

PROJECT NAME: Early Literacy Expansion in North Hartford Promise Zone 03

PROJECT NUMBER: 22VSFCT003

PROJECT PERIOD: 02/13/2023 - 02/12/2024

Brief Two-Line Description of the Program (200 characters)

Make a difference! Help build community capacity to improve early literacy for children in North Hartford. Gain experience in community outreach, conducting focus group research/needs assessment.

Program Description (2,000 characters)

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Be part of a collective impact model working to end poverty for children and families in North Hartford. Help build community capacity to support the school readiness, early literacy, and parent engagement components of the North Hartford Ascend Pipeline – providing an integrated cradle to career social services pipeline that make community resources easier for parents/residents to access and navigate.

United Way is seeking to scale our existing early literacy initiatives – United Way Readers (a volunteer reading program working with struggling readers grades K-3 at two North Hartford elementary schools) and Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (a free monthly book subscription program for Hartford children ages birth to five) – with the goal of increasing the number of students that start school ready to learn and reading proficiently by the start of fourth grade, a key milestone in graduating high school on time.

ABOUT US:

The mission of United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut (United Way) is to bring together people and resources committed to the well-being of children and families. We are the largest United Way in the state located in Hartford (the capital city) working alongside hundreds of corporate partners and thousands of volunteers who give, advocate, and volunteer around education, income, and health. Our goal is to address the root causes of poverty to change outcomes at both individual/systemic levels.

ABOUT YOU:

The success of the North Hartford Ascend Pipeline is dependent upon AmeriCorps VISTA service. In return, this project provides a great opportunity for members to learn about the non-profit sector and gain experience working in the community engaging with parents and residents, early childhood service providers and community-based organizations. Make an impact in the lives of children and families through programmatic services and contribute to systems changes that improve community conditions.

Provide details about member duties and other information about the position and community (1,000 characters)

United Way is looking to select four VISTAs: two members are responsible for building capacity of United Way Readers programming (one in each school); one member will operationalize the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program to replicate the model; and one member will work with the community to solicit feedback and improve access to/participation in literacy services/supports.

Essential duties include: asset mapping/research, recruitment and community outreach; improve public awareness efforts around early literacy; create a family engagement model that is sustainable and replicable through ongoing community engagement and feedback; evaluate program/resource effectiveness and community impact; and ensure resources are meeting the needs of children and parents.

Members will receive a living allowance, education benefits to reduce student loan debt, professional development opportunities to start a career/return to the workforce, relocation benefits, and childcare subsidies.