist in educating local law enforcement about the hidden rules of poverty.
 - b. Work with existing community neighborhood groups to teach Bridges.
4. Work with the following groups to teach them how poverty impacts them and how to communicate and interact with those in poverty.
 - a. Attorneys
 - b. Courts
 - c. Other service agencies and non-profits
 - d. Healthcare institutions

Qualifications

- Bachelors Degree.
- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Proven leadership ability.
- Ability to work within a team and also independently.
- Ability to build relationships with diverse populations.
- Experience writing newsletters and creating marketing publications.
- Strong organizational, project management and event planning skills.
- Demonstrated ability for public speaking.
- Knowledge of and experience in service-learning, volunteer management and national service preferred.
- Ability to manage short and long-term deadlines.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Strong computer knowledge and skills.
- An interest in working within a social service organization that has a focus on capacity building and anti-poverty efforts.
- An interest in ending poverty and/or experience with poverty.
- Highly organized, dedicated, responsible, team-oriented, and flexible.
- Ability to work independently and to connect tasks to broader project/organizational goals.
- Commitment to the agency's mission and the purposes of the VISTA project.
- Able to learn quickly.
- Able to work evenings and weekends as needed.

Additional information relevant to these positions can be found at:

<http://www.circlesusa.org/>

<http://www.utahvalley.com/>

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ Americorps/ Americorps-vista>

<http://www.bridgesoutofpoverty.com/>