Community Engagement

Course Syllabus

Course Overview

Community Engagement is a seven-week facilitated online course that will support VISTAs in strengthening their community engagement skills for their year of service and beyond. The course design includes assignments in which VISTAs build community engagement skills while receiving personalized feedback from the facilitator. This approach allows VISTAs to gain experience in the course that they can then apply at their sites (and in any future service or workplace projects) when appropriate.

Prerequisites

Students must be officially sworn-in as VISTA members and have completed Virtual Member Orientation.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course you will be able to:
- Articulate how community engagement ensures project effectiveness and supports VISTA's goals of capacity building and sustainability.
- Recognize culturally responsive approaches to engaging your community.
- Identify skills and attitudes needed to enter a community respectfully.
- Unearth your organization's history of community partnerships and relationships.
- Create an inventory or map of community assets.
- Conduct a needs assessment that engages stakeholders who can help define your community need.
- Determine which community engagement strategies best address the current needs of the community.
- Create a community engagement plan.
- Assess your progress and make adjustments to your plan.

Course Features

Course weeks: The course features seven weeks of content, including a course introduction and conclusion. You will complete various types of graded activities, including:

- *Quizzes:* These open-book quizzes will assess your comprehension of the course readings and materials.

- *Assignments:* These assignments allow you to apply the course materials and readings to a specific community engagement task.
- *Introduction and Concluding Assignments:* These assignments allow you to explore community engagement and capacity building as you enter and exit the course.
- *Forum Questions*: Each week there are questions designed to invite lively discussion.

Course-at-a-Glance

Week 1: What is Community Engagement?
Readings:
- Course Syllabus
- Course Activity Checklist
- An Introduction to Community Engagement (CDC/CTSAC)
  - Healing Of the Canoe
  - Can Do Houston
- Cultural Competence and Community Engagement (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs)

Assignments:
- 1-A: Create Your Profile, Watch Facilitator Video and Introduce Yourself
- 1-B: Introduction to Community Engagement *Quiz*
- 1-C: Identifying Community Driven Solutions *Assignment*
- 1-D: Building Cultural Competence *Forum*

Week 2: Get to Know the Project and Community You're Serving
Readings:
- Respectful Community Entry (Education Northwest and Bank Street College)

Assignments:
- 2-A: Respectful Community Entry *Quiz*
- 2-B: Learning From the Past, Planning for the Future *Assignment*
- 2-C: Anticipating Challenges *Forum*

Week 3: Mapping Your Community's Strength and Assets
Readings:
- Asset Mapping 101 (Center for Community Health and Development)

Assignments:
- 3-A: What Are Community Assets? *Quiz*
- 3-B: Identifying Assets in Your Community *Assignment*
- 3-C: Asset Mapping and My VAD *Forum*

Week 4: Assessing Your Community's Needs
Readings:

- Needs Assessment: Frequently Asked Questions (Watkins, West Meiers, Visser)
- Asking Why: The Root Causes or 5 Whys (Community Action Association of Pennsylvania)
- Types of Stakeholders (Center for Community Health and Development)

Videos:
- 5 Steps to Assessing Community Needs (Education Northwest)
- Demystifying Stakeholder Engagement (Education Northwest)

Activities
- 4-A: Steps of a Community Needs Assessment *Quiz*
- 4-B: Stakeholder Identification for Needs Assessment *Assignment*
- 4-C: Stakeholders and Root Causes *Forum*

Week 5: Engagement Strategies and the Levels of Participation

Readings:
- Understanding Community Engagement Tools (Education Northwest)
- A Variety of Methods and Techniques to Engage (Community Places)

Assignment:
- 5-A: Engagement Tools and Strategies *Quiz*
- 5-B: Choosing the Right Tools For Your Community *Assignment*
- 5-C: Determining the Success of Strategies *Forum*

Week 6: Evaluating Your Engagement Strategies

Readings:
- Measuring Success (Center for Community Health and Development)
- Gathering Information: Monitoring Your Progress (Center for Community Health and Development)

Assignments:
- 6-A: Measuring Success with Quality Information *Quiz*
- 6-B: Indicators for Success *Assignment*
- 6-C: Stakeholders and Evaluation *Forum*

Week 7: Creating a Community Engagement Plan and Final Reflection

Videos:
- Effective Community Organizing (Glappit Nova)

Assignments:
- 7-A: Building Your Engagement Plan *Assignment*
- 7-B: Final Reflection *Assignment*

Course Completion and Grading Criteria

This course is offered on a pass/fail basis. Successful participation and completion of this course will be assessed in the following ways:
- Quizzes (6 total) – 8 points each (27% of total grade)
- Assignments (7 total) - 15 points each (60% of total grade)
- Forums (6 total) - 2 points each (7% of total grade)
- Final Reflection - 10 points (6% of total grade) ***Completion Required to Pass***

A total of 175 points are available in this course. To pass this course, you must earn a minimum of 122.5 points, or 70% AND complete the final reflection. The *Course Activity Checklist* details the individual point values and due dates for all activities.

Course Expectations
As a participant, you are expected to:
- Read all required articles and other materials.
- Complete and submit all activities by the due dates.
- Contact the facilitator if you have questions about the materials or assignments that keep you from completing them.

You can expect the course facilitator to:
- Read all your assignments and questions carefully and thoughtfully and respond as promptly as possible.
- Answer any specific questions within 48 hours.

Communication
There are two ways to interact with your facilitator:
- Via the forums
- Via the messaging system

Please use the messaging system to contact your facilitator, instead of personal email, Facebook, or other forms of messaging.

Course Rules & Guidelines

Academic honesty and integrity: All work submitted in this course must be your own. All sources used in your work must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations of academic honesty will be taken seriously and may result in a failing grade in the course.

Course conduct: In the interest of promoting a positive learning environment, *s*tudents are expected to observe the following guidelines for personal conduct:
- Share only items and comments that are pertinent to the discussion topic.

- Be respectful of diverse opinions and experiences; disagree respectfully.
- Use discretion when sharing experiences and names of individuals directly from your VISTA assignment.

Participation: Students who enroll in VISTA online courses are expected to participate actively, and may be dropped for failure to log into the course within the first five days of the first day of class. If a student is added after the fifth day of the course, he/she must login with 48 hours or be dropped from the course. Please notify your facilitator if you expect to be out of town for an extended period of time (seven days or more).

Assignment due dates: Weekly activities are due on Sunday at 11:00 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time) See the Course Activity Checklist under Courses Resources on the home page for a list of assignments and corresponding dues dates.

Policy for late work: Students are responsible for locating and completing all the activities in the course. Active participation is also expected on a weekly basis. See the *Course Activity Checklist* for activity due dates. Activities will be due every Sunday night. You must give prior notice and receive permission from the facilitator in order to turn in work past the due date, up to ten days. Every day an activity is late, without prior notice and permission, will result in the loss of one point (for example, if your activity is three days late, you will lose three points). After ten days, you will automatically receive a score of zero.

Minimum Technical Requirements

- Access to an Internet connection (dial-up/56k minimum, cable modem preferred)
- Java, JavaScript enabled browser (IE9 or better, Chrome, or other equivalent)
- Although not required, a PDF reader and word processing may be necessary for reading/completing specific course components. If you don't have access to Microsoft Office; we recommend the open-source equivalent, Apache Open Office.

Accessibility

The VISTA Campus is accessible to Section 508 and WCAG Level II guidelines. This includes accessible PDF, MS Word, and MS Excel documents. Alternative text tags have also been added to website images as needed, as well as alternate content provided for multimedia files.

Course References List

The following resources were consulted, excerpted, adapted or reprinted for course readings and resources.

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Center for Community Health and Development. (2018). Chapter 3, Section 8: *Identifying Community Assets and Resources.* Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas. Retrieved November, 2018, from the Community Tool Box:
https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/identify-community-assets/main

Center for Community Health and Development. (2018). Chapter 38, Section 2: *Gathering Information: Monitoring Your Progress.* Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas. Retrieved November, 2018, from the Community Tool Box:
https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluate-community-initiatives/monitor-progress/main

Center for Community Health and Development. (2018). Chapter 7, Section 8: *Identifying and Analyzing Stakeholders and Their Interests.* Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas. Retrieved November, 2018, from the Community Tool Box:
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http://www.thecaap.org/what-we-do/resources/community-needs-assessment-tool.html

Community Places *(2015) Community Planning Toolkit-Community Engagement.* Retrieved November, 2018 from Community Places:
https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/community-engagement

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http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/Community_Assessment.pdf

Clinical and Translational Science Awards Consortium. (2011). *Principles of Community Engagement. Rockville, MD: US Gov. Printing Office.* Retrieved November, 2018, from:
https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pdf/PCE_Report_508_FINAL.pdf

Cross. T. L., Bazron, B.J., Dennis, K. W., & Isaacs, M. R. (1989). *Toward a culturally competent system of* care: *Vol.1 A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally*

disturbed. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, Child Development Center, Child and Adolescent Service system Program, Technical Assistance Center. Retrieved November, 2018, from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED330171.pdf

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Education Northwest. (2018). *Understanding Community Engagement Tools*. Unpublished manuscript, Education Northwest, Portland, OR.

Education Northwest & Bank Street College. (n.d.). *Orientation Materials for Supervisors, Community Entry*. Retrieved November, 2018 from Corporation for National & Community Service, VISTA Campus website: https://www.vistacampus.gov/sites/vistacampus/files/legacy/50/Training/TrainingResources/community_awareness.pdf

Glappit Nova (2014, March 31). *Effective Community Organizing with Amara Enyia* [*Video* File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= QKsqx4InqZM.

Shire of Northam (2013) *Shire of Northam Community Engagement Plan.* Retrieved November, 2018, from Shire of Northam: *https://www.northam.wa.gov.au/community-engagement-plan.aspx*

Watkins, Ryan; West Meiers, Maurya; Visser, Yusra Laila. (2012) *A Guide to Assessing Needs : Essential Tools for Collecting Information, Making Decisions, and Achieving Development Results.* World Bank. Retrieved November, 2018, from: https://www.needsassessment.org/guidebook/Section%201.pdf