



**BILLINGS METRO VISTA PROJECT**  
**AmeriCorps VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)**



Organization Name:	<b>Tumbleweed Program in partnership with the City of Billings</b>		
VISTA Project Name:	<b>Youth Count!</b>		
<b>VISTA Project:</b> Billings Metro Vista Project (Billings MVP)	<b>VISTA Member Name(s):</b> Joshua Downes & Chelsia Davis		
<b>Site Supervisor:</b> Sheri Boelter, Executive Director City Liaison: Lynda Woods, Community Development	<b>Site Physical Address:</b> 505 North 24 <sup>th</sup> Street Billings, MT 59101		
<b>Project Period:</b> January 2013 through January 2014	<b>Pre-Service Orientation Dates:</b> January 22-24, 2013 <b>Location:</b> Helena, Montana		
<b>Goal 1 Focus Area:</b> Economic Opportunity: Housing <b>Focus Area / Service Category:</b> Economic Opportunity: Homeless Services (605)	<b>Last Revision:</b> October 3, 2012 Brenda Beckett, Community Dev. Manager		
<b>VAD-RELATED TRAVEL</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Travel is <b>required</b> for this position.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel is <b>not required</b> for this position.
<b>If travel is required:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	A company vehicle will be provided for VISTA use. No other personal vehicle is required for this position.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A company vehicle will be provided for VISTA use. However, a personal vehicle will also be required to implement this project.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public transportation will be sufficient for this service assignment.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	A privately-owned vehicle is required and mileage will be reimbursed.		

**VISTA Project Goal**

There is no accurate picture of the number, characteristics and needs of homeless youth in Billings, Montana. Each January, communities across the country conduct a census, Point-In-Time (PIT) count of their homeless populations. Data on unaccompanied homeless youth is currently unavailable, as a national standard for counting this cohort has not yet been established. Available PIT data vastly under-represents the number of youth experiencing homelessness and services required to impact poverty conditions.

The overall intent of the **Youth Count!** project is to prepare and facilitate a count to enumerate and assess youth experiencing homelessness in the Billings area. Building this capacity will enable policymakers and service providers to plan, fund and shape services that accurately reflect the needs of homeless youth in the community to ultimately reduce their number for years into the future.

**VISTA Member Activities and Steps Checklist**

Activity One	<b><i>Garner knowledge about current homeless initiatives and accomplishments and conduct research on national best practices for counting homeless youth.</i></b>	Planned Period of Work
Step One	Review historical information on the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness and community efforts to prevent and end homelessness by reviewing print documents, electronic files, <i>Welcome Home Billings</i> , Two-Year Action Plans FY 09-11, Two-Year Action Plans FY 11-13 and accomplishments.	Q1
Step Two	Research available materials on the <a href="#">National Alliance to End Homelessness website</a> , specific to counting youth.	Q1
Step Three	Research national Point-In-Time procedures for counting the overall homeless population.	Q1

	Review the January 2013 PIT survey instrument, paying particular attention to the construct of survey questions and resultant data available through the Montana Continuum of Care website.	
<b>Step Four</b>	Identify key stakeholders in the community that should be involved to develop, plan for and implement <b>Youth Count!</b> Include youth experiencing homelessness (or youth who have formerly experienced homelessness), Billings Public Schools Homeless Liaison, City staff, members of the faith community, members of the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness and the Billings Area Resource Network.	Q1
<b>Step Five</b>	Create a small <b>Youth Count!</b> advisory group including key members of the community to guide and assist with the project. Create goals, guidelines and a meeting schedule to create structure for the advisory group.	Q1
<b>Step Six</b>	Determine requirements for carrying out human subject surveys with homeless youth (Institutional Review Board protocol). Follow up to ensure compliance with requirements if necessary.	Q1 - Q2
<b>Activity Two</b>	<b><i>Create the Youth Count! survey instrument.</i></b>	<b>Planned Period of Work</b>
<b>Step One</b>	Conduct research on other youth count surveys utilized for this cohort and make efforts to communicate with individuals with experience in conducting youth count surveys for feedback on instruments used.	Q1-Q2
<b>Step Two</b>	Utilize <b>Youth Count!</b> advisory group to generate ideas on the survey instrument components. Bring examples and feedback on utilization to the group.	Q1-Q2
<b>Step Three</b>	Consider questions involving demographics, other characteristics, where they typically reside at night, use of government services, social support networks and causes of the current homeless episode.	Q1-Q2
<b>Step Four</b>	Consult with youth receiving services at homeless service agencies and youth advocates to identify key areas and times to find youth (when / where) who do not reside in homeless shelter programs (malls, parks, downtown, encampments, abandoned buildings, etc.).	Q1-Q2
<b>Activity Three</b>	<b><i>Plan, organize and conduct summer / fall Youth Count! via the creation of a comprehensive Strategic Plan.</i></b>	<b>Planned Period of Work</b>
<b>Step One</b>	Create a Strategic Plan to conduct <b>Youth Count!</b> including goals, strategies, tasks, responsible parties, timelines and outcomes.	Q2-Q3
<b>Step Two</b>	Ensure the Strategic Plan includes: - Fund development to secure survey participant gifts. - Fund development to accommodate financial incentives for youth participating in survey administration. - An option for youth to mail in the survey after independent completion. - Identification of the best time of day to conduct the counts. - Length of time the survey will be conducted (two days to two weeks).	Q2-Q3
<b>Step Three</b>	Ensure inclusion of the following cohorts: - Literally homeless; unsheltered. - Sheltered youth (Youth Services Center and other organizations). - Precariously housed: couch-surfing; living in vehicles; and residing in places unfit for human habitation.	Q2-Q3
<b>Step Four</b>	Develop a Volunteer Recruitment and Training Plan for survey administration. Garner supervisor approval. Ensure inclusion of youth volunteers to assist with survey completion.	Q2-Q3
<b>Step Five</b>	Implement the Volunteer Recruitment and Training Plan to ensure all volunteers are well prepared to administer the survey.	Q2-Q3

<b>Step Six</b>	Facilitate the project to carry out survey administration.	
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Activity Four	<b><i>Create a Youth Count! Report.</i></b>	Planned Period of Work
<b>Step One</b>	Collate data results and complete analysis and findings following survey implementation.	Q3-Q4
<b>Step Two</b>	Complete a gap analysis to determine and prioritize unmet service needs.	Q3-Q4
<b>Step Three</b>	Create drafted report illustrating methodology, involved partners, Volunteer Recruitment and Training Plan, gap analysis and prioritized needs, all other data results and policy recommendations.	Q3-Q4
<b>Step Four</b>	Review drafted report with supervisor and advisory group to garner feedback for improvements.	Q3-Q4
<b>Step Five</b>	Refine report utilizing feedback (as many times as necessary) and finalize.	Q3-Q4
Activity Five	<b><i>Share report results and begin planning for service improvements.</i></b>	Planned Period of Work
<b>Step One</b>	Create a presentation illustrating the Youth Count! Report. Garner supervisor approval.	Q4
<b>Step Two</b>	Present data findings to the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness.	Q4
<b>Step Three</b>	Create media pieces utilizing findings and policy recommendations to build awareness.	Q4
<b>Step Four</b>	Assist in the development and facilitation of service improvements.	Q4

## **VISTA Project Plan Goals**

*For each of the following seven (7) performance milestones, please project a targeted number that the proposed VISTA Project is expected to reach.*

Performance Milestones	Targeted Number	Please Specify
<b># Capacity-Building Efforts:</b> Must be a direct result of the implementation of a specific community strategic plan.	<b>1</b>	Youth Count!
<b>Additional # of Clients / Individuals Served:</b> Over and above your current service level. How many people will be impacted by a project the member developed?	<b>50</b>	Youth surveyed
<b># of New / Improved Services to be Developed:</b> Service must serve clients, not organization staff.	<b>1</b>	New / enhanced service as a result of survey findings
<b># New Community Volunteers:</b> Indicate the number of new volunteers the member will recruit and train.	<b>25</b>	Community volunteers to participate
<b>Amount of Financial Resources:</b> Specify dollar amount, in-kind and cash the member is expected to generate.	<b>\$500</b>	Resources to be generated to support survey
<b># of Community Assessments:</b> Focused effort to gather data, can have multiple parts. One issue = one assessment.	<b>1</b>	Youth Count! Report
<b># of Community Groups / Boards Developed and / or Supported:</b> Count / list any groups or boards the member is expected to develop, support or report to.	<b>1</b>	Tumbleweed Program; Mayor's Committee on Homelessness
<b># of Strategic Plans Developed / Implemented:</b> Plans to direct a major overall effort or initiative.	<b>2</b>	Volunteer Recruitment & Management Plan Youth Count! Strategic Implementation Plan

