* Educational Support- 4 positions-
  + Kanawha County
  + Logan County
  + Mason County
  + Jackson & Roane Counties
* Child Welfare Listening Project- 2 positions-
  + Charleston
  + Parkersburg
* Community Center Development, Charleston
* WVCCL
* Grandparent Support- 3 positions-
  + Fayette County
  + Kanawha County
  + Lincoln/Logan Counties

All positions are AmeriCorps\*VISTA positions. Interested applicants should contact Marta Pate at 304-414-4452 or mpate@stepbystepwv.org.

Educational Support

Disadvantaged youth living in low income communities struggle daily to navigate the turbulent transition from childhood to adulthood. Surrounded by poverty, disability, and dysfunction, young people in these communities need meaningful opportunities to connect with caring adults, receive focused attention and educational support, and access to educational and career development resources.

Through this project plan, VISTA members will support the implementation of out-of-school time academic interventions for elementary and middle school students and their families. VISTA members will conduct a range of data collection, resource development, and systems building activities. VISTA members will work closely with local schools, area nonprofit agencies, families and other community partners. Ultimately, VISTA members will support and strengthen the design of systems and structures to support sustainable out-of-school time academic interventions.

Planned activities/tasks include:

* Administer group and individual-based data collection methods, and compile community profiles based on findings
* Coordinate with after-school program site coordinators and local school personnel, as appropriate, to ensure access to relevant archival and retrieve said data.
* Implement program assessment and evaluation protocols.
* Create handbooks, training materials, how-to guides, and/or other reference material, as appropriate, for use by future staff members.
* Nurture relationships with colleges and other evaluation specialists, where possible.

Child Welfare Listening Project

In 2011, the most recent year available, West Virginia had 4,475 children living in foster care according the Child Welfare League of America report on WV for 2013. Looking at national statistics, the future for these children is bleak once exiting the foster care system. By the age of 19, only 57% of emancipated foster youth have received a high school diploma or GED. Less than 5% of former foster youth graduate college, compared with 70% of foster youth who express a desire to attend college. Less than 50% of former foster youth are employed 2.5-4 years after leaving foster care, and only 38% have maintained employment for over one year. Nearly 40% of transitioning youth will be homeless within 18 months of discharge. 3 in 10 of the nation’s homeless adults report foster care history. Former foster youth experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at twice the rate of US war veterans. Over 70% of all California State Penitentiary inmates have spent time in the foster care system (VOICES Foster Care Statistics Fact Sheet & CWLA Youth After Foster Care Statistics).

Step by Step, in partnership with Children’s Home Society, proposes to return to its roots as a child welfare leadership project, and launch a multi-year campaign to:

* Assess the needs of young people transitioning from the WV Child Welfare System through surveys, forums and listening projects
* Conduct an extensive Listening Project to gather the insights of veterans of the child welfare system and document their experience coming of age and emerging as independent adults over the last three decades
* Research national models for preparation for youth leaving the child welfare system
* Research national models for providing support systems for youth once they have left the system
* Build a project advisory system to assess and propose ongoing interventions to increase the options for viable economic, educational and wellness futures for young people emerging from WV’s child welfare system.

Community Center Development

For the West Side of Charleston, that the demographics for the zip code show only 24% of families with children under 18 lives below the federal poverty line is deceptive. Surrounded by abandoned and boarded buildings and a median income of only $22,250 and a 5.5% unemployment rate, far more families are facing conditions of poverty than the initial statistics indicate. At the nearby Westside Elementary School, 445 of 478 students qualify for the free/reduced lunch program. Moreover, lack of educational attainment holds consistent with the other communities targeted in this proposal as well. Only 4.5% of the total adult population has earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 38.6% of adults hold no high school diploma. This is also an area with many seniors living in poverty in sub-standard housing and resources that are in accessible to those without a car or with mobility issues.

Sample activities/tasks include:

* Research, develop, and implement community assessment surveys.
* Work collaboratively with other staff and community members to evaluate volunteer needs.
* Speak at interested and relevant university classes.
* Meet with service learning coordinators and develop roster of service groups coming through to assist with community projects.
* Recruit, train, and coordinate “team leaders” from the community to oversee volunteer projects and community workdays.
* Establish development calendar of deadlines for funding proposals, resource development.

Grandparent Support

In many low income communities, it is estimated that a minimum of 30% of children are being cared for or raised by a grandparent. These grandparents are often overwhelmed and are unaware of resources that they could access to assist them in their roles as caregivers to their grandchildren. The role of the VISTA for this position is to assist communities with connecting caregiver grandparents with the resources and support groups that are available, and to assist communities in developing programs to fill the gaps in needed resources and support.

Sample activities/tasks include:

* Research, develop, and implement community assessment surveys.
* Administer group and individual-based data collection methods, and compile community profiles based on findings
* Research and assess national models for caregiver grandparent support systems
* Research and assess local resources/support available.
* Build and nurture relationships with pertinent groups like Birth to 3, Disability Advocacy groups, etc.