



Refugee Support Network AmeriCorps VISTA

POSITION TITLE: Community Engagement Coordinator – City of Kent

BACKGROUND

The City of Kent is currently recruiting a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA Community Engagement Coordinator. This individual will aid in the development of a new city-wide project, the *My City Kent Initiative*, to ensure Kent's newest community members are engaged with and have pathways to contribute to all aspects of city government and the community.

The "*My City Kent Initiative*" was created to address the significant barriers which exist and limit refugees and immigrants from consistently engaging in their local community and city government. These barriers can include: 1) Fear of direct involvement –many refugees come from countries where it is dangerous to actively participate in government or influence policy; 2) Limited knowledge of "the system" –immigrants and refugees may not have the background knowledge, such as the structure of mainstream U.S. civics, to know *how* they can get involved; and 3) Value of involvement –refugees and immigrants may not see the long-term impact that civic participation can have for their children, families, friends and communities. Moreover, newly arrived communities may not see the value of the ideas and expertise they can share with local government. Through the *My City Kent Initiative*, refugees and immigrants will have increased knowledge of and access to city services and will develop a sense of civic ownership in their new country.

AmeriCorps*VISTA

AmeriCorps is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects more than 70,000 Americans each year with service positions to meet our country's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a federally subsidized division of AmeriCorps.

VISTA Benefits:

- A bi-weekly living allowance of approximately **\$491.96**
- Medical benefits
- Affordable Life insurance (optional)
- Childcare assistance (if income eligible)
- An education award of **\$5,775** or a stipend of **\$1,500** upon completion of **1 year of service**
- Relocation travel allowance. Amount is based on the number of miles travelled and may not exceed \$1,000



Basic eligibility criteria:

- Associates must be at least 18 years of age at the time of placement
- Associates must serve on a full-time basis during the project period
- Associates must not be listed on the National Sex Offenders Public Registry

**Members are not employees of their sites, but are VISTA members serving at their sites as representatives of the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps*VISTA program.

POSITION SUMMARY

Scope of Work:

The *My City Kent Initiative's* goal is to provide educational opportunities and services that advance economic, social, and civic integration for refugees and immigrants living in the City of Kent. The AmeriCorps VISTA Community Engagement Coordinator will work with the City to build a refugee and immigrant civic engagement program. The position will be located in the Mayor's Office and supervised by the Community Development Block Grant Coordinator and Kent Cultural Diversity Initiative Group Facilitator, who works in the Parks Department, Housing and Human Services Division. The AmeriCorps VISTA Community Engagement Coordinator will build City of Kent's capacity to 1) Assess the major barriers to newly arrived community understanding and accessing city services and governance; 2) Recommend activities and events that will better engage and involve refugee and immigrant communities; 3) Support *My City Kent Initiative* projects which will increase refugee and immigrant community knowledge of and access to City of Kent resources; and 4) In partnership with Kent community based non-profits, develop a leadership and civic engagement program which empowers refugee and immigrant youth to share their ideas and make Kent an even better place to live.

Essential Job Functions:

- Increase accessibility by identifying barriers preventing cultural communities from accessing resources within the City of Kent
- Using feedback from cultural communities, the VISTA project will improve resource accessibility and educate City staff in order to improve the quality of service and engagement in these communities
- Create training and career opportunities for youth who traditionally lack access to these resources
- The AmeriCorps VISTA member will build:
 - 1) City capacity to assess and engage refugee and immigrant communities



2) Refugee and immigrant community knowledge of and capacity to access to resources.

Qualifications:

Education: Bachelor’s degree preferred

Experience: Previous experience working or volunteering with refugee/immigrant communities preferred; ability to speak a language of one of the larger immigrant/refugee populations residing in Kent is a plus.

Or: In place of the above education and experience requirements, the successful candidate may possess any combination of relevant education and experience which would demonstrate the individual's knowledge, skill and ability to perform the essential duties and responsibilities listed above.

How to Apply: Create an account and submit your application by following this link:

<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=63395&fromSearch=true>