

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title: Maniilaq - Sustainability VISTA - Year 1

Sponsoring Organization: Rural Alaska Community Action Program

Project Name: Rural Alaska Community Action Program

Project Number: 06VSPAK006

Project Period: 09/06/2015 - 09/03/2016

Site Name (if applicable): Maniilaq Association

Focus Area(s)

Primary: Healthy Futures

Secondary:

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: Maniilaq manages social and health services for about 8,000 people with the NW Arctic Borough and the village of Point Hope. 7 out of 12 member communities have 20% or more of their populations are residing below the poverty level. Maniilaq understands the importance of expanding access to health services to a rural service population and directing services to those who need it most. The VISTA will help coordinate local efforts to improve access to nutritious food and connect economically disadvantaged people to health services that will establish healthy initiatives. The project will alleviate poverty in the northwest arctic by connecting low income people to health services across the region.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: Ongoing*)

Promote awareness about Maniilaq's Traditional Food Initiative to local, state and tribal (nationwide) audiences. Through the work under the Traditional Foods Initiative, the VISTA will help improve access to safe traditional foods at Maniilaq's Long Term Care Center in Kotzebue, and families from the surrounding low income communities. As a positive externality, the VISTA's work will promote a model for other institutions across Alaska and the Nation to improve access to safe nutritious/local traditional foods.

Member Activity: Develop a thorough understanding of The Siģuaq through training and hands-on experience working with the Hunter Support Program Manager at The Siģuaq. The VISTA will assist with the monthly and annual operational reports of The Siģuaq, including presentations to the Maniilaq Board of Directors and local partners, when requested.

Member Activity: Meet with and interview key stakeholders to establish a historical context surrounding the challenges, successes, and future direction of the use of traditional foods at long-term care centers in Alaska. The VISTA will prepare a brief which can be used to describe the past/present/future of the Traditional Foods Movement in Alaska.

Member Activity: Work with the Hunter Support Program Manager to document the traditional harvesting of substance resources; and develop case-studies of The Siģuaq model using various media outlets (print, video, presentations, social media, radio, etc). More specifically, work with ANTHC's "Store Outside Your Door" to produce a video case study of The Siģuaq model.

Member Activity: Participate in the Seal Oil Taskforce and assist the Chair with meeting coordination, facilitation and resource distribution. The VISTA will partake in Maniilaq's safe seal oil processing research and development projects and provide feedback back to the Seal Oil Taskforce.

Member Activity: The VISTA will help develop an evaluation plan to assess the overall health impact of The Siģuaq on the elders well-being at Maniilaq's long-term care center. This plan will help determine the effectiveness of The Siģuaq across all dimensions of health and will establish a timeline for implementation.

Member Activity: Lead the planning and implementation of a Traditional Foods Summit in Kotzebue, Alaska. The VISTA will assemble a planning team and seek grant funding to be used for travel scholarships for tribal leaders and stakeholders to attend. The VISTA will work with local stakeholders, tribal leaders, health professionals, Elders, regulators, university researchers, traditional foods stakeholders and the Northwest Alaskan communities to garner community support and participation for this event.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: Ongoing)

Develop at least two Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety plans for new traditional food items desired by the Long Term Care Center. These HACCP plans will allow The Siģuaq to serve Maniilaq Association's resident Elders more of the culturally appropriate and nutritious foods they have enjoyed harvesting and consuming throughout their lives, but have been prevented from consuming as residents of an assisted living facility.

Member Activity: The VISTA will review existing traditional food safety resources and complete Alaska Food Handler training, the National Environmental Health Association's HACCP Basics for Processors and Manufacturers, and/or other appropriate food safety training.

Member Activity: The VISTA will partner with regulatory agencies, research institutions, and food safety experts to accurately assess and categorize the health risks of wild fish and game species and traditional food products.

Member Activity: The VISTA will complete at least two HACCP plans that use industry best practices for handling traditional food items desired by the Long Term Care Center. The VISTA will coordinate with ADEC for the approval of the HACCP plans; and provide the necessary training to food handlers at The Siģuaq and Long-term Care Center.

Member Activity: With the acquired traditional food safety knowledge, the VISTA will disseminate information through the development of community education resources. These resources will target low income communities in Northwest Alaska who rely heavily on traditional foods as their main source of sustenance.

Objective of the Assignment (Period of Performance: Ongoing)

Assist and facilitate the expansion of ANTHC's Healthy Homes Consultation Study in the Maniilaq Service Region. This project aims to educate, motivate, and empower children's caregivers to improve environmental behaviors and indoor air quality in the home environment.

Member Activity: The VISTA will review and complete the National Center for Healthy Housing's self-study Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners Course.

Member Activity: The VISTA will serve as Maniilaq's liaison between enrolled homeowners, housing authorities, and ANTHC; to promote and ensure the success of ANTHC Healthy Homes Study in the Maniilaq Service Region. Upon request, the VISTA could travel to communities to assist ANTHC representatives to engage communities and/or homes in the proposed intervention and reinforce healthy home environmental behaviors.

Member Activity: The VISTA will monitor and report on the healthy homes study's activities in the Maniilaq Service Region. This information will help determine the feasibility of long-term healthy home intervention methods and provide recommendations for the development of an environmental health consultation program at Maniilaq Association.

Member Activity: Based on the recommendations, the VISTA will create a sustainability plan that will allow for transfer of knowledge of the year's efforts to build the capacity of Maniilaq Association to better serve their communities through a health homes consultation program.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: Ongoing*)

Assist the Supervisor in working to develop an infrastructure to expand Maniilaq's other health initiatives such as Naturally Occurring Asbestos Medical Surveillance Program and Rabies Prevention program with an overarching objective to educate the communities about these health initiatives and ensure that the appropriate health services are provided to those in low incomes communities who are negatively affected by these issues.

Member Activity: The VISTA will work with the Supervisor to research, review, and update current local, state and federal strategies taken in addressing Naturally Occurring Asbestos and rural Rabies Prevention.

Member Activity: The VISTA will seek to develop partnerships local, state and federal stakeholders such as Center for Asbestos Related Diseases, Alaska Department of Public Health, CDC/ATSDR, and communities impacted by increase of rabies incidents as well as those impacted by naturally occurring asbestos in the Maniilaq Service Region. The VISTA will assist in taking steps to address these Initiatives such as convening a panel of internal and external experts to develop a written plan for the development of a sustainable naturally occurring asbestos medical surveillance program; or developing a rabies communication policy to guide how the hospital processes animal bites to ensure correct patient care. This will help Maniilaq understand the issue better and make steps to better serve all the Northwest Alaska communities.

Member Activity: Work with the supervisor to develop a health care worker educational component to ensure doctors, nurses, radiologists, community health aides and other appropriate health care workers understand the rabies preventions and medical surveillance screening efforts. VISTA will then develop project outreach materials to raise awareness of these programs and ensure that impacted community residents better understand the risks, potential health impacts, and where to go for medical screening if needed.

Member Activity: Work with the supervisor to strengthen Maniilaq's efforts to empower the communities to lead safe and healthy lives that will help Maniilaq understand the issue better and make steps to better serve all the Northwest Alaska communities.