



Building A Brighter Future For Yuma

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City of Yuma, Arizona – AmeriCorps VISTA

Program Year - 2015-2016

Yuma, Arizona

Federal Legislative District(s) 7

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional District(s): 7

State Legislative District(s): 4 & 13

Service Area by County/City:

Yuma/Yuma

Project Federal Share:

Project Local Match:

Community Volunteers Recruited:

Volunteer Hours Served:

Value of Volunteer Hours:

***[2013 Independent Sector Rate](#) for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$22.52**

Community Need

The City of Yuma (City) and community partners continue to work hard at improving the quality of life of our citizens. Due to the past economic downturn, on-going State funding cuts, medical and retirement increases, the City was looking for additional resources to help move organizational goals forward. As a result in 2014 the City began its partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA.

The City has five initiatives. The objective of these initiatives is to strengthen our community by creating new jobs, expanding economic growth, assisting small business entrepreneurs, and creating healthy futures. Below are the projects being supported by the AmeriCorps VISTA program.

- Anti-Meth Campaign
- Mesa Heights Strategic Plan and Neighborhood Revitalization
- Recycling Program Expansion and K-12 Education Strategies
- Small Business Start-Up and Support
- Low-Income Water and Housing Assistance Program

Program Activities

This City is moving into its second year partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA. The AmeriCorps VISTA program has provided value and is a good opportunity for our organization. Each VISTA member will be assigned to a specific project. VISTA member will work with City staff and community stakeholders to help build project capacity and to support each project objective.

Anti-Meth Campaign: Develop and deploy an effective campaign that will provide continual education and awareness to families, adults and children regarding the illegal purchase and use of street drugs and the many consequences of such use, including death.

Mesa Heights Strategic Plan and Neighborhood Revitalization: Develop a new Strategic Plan and Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area for the Mesa Heights Neighborhood with focus to strategically address housing conditions, crime, infrastructure and economic development.

Small Business Start-Up and Support Program: Help develop, organize and promote a program to assist Small Business entrepreneurs, especially 8A set asides with women or minority owned businesses, with the tools and information needed to open, market, and sustain a Small Business.

Recycling Expansion and K-1 Education Strategies: Develop and implement a bi-lingual (English/Spanish) K-12 Recycling Education and Outreach Program that at a minimum focuses on proper recycling methods, how to use community shared recycling containers and the environmental advantages of recycling.

Low-Income Water and Housing Assistance Program: In conjunction with support from Western Arizona Council of Government (WACOG) staff, help develop and deploy a program within our community that will assist residents who are facing water utility disconnects due to non-payment or who are facing housing condemnation due to health and safety reasons. Additionally, brochures in English and Spanish will be developed for distribution to residents regarding this program and where support and assistance can be obtained.

Building A Brighter Future For Yuma - continued

The primary areas affected by our projects will be within the City limits. However, the outcome of our stated initiatives will benefit Yuma County and other surrounding communities to a large degree as these issues do not follow artificial manmade borders. Each project is unique and is expected to achieve many different goals. However, the overall goal of each project is to enhance the quality of life of Yuma citizens, in particular low-income individuals and families, by creating an environment that supports their well-being and provides for a safe, healthy community and home environment. We expect to achieve these overall goals with the help of VISTA personnel and by providing new educational opportunities, engaging neighborhoods and businesses and through the creation of new jobs.

National Priority Area and Program Performance Goals

Economic Opportunity

- Develop a Small Business Start-Up and Support Program to assist a minimum of 5 Small Business entrepreneurs, especially 8A set asides with women or minority owned businesses.
- Develop a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan for the Mesa Heights neighborhood that will address housing conditions, infrastructure, economic development and crime. Revitalize a minimum of 5 homes over the course of the project.

Education and Healthy Futures

- Develop an Anti-Meth Campaign to educate citizens and strengthen public awareness about the dangers of street drug use and to help combat illegal sale and use of street drugs in our community. Target audience is 10 community groups and 250 individuals.

Program Impact

AmeriCorps VISTA member Jeff Oates, serving with the City of Yuma, Arizona on the Mayor's United for Yuma Anti-Meth Campaign initiative, recently coordinated and co-hosted the Mayor's first community coalition meeting in which more than 50 people from over 35 different organizations and agencies attended. The diverse group included multiple elected officials throughout Yuma County, tribal nation council representatives, federal, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, medical and treatment specialists, and, non-profit groups and clubs including Disabled American Veterans, United Way of Yuma County, the Salvation Army and the Boys & Girls Club of America. Also in attendance were the local media, private businesses, faith-based organizations, anti-drug coalitions and other City and County leaders and stakeholders.

Since Jeff's arrival in April, he also worked with City staff and a local 'recovered' meth addict (Steve), to develop a "Meth in Yuma" video which is now available on YouTube. The video is a personal testimonial of Steve's drug addiction, the dangers he suffered, and how he conquered his long-term addiction. Additionally, Jeff helped write and secure a grant from the Tohono O'odham Nation in the amount of \$15,220.28. The funding will be used to develop the Anti-Meth Campaign website, educational brochures and other outreach efforts for this project. Jeff's presence at the City of Yuma is an excellent example of how the AmeriCorps VISTA program can help build organizational capacity and support community efforts.



Mayor Nicholls and VISTA Anti-Meth Campaign Community Meeting
November 2015

Program and community impacts for the City's five projects cannot be fully measured as some program initiatives have not yet started, some are pending VISTA replacement, and some require multi-year development.

Building A Brighter Future For Yuma - continued

- Develop a sustainable Recycling Expansion and K-1 Education Strategies Program in English and Spanish to further teacher and student knowledge regarding proper recycling methods and to help divert municipal recyclables from the landfill. Target audience is a minimum of 200 students.
- Develop a Low-Income Water and Housing Assistance program that will assist residents who are facing water utility disconnects due to non-payment or who are facing housing condemnation due to health and safety reasons. Expected outreach is a minimum of 250 individuals.

Mission

The City of Yuma government exists to provide a forum for public discussion and decision-making. We are committed to deliver quality public services and to advance the social and economic well-being of our present and future citizens.

Vision

Building on our heritage, our vision for Yuma is a community that is livable and competitive.

History

The City of Yuma government has existed for more than 100 years. The organizations primary purpose is to protect, serve and support the citizens and visitors of Yuma. The AmeriCorps VISTA program is a great connection to our City government as we both strive to ensure the safety, well-being, equal opportunity, and quality of life for all.

Partnerships

Every project has or will involve community partnerships. Currently, partnerships with residents, non-profits, law enforcement agencies, economic development agencies, schools, low-income families, churches, hospitals, drug support groups, boards and commissions, elected officials, local businesses and other local governments, have been engaged and involved with our projects to-date. It is anticipated additional partnerships will develop and grow as each project continues to move forward.

Other

Yuma is an amazing place to live, to work, raise a family, start a business, and more. Our citizens have a history of coming together for the City they love and work hard to make our community stronger. Yuma is unique and we want to make sure everyone else knows it. With support from AmeriCorps VISTA staff and our community, Yuma will continue to move forward in a productive and positive manner.



Anti-Meth Campaign Meeting - Local Officials and Leaders