



## Position Description: AmeriCorps VISTA Bethesda, Maryland

### Overview:

Hunger Free America is seeking two full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members to work with the Montgomery County Food Council in Montgomery County, Maryland to implement anti-hunger strategies. VISTA members support community leaders in identifying food-resource barriers and developing comprehensive end hunger plans.

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) is an independent nonprofit that serves as the primary convener of businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in Montgomery County, connecting 2,000+ partners in education, advocacy, and collaboration building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the 100,000+ residents at risk for hunger, expanding food education for residents, supporting County farms and food/beverage businesses, and addressing the environmental impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling. MCFC currently leads community coordination and connection efforts to feed the County's food insecure residents during COVID-19. MCFC creates community education tools, processes to collect food system data, and collaborative stakeholder networks to increase knowledge about hunger, environmental sustainability, supporting local businesses, and food education in our County.

MCFC leads community initiatives through its four working groups: Food Economy (connecting farmers, food producers, manufacturers and retailers); Food Education (improving the nutritional knowledge of residents through educational opportunities); Environmental Impact (protecting and improving the local environmental resources of Montgomery County related to agriculture and food); and Food Recovery and Access or "FRAWG" (supporting the increased recovery of, equitable access to and advocacy for more healthful food for County residents).

MCFC, through FRAWG and its other working groups and along with its community partners, forms a broad-based, multi-sector coalition committed to creating a hunger free community in Montgomery County. Hunger free community initiatives are formed around the belief that to end hunger at the community level, a broad range of community stakeholders must unite behind a common vision and strategy. In the Spring of 2017, the Montgomery County Executive, in partnership with the Food Council, released the Five Year Food Security Strategic Plan - a roadmap of research, findings and recommendations to be implemented by County agencies, food assistance providers, nonprofits and multiservice organizations to reduce the number of food insecure people in the County. The FSP's overarching goal is to build a Montgomery County in which all people have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food, with dignity. Recent Food

Council-led initiatives include establishing a SNAP Outreach Program, convening a Food Security Community Advisory Board, launching an online searchable database of local food assistance providers, and facilitating a monthly working group that serves as a community of practice for over 120 food security organizations.

In the coming year, goals include expanding access to culturally appropriate foods, implementing nutrition standards for food assistance, increasing availability of food education opportunities for all residents, and partnering with healthcare providers and other community organizations to screen residents for food insecurity and refer them to available resources.

**Position Descriptions:**

The Food Security Community Hunger Free America AmeriCorps VISTA will be responsible for:

- Coordinating community engagement in Montgomery County Food Council programs, including stakeholder outreach, capacity building, and engaging a variety of community members and non-profit organizations.
- Facilitating networking, information sharing, and overall organization for the Food Council's Food Recovery and Access Working Group.
- Establishing partnerships with local nonprofit and government programs and coordinating training opportunities for food security community organizations to assist in the implementation of the County's Food Security Plan.
- Connecting with partner organizations, community leaders, residents experiencing food insecurity, stakeholders and other established entities in the community, and conducting outreach to raise the visibility of hunger in our community.
- Helping to develop and implement a sustainable fundraising plan to increase funds and in-kind support for the continued work of the Food Security Plan.
- Preparing and distributing materials; including but not limited to: resource guides, press releases, video clips, social media content, and public documentation.

The Food Access Initiatives Hunger Free America AmeriCorps VISTA will be responsible for:

- Coordinate community and government agency partner engagement in the Benefits Outreach and Enrollment subcommittee, which convenes SNAP and nutrition benefit leaders monthly in a community of practice, including meeting facilitation, administration, and group communications.
- Provide guidance and support to members of the Food Council's Food Security Community Advisory Board (FSCAB). The FSCAB is a Food Council initiative that provides resources and training opportunities to residents who have experienced food insecurity, in order to support their leadership as navigators and advocates in their communities. Meet with FSCAB members regarding Advocacy Plan development and implementation, and coordinate quarterly meeting logistics, including speakers and member stipends.
- Provide capacity building support to the Food Council's SNAP Outreach program, including creating and distributing educational materials, identifying and connecting with new and prospective community outreach partners, and provide administrative and logistical support to program operations.
- Research and share information on benefits-related policy and legislative matters.
- Help to develop and implement a sustainable fundraising plan to increase funds and in-kind support for the continued work of the FSCAB and SNAP Outreach Programs.

**Time Commitment:**

This is a one year, full-time position with a **start date of June 6, 2022.**

This is a stipend volunteer position with AmeriCorps-Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

Learn more at <https://www.vistacampus.gov/>.

**Position Benefits:**

For more information on benefits provided through AmeriCorps VISTA, visit:

<https://www.vistacampus.gov/in-service/benefits-service>

**Qualifications:**

- Associate's Degree or equivalent experience.
- Strong, self-motivated interest in working on domestic nutrition, hunger and food security issues, and ability to proactively pursue projects.
- Excellent planning, organizational and time management skills, and ability to effectively and regularly communicate progress to supervisors.
- Willingness to travel around the County to attend meetings, events or conferences, in accordance with local public health guidelines. Reliable access to a car is preferred.
- Ability to occasionally flex time to attend evening or weekend events.
- Demonstrated experience in community engagement preferred.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, and comfort in reaching out to people by phone or in person.
- Experience with and enthusiasm for public speaking and giving presentations.
- Good working knowledge of Microsoft Office programs.

To apply, please email a cover letter and resume to [jobs@mocofoodcouncil.org](mailto:jobs@mocofoodcouncil.org) with the subject line "VISTA Application." **Application deadline is April 25, 2022.** Cover letters should include a summary of the candidate's experience and interest in community engagement and food systems issues. No phone calls please.

The Food Council is committed to building equity in a food system that has, since its very beginning, established and reinforced structural racism and social injustice. We strive to create and strengthen pathways for those who have been marginalized by our food system to direct the policies and programs that will build a more equitable system. The MCFC prioritizes the expertise and leadership of people of color in facilitating systems change and building a team that reflects the diverse population of Montgomery County's communities. We actively encourage and seek applications from Black, Indigenous, and people of color and members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. We also encourage applications from people with these identities or who are members of other marginalized communities. The MCFC is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is firmly committed to a policy against discrimination based on age, sex, race, religious creed, sexual orientation, disability or ethnic or national origin.

Learn more about the Montgomery County Food Council at: [www.mocofoodcouncil.org](http://www.mocofoodcouncil.org).