

WHAT IS COMMUNITY NEED?

As an AmeriCorps program, Volunteer Maryland (VM) Service Sites must meet critical community needs within six focus areas, as determined by the Corporation for National and Community Service. If your volunteer program(s) does not fit into one of these focus areas, please discuss your proposal with Volunteer Maryland staff prior to submission.

As part of the Service Site application, potential VM Service Sites are asked to select a focus area and articulate the critical need in the community or client population that will be addressed by direct service volunteers during the VM partnership year. To do so, agencies may summarize or quote relevant data or other research to support the community need statement. Abbreviated example community need statements are provided below.

Focus Area: Disaster Services

- I. Increase capacity of communities to serve vulnerable populations in the event of a disaster
- II. Improve communities in disaster-affected areas

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY NEED STATEMENT – DISASTER SERVICES

Anne Arundel County is home to more than 10 percent of Maryland's citizens (population 510,000). Located between both the Chesapeake Bay and Washington, DC, the County faces a variety of environmental and other threats to its residents each year. However, a recent survey by Johns Hopkins University (July 2005) revealed that most Maryland citizens are unaware of the necessary safety precautions to prepare for and respond to an environmental or other emergency. At the County Office of Emergency Management, direct service volunteers will serve on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). (Sources: US Census and JHU Press)

Focus Area: Economic Opportunity

- I. Financial Literacy:
 - a. Financial resources referral services
 - b. Financial literacy services
 - c. Financial services-related assistance
- II. Housing:
 - a. Housing development and repair
 - b. Housing placement services
 - c. Housing services to homeless persons
- III. Employment:
 - a. Job training / skills development and job placement referral services
 - b. Job training and skill development services
 - c. Job placement services

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY NEED STATEMENT – ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

According to a report issued by the Working Poor Families Project in 2008 titled, “Still Working Hard, Still Falling Short,” 16% of working families in Maryland are low-income. As a result, even in a wealthy state such as Maryland, there are over 100,000 families struggling to make ends meet. The Baltimore CASH Campaign mission is to increase financial security for low-income Baltimore families by promoting the Earned Income Tax Credit, providing free tax preparation services, and connecting individuals to year-round financial management services and programs. Direct service volunteers will serve as Tax Volunteers, Financial Resource Volunteers, CASH Coaches, FAFSA Preparers, Credit Report Educators, and Money Power Day Volunteers.

Focus Area: Education

- I. School Readiness (pre-K) – Gains in school readiness for economically disadvantaged, pre-K children in the areas of:
 - a. Social and emotional development
 - b. Literacy skills
 - c. Numeracy (math) skills
- II. Succeeding in K-12 – Improve graduation rates and grade-level performance for K-12 students:
 - a. Improved attendance, academic performance, or engagement
 - b. Decreased substance abuse, arrest, or gang involvement
 - c. Decreased disciplinary incidents
 - d. Graduated high school / obtained GED
 - e. Completed course(s) related to subject matter tutored or taught
- III. Post-Secondary Education Support Services:
 - a. Applied and enrolled in post-secondary institution
 - b. Receive post-secondary vocational or technical certificate
 - c. Continue to another year of post-secondary education

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY NEED STATEMENT - EDUCATION

High Point is the most diverse high school in Maryland with over 66 countries and 44 languages represented in the student body. According to internal evaluations, 64 percent of tenth graders and 22 percent of ninth graders were reading at a fifth grade level or below when they approached VM for a partnership. Direct service volunteers will provide tutoring and helped students complete homework, prepare for functional tests, and increase academic skills. (Source: 2003 School Improvement Team Report)

Focus Area: Environmental Stewardship

- I. Improve Energy Efficiency of Structures
 - a. In economically disadvantaged communities, construct new energy-efficient units or retrofit existing units
 - b. Create energy savings by above actions
- II. Improve Lands or Habitats

- a. Acres of parks/public lands improved
- b. Miles of trails/rivers improved/created
- c. Tons of materials collected for recycling from waste stream
- III. Improving Awareness of Environmental Stewardship Issues
 - a. Contact/engage individuals in outreach campaign on energy/environmental issues
 - b. Specific action or behavioral change
- IV. Formal Green Job Training – Economically disadvantaged and/or employed individuals complete training in:
 - a. Green jobs
 - b. Sustainable energy
 - c. Natural resources
 - d. Sustainable agriculture
 - e. Other energy-efficient/environmentally-conscious practices

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY NEED STATEMENT – ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

A report by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation demonstrated that Wicomico County leads all other Maryland counties in the percentage of farmland lost to development between 1982 and 1997 and the Maryland Department of Planning reported that Dorchester and Caroline counties join Wicomico as threatened in land protection. The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance works to protect watershed in these three counties and Delaware. Direct service volunteers will work with the Nanticoke Creekwatchers Water Monitoring Program to monitor water quality and conduct stream and watershed clean-ups.

Focus Area: Healthy Futures

- I. Homebound Seniors and Disabled Individuals
 - a. Independent Living
 - b. Companionship Services
 - c. Respite Service
- II. Reducing Childhood Obesity
 - a. Child and Youth Physical Education
 - b. Child and Youth Nutrition
 - c. Food Access: support, distribution, education
- III. Preventative and Primary Health Care Access
 - a. Connect uninsured or economically disadvantaged individuals to health care services or programs

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY NEED STATEMENT – HEALTHY FUTURES

Homelessness causes health problems, exacerbates illness, and complicates treatment and access to care. According to the Maryland Department of Human Resources, 15,624 individuals were sheltered in Baltimore in 2008. Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) provides health-related services, education, and advocacy to reduce the incidence and burdens of homelessness. Thirty-five percent of HCH clients have a serious mental illness and 50 percent are diagnosed with an addiction. HCH Direct service volunteers will remind clients of upcoming appointments, greet

and escort clients to their appointments, and provide interpretation services to clients at the Saturday clinic. Trained health care volunteers will help provide services to clients.

Focus Area: Veterans

- I. Increase economic, education, and health opportunities for veterans and military families by leveraging national service

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY NEED STATEMENT – VETERANS

According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, approximately 107,000 veterans are homeless each day. An additional 1.5 million veterans are considered at risk of homelessness as a result of “poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.” Direct service volunteers will conduct street outreach; offer support services, housing referrals, and life skills workshops at the Drop-in Center; and provide transportation to and from medical appointments. (Source: <http://www.nchv.org/background.cfm>)