

# VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

**Title:** VISTA Financial Aid Program Development- UWM

**Sponsoring Organization:** Serve Wisconsin-- Wisconsin National and Community Service Board

**Project Name:** Serve Wisconsin-- Wisconsin National and Community Service II

**Project Number:** 20VSNWI004

**Project Period:** 08/30/2020 - 11/20/2021

**Site Name:** Serve Wisconsin

## **Focus Area(s)**

**Primary:** Economic Opportunity

**Secondary:**

## **VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities**

**Goal of the Overall VISTA Project:** The Office of Student Financial Aid at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is committed to providing resources and support for students across the state to understand and more easily navigate the college financial aid process. The VISTA member will contribute to this goal by focusing on increasing FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) filing rates of low-income high school students and families. The FAFSA is the first step in accessing financial aid, making higher education more financially attainable for low-income families.

### **Objective of the Assignment**

Build partnerships with high FAFSA potential high schools and community- based organizations to increase FAFSA filing support.

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 1. Use data from the Student Success Through Applied Research Lab to identify which high schools in Wisconsin to focus initial partnerships

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 2. Connect with identified schools and associated CBOs to listen to their needs and suggestions for partnership to best support low income students with filling out the FAFSA

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 3. Build sustainable partnerships with identified high schools, or build on current partnerships, to connect volunteers with students and families to increase FAFSA filing rates

## Objective of the Assignment

Create infrastructure to connect UW-Madison Alumni with FAFSA filing volunteer opportunities.

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 1. Connect with the UW-Madison Foundation and Alumni Association to understand current volunteer landscape and mechanisms to engage with Alumni a. Build partnerships and buy-in with key geographic alumni chapters

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 2. Work with Alumni Association to gather data to connect with former FASTrack program financial aid recipients

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 3. Recruit volunteers a. Create FAFSA filing volunteer position descriptions b. Work with Office of Student Financial Aid communications team to create marketing materials and broadcast opportunity widely through social and traditional media outlets

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 4. Create mechanism for tracking volunteer engagement, feedback, and needs

## Objective of the Assignment

Create comprehensive FAFSA filing training for volunteers.

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 1. Fill out the FAFSA and attend trainings to become familiar with the application a. Identify key areas of the FAFSA to provide additional support for volunteers

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 2. Develop online modules or recordings for the training a. Conduct training with first pilot cohort of volunteers b. Gather feedback on trainings and make edits accordingly

**Member Activity (08/30/2021 - 11/20/2021):** 3. Learn about future changes to the FAFSA application and incorporate those changes into future trainings