DOI/VISTAs
SERVING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES
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*Cover photo shows Bighorn Canyon National Park in Fort Smith, Montana*
What is a VISTA?

1. VISTA Volunteers are full time, college educated individuals committing a year of their lives to live and work in their host community.

2. VISTAs write grants, recruit and train volunteers, research and interpret data, build partnerships, coordinate fundraisers, plan festivals, organize tree plantings, develop programs with schools, create outdoor classrooms, present at professional conferences, and more.

3. VISTAs receive a monthly living stipend, health insurance, a $5,645 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, and, following their term, a year of non-competitive eligibility for federal jobs.

4. During fiscal year 2014, the team placed 16 VISTAs serving tribal communities with DOI Bureaus including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE).

Summary

DOI/VISTAs serving in tribal communities develop sustainable programs that create economic opportunities through employment training, internships, and community resource development. Additionally, VISTAs initiate programs that foster healthy futures through food sovereignty initiatives, nutritional education, and the development of community gardens on tribal lands. The three VISTA teams with VISTAs serving tribal communities are administered through the Bureaus of the U.S. Department of Interior. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Tribal Colleges and Universities Land Grant Development Initiative assists the Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded Tribal Colleges and Universities Team. All three teams focus on capacity building in underserved communities nationwide. VISTA projects specifically address the sustainability of healthy futures, education and professional development, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship in underserved tribal communities nationwide.
IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:
VISTAs WORKING WITH TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

For the 16 VISTAs Serving from June 2014 – June 2015

- 362 Acres of public land cleaned and improved
- 4,475 Volunteer hours recruited
- $236,555 Grant funding received
- 4,867 Youth engaged in an educational setting
1 Healthy Futures
College of Menominee Nation—Keshena, Wisconsin

The goal of the DOI/VISTA was to focus on the need for local and healthy food within the Menominee Nation. Between October 2014 and June 2015 the DOI/VISTA:

- Wrote 3 grant proposals, collecting $25,000
- Started the campus’s first garden
- Started a local farmers’ market
- Created gardening education programs with a demonstration garden and multiple greenhouse projects

Community members attend a local farmer’s market organized by the DOI/VISTA

Supervisor: Brian Kowalkowski
Email: bkowalkowski@menominee.edu

2 Healthy Futures
United Tribes Technical College—Bismarck, North Dakota
BIA

The DOI/VISTA worked to increase organizational capacity and sustainability within the community. In just six months the DOI/VISTA:

- Initiated an online grocery ordering system
- Collected over 500 pounds of litter
- Engaged over 200 youth in an educational setting
- Formed 6 partnerships with community organizations

A group of students visit the UTTC Kid’s Garden where they are educated on growing healthy food

Supervisor: Pat Aune
Email: paune@uttc.edu

3 Healthy Futures
Hashiditó—Eastern Navajo Nation
OSMRE

The project goal was to increase access to healthy foods and reduce disease. In the first six months the DOI/VISTA:

- Harvested 310 pounds of food through home gardening programs
- Engaged 25 youth in food and gardening programs
- Provided health and wellness services to 10 individuals
- Partnered with a local program to provide Navajo families prescriptions and vouchers to redeem for fresh fruits and vegetables

AmeriCorps volunteers working on a community garden in the Eastern Navajo Nation

Supervisor: Watson Castillo
Email: ojosix@hotmail.com
Healthy Futures
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College—Hayward, Wisconsin
BIA

The goal of the DOI/VISTA was to educate community members on food sovereignty and its connection to economic development. In the first nine months the DOI/VISTA:

- Secured $132,000 of funding for the community college's Sustainable Agriculture Research Station
- Harvested 1,800 pounds of food
- Served 56 youth in an educational setting

Education and Professional Development
Saguaro National Park—Tucson, Arizona
NPS

The project goal was to develop programs to allow for students in underserved communities to enter into higher level service learning and volunteer opportunities. Between October 2014 and June 2015 the DOI/VISTA:

- Received a $45,000 grant for the Next Generation Ranger Corps that she helped develop
- Mentored 2 interns in the program
- Organized an educational program for 51 local ninth grade students with NPS biologists

The DOI/VISTA assists a volunteer with picking beans in a community garden organized for the area’s residents

Supervisor: Amber Marlow
Email: marlowa@lco.edu

Education and Professional Development
Badlands National Park—Interior, South Dakota
NPS

The DOI/VISTA worked to educate youth and college students in an attempt to fill several entry level positions at White River Visitors' Center. In the last nine months the DOI/VISTA:

- Trained five community members in job and employment skills
- Served 25 youth in an education setting
- Received the Ticket to Ride grant to transport youth interns from the Pine Ridge Reservation to the park
- Organized a volunteer work day which collected 500 pounds of litter

The DOI/VISTA leads Ranger Corps members on a hike through the Park

Supervisor: Laura Law
Email: laura_law@nps.gov

The DOI/VISTA instructs a youth intern on how to assist visitors and answer questions.

Supervisor: Julie Johndreau
Email: julie_johndreau@nps.gov
Education and Professional Development
Institute of American Indian Arts—Santa Fe, New Mexico
BIA

The project goal was to identify the areas of education and training needs that will enhance the abilities of the Native citizens. In the short three months since beginning this site, the DOI/VISTA:

- Worked to develop a survey to assess the needs of the community
- Aided in the coordination and administration of an assessment across the 22 Indian Pueblos and Tribes served by IAIA
- Assisted with the final analysis of data provided by the survey the VISTA created and distributed

Volunteers working together during the SIPI Restoration Workday to restore a site that will be used for future projects

Education and Professional Development
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute—Albuquerque, New Mexico
BIA

The project goal was to develop a youth engagement and partnership program within Glacier National Park. In the last six months the DOI/VISTA:

- Initiated professional development projects such as resume consultations, grant writing workshops, and speakers discussing employment opportunities
- Trained 63 individuals in the community in job or employment skills
- Recruited 50 volunteers to help clean a 4-acre plot of land used for experiential learning purposes

Cultural Preservation
Glacier National Park—West Glacier, Montana
NPS

The project goal was to develop a survey to assess the needs of the community. In the last six months the DOI/VISTA:

- Developed a cultural interpretation class at Blackfeet Community College
- Served 300 youth in an educational setting
- Created 5 projects related to the celebration and preservation of local history, culture, and art
10 Cultural Preservation
Leech Lake Tribal College—Cass Lake, Minnesota
BIA

The project goal was to provide educational opportunities and sustainable health and wellness programs to LLTC students. For the last nine months the DOI/VISTA:

- Implemented course work for 5 classes at the college
- Created 8 projects related to celebration and preservation of the local and regional history, culture, and art
- Prepared a successful proposal for the LLTC Wellness Center to become the only rural, tribal, community college in the nation to be selected by a Partnership for a Healthier America’s “Healthier Campus Initiative.”

Supervisor: Matt Hanson
Email: matt.hanson@LLTC.edu

11 Cultural Preservation
Ilisagvik College—Barrow, Alaska
BIA

The goal of the DOI/VISTA was to promote healthy futures through culturally relevant meals. From November 2014 to June 2015 the DOI/VISTA:

- Organized 5 events celebrating tribal culture, reaching 85 youth
- Provided cooking classes and health information to more than 1200 community members
- Provided free traditionally grown herbs and greens to more than 150 in the community

Supervisor: Diana Solenberger
Email: diana.solenberger@ilisagvik.edu

12 Cultural Preservation
Big Horn Canyon National Park—Fort Smith, Montana
NPS

The project goal was to bring Native American youth into State and National parks and create projects promoting education and health. Between October 2014 and June 2015 the DOI/VISTA:

- Obtained $3,334 in donated resources
- Recruited 25 longstanding community volunteers
- Developed educational speaker’s series in three schools across the reservation, reconnecting youth with their cultural history
- Implemented a career fair and resume workshop at a local tribal college

Supervisor: Christy Fleming
Email: christy_fleming@nps.gov
13 Environmental Stewardship
War in the Pacific National Historical Park—
Hagåtña, Guam
NPS

The project goal was to engage underserved youth in outdoor education programs. In six months the DOI/VISTA:

- Organized a service-learning project with a local high school during, collecting 2000 pounds of waste around Ponte Plateau World War II site
- Initiated fieldtrips and outreach presentations to engage youth
- Joined the Guam Department of Education’s Service Learning Committee and contributed to the 3-day island-wide Service Learning Summit

Supervisor: Rose Manibusan
Email: rose_manibusan@nps.gov

14 Environmental Stewardship
Aztec Ruins National Monument —
Aztec, New Mexico
NPS

The goal of the DOI/VISTA was to educate local youth on the environment and the Monument. Between October 2014 and June 2015, the DOI/VISTA:

- Surveyed 300 teachers on which educational needs the Monument could address
- Organized an education session and field-trip for 160 local high school students
- Hosted traditional Pueblo game nights at an elementary school, reaching 130 youth
- Reached over 1300 community residents and solicited 1200 volunteer hours

Supervisor: Danielle York
Email: Danielle_york@nps.gov

15 Environmental Stewardship
Hands on the Land Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument—
Albuquerque, New Mexico
BLM

The goal of the DOI/VISTA was to create programs to foster outdoor education and promote citizen ownership of public lands. In the first six months the DOI/VISTA:

- Recruited the Monument’s first group of interpretive guides to provide educational tours
- Secured 2 grants allowing more underserved students to visit the Monument
- Established the Monument’s first Teacher on Public Lands who will work 160 hours developing curriculum

Members of the American Hiking Society visit KKTR and take an interest in the natural rock formations

Supervisor: Jackie Leyba
Email: jleyba@blm.gov
For More Information Visit:
www.doivista.org  -  www.osmrevista.org

Seth Burdette
DOI/VISTA Team Coordinator
seth@conservationlegacy.org
(304) 252-4848 Ext. 303

T Allan Comp, Ph.D.
DOI/VISTA Team Program Officer
tcomp@osmre.gov

Amy Showalter
OSMRE/VISTA Team Coordinator
ashowalter@conservationlegacy.org
(304) 252-4848 Ext. 310