

The Community Engagement Institute's
AmeriCorps Newsletter
2023 Recap



AmeriCorps Quarterly Training on November 3, 2023

Our Program

The AmeriCorps Program with the Community Engagement Institute (CEI) at Wichita State University offers capacity building services and direct volunteer opportunities to members of the community interested in combating poverty in the Wichita area.

This year, a total of 11 AmeriCorps VISTAs and 34 AmeriCorps State members served at eight different sites. Members served more than 28,025 hours.

From VISTA to VISTA Supervisor



Amanda dropping off donations.

Amanda completed her service this year as an **AmeriCorps VISTA** with ICT Food Rescue. During her service, she went on a Research and Development trip with the executive director to Detroit, ME, where she worked with Metro Food Rescue and Make Food Not Waste to gain perspective on strategies for launching the Upcycle Kitchen in Wichita, KS. The Upcycle Kitchen is a new program that ICT Food Rescue launched this summer to upcycle rescued food into nutritious meals to serve other nonprofits. Two new VISTAs, Tyler and Amanda, began serving in the Upcycle Kitchen in August 2023, with Amanda serving as their supervisor.



Development through Sedgwick County Health Department



Estella at the Sedgwick Co. Health Department office.

Estella serves as an **AmeriCorps State** member at the Sedgwick County Health Department. She connects community members with government resources, attends events, and collaborates with high schools to network and introduce students to a career as a Community Health Worker. Estella engages in Community Health Improvement Plan work groups, including Healthcare Access, Food Access, and Mental Health Access. The Healthcare Access workgroup works with community partners to provide information on language access plans, which provide translation services for patients whose primary language is not English.



VISTA Builds Community Health



Tiffanie outside of The Center.

Tiffanie serves as an **AmeriCorps VISTA** member with The Center. On Saturday, February 25, 2023, her site became a destination for health lovers. The "*It's A Heart Thing: Food for Life*" event was held with over 18 vendors offering advice to attendees eager to learn about their heart health, and included participation from organizations such as HealthCore, Rainbows United, Girl's on the Run, Juice 101, and Everygy. News of the event spread by social media and word of mouth with over 50 people in attendance. The event was also broadcasted in an interview with Dr. Michalle Vann, where The Center received a surprise \$1,200 donation from KWCH and the Davaughn James Law Firm.



New AmeriCorps Partnership with Kansas African American Museum



Aaron poses inside TKAAM.

Aaron serves with The Kansas African American Museum (TKAAM), a new **AmeriCorps State** site. Recently, he assisted with making a documentary of TKAAM’s annual Trail Blazers event honoring trail blazers from Kansas. This event highlighted Black Kansans who paved the way in their specialties and made a positive impact on both Kansas and the United States. Aaron stated: “I am eager to learn and get this information back out into my community. I like to be able to shine a light on these trail blazers from Kansas”. The documentary was a success and is not the only documentary TKAAM has produced. Aaron assisted with the behind the scenes of filming, editing, and gathering information on the trail blazers for this documentary.



The Kansas African American Museum

Economic Impact in McPherson



Jackie at an event for STEP MC.

Jackie Gilby came to STEP MC as an **AmeriCorps VISTA** member in 2022. Having been previously homeless she had life experience to bring to the table. Within the last year, Jackie has taken reign of the community from within her position. She has joined forces with most of the local nonprofits to create a resource collective that will serve McPherson County as a whole. Thus far she has raised over \$25,000 in donations and sponsorship for STEP MC, managed 150 hours of volunteer service hours from within the community, and saved over \$5,000 in managing in-kind donations made toward STEP MC for their participants.



AmeriCorps Scholarships

For the 2023-24 academic year, WSU provided \$1,000 scholarships to AmeriCorps undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at WSU.

- ★ **Aaron Neal (Undergraduate)**
AmeriCorps State, 2023-Present
Kansas African American Museum
- ★ **Noah Sanford (Undergraduate)**
AmeriCorps State, 2023-Present
Legacy GardenWorks
- ★ **Lauren Scislawski (Graduate)**
AmeriCorps State, 2022-2023
Legacy GardenWorks
- ★ **Jennifer Segovia (Undergraduate)**
AmeriCorps State, 2023-Present
Children 1st
- ★ **Angela Stegman (Graduate)**
AmeriCorps VISTA, 2023-Present
Prevention Initiatives
- ★ **Quinn Torgerson (Undergraduate)**
AmeriCorps State, 2023-Present
Legacy GardenWorks

MLK Jr. Service Day

AmeriCorps members provided community service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. VISTA members volunteered with United Way of the Plains' GIV Warehouse for their service day project. For more information about the GIV Warehouse, visit: Give Items of Value Program (unitedwayplains.org).

AmeriCorps members with Children First hosted a program on MLK Jr. Day with their student Ambassadors. Danny Barrera, former VISTA Leader, shared leadership skills and then the students prepared backpacks for the unhoused in Wichita.



VISTA members at United Way's GIV Warehouse.

Opportunities

Are you or someone you know interested in serving with AmeriCorps or VISTA? To be eligible for service, you must be at least 18 years of age, and a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. The following openings are available now. *They are listed as PT for part-time and FT for full-time.*

Family Promise:

Graduate Leadership Position, PT or FT

Urban League: Outreach Coordinator, PT or FT

Legacy Ministries: Youth Development, PT

Midwest Battle Buddies: Business Liaison, PT

Center for Public Health Initiatives:

Public Health, PT

NAMI: Outreach Coordinator, PT

KanCare Ombudsman:

Resource Development Position, PT

Holy Family Medical: Community Outreach, FT

Passageways: Outreach Coordinator, FT

To apply, visit americorps.gov and search "WSU". For more information, contact:

Angela Gaughan, Program Manager
angela.gaughan@wichita.edu
(316) 570-1309