

## Concept Paper for ANN VISTA Project for FY 2012 – Submitted 12-11-11

### Executive Summary

*1. Provide a brief description of the proposed project, including the project goal(s) as well as an overview of the activities the requested VISTAs and Leaders will perform.*

### Description

The ANN VISTA Project is designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty by focusing on one goal and seven primary objectives. The Project goal is to increase the impact of national service on community needs in Nevada communities served by CNCS-supported and CNCS-eligible programs. The seven Project primary objectives and activities are:

Objective 1.1 - Identify Segments for Nevada's Nonprofit Sector & Economic Impact of Sector – Activities: Assist in growing sector and impact data from Urban Center, Nevada banks, Secretary of State, IRS, Nevada Dept. of Labor, economic development clusters, associations, groups

Objective 1.2 - Build Capacity in Business IT Ecosystems for Nonprofits in Target Sector Segments – Activities: Assist in webinars, workshops and one-on-one's; Provide customer service; back office shared services; e-commerce; data centers; and automated services and processes

Objective 1.3 – Offer Capacity Building Services to Nonprofits in CNCS-Focused Segments – Activities: Assist with state-wide Roundtables, workshops, webinars, convenings of target industry and cluster actors, and creation of cluster initiatives in regions

Objective 1.4 - Build Nonprofit Sector Database While Creating IRS Filing Training Modules – Activities: Grow ANN's database by sector segments, assist with eMail data systems, partner with SCORE and libraries/college computer labs; Assist with training modules re IRS filing

Objective 1.5 – Build Capacity in Social Media & Fundraising Online Campaigns for CNCS-Focused Segments – Activities: Increase cash resources and in-kind resources available through fundraising online; Assist with Nevada's Big Give (annual event); Assist with creating Social Media Campaigns

Objective 1.6 – Assist in Nonprofit Marketing and Google Grants for CNCS-Focused Segments – Activities: Become certified in Google Advertising Fundamentals; Assist with webinars and workshops; Provide technical assistance with Google Grant applications & implementation

Objective 1.7 – Become a Broker of VISTAS and Shared-VISTAS Based on Community Needs – Activities: Based on community needs and target industry and cluster initiatives by region, VISTAS will be recruited, trained and placed with eligible nonprofits, and even shared between smaller nonprofits

*2. How many VISTAs and Leaders are you requesting?*

PHASE 2 - Phase 2 consists of 2 VISTAs. Building on successes of ANN's VISTA in 2011, the focus for the 2 VISTAs will be nonprofit sector segmented list-building, Business IT Ecosystems capacity building, social media campaign help, fundraising online campaign help, regional cluster support, preparation to broker 6 VISTAS. One VISTA will be located in Northern Nevada; one VISTA will be located in Southern Nevada.

PHASE 3 – Phase 3 consists of continued and expanding work of 2 VISTAs in addition to brokering 6 VISTAs to nonprofits in CNCS-focused segments and areas identify by community need and regional cluster initiatives. 1 additional VISTA Leader will assist in training, recruitment, and management of VISTAs.

*3. What is the estimated length of time required to complete the project?*

4 years

*4. Briefly describe your organization's mission, history, and the beneficiaries of your organization's programs.*

MISSION - ANN's mission is strengthening communities by increasing the influence and capacity of Nevada's nonprofit sector.

HISTORY - In 2007, Charles Schwab Bank began providing a series of programs for nonprofits in the Reno area called the Nonprofit Capacity Building Roundtable. An informal consortium of over sixty northern Nevada nonprofits attending the roundtables appointed a task force to examine the feasibility of establishing a nonprofit association. This task force conducted research, including interviews of networks of nonprofits and surveys of nonprofit staff, to determine the available resources and gaps in service delivery for nonprofits in the region.

From its research, the consortium determined that the local nonprofits could benefit from 1) professional development of nonprofit leaders, 2) coordination of capacity building programs and services, 3) a public awareness effort that would increase support for nonprofits, 4) joint purchasing power for commodities such as insurance, and 5) a unified voice on public policy issues.

To address these gaps in services and programs, the consortium task force recommended strategies: 1) develop a sustainable and entrepreneurial business model for a nonprofit membership organization that can provide needed programs and services and act as a unified voice for the nonprofit community, 2) work with existing nonprofit networks, programs, and services to capitalize on economies of scale and avoid duplication, and 3) launch the organization with enough start-up funds and human capital to operate a sustainable membership organization that delivers relevant and market-sensitive products and services.

At the February 8, 2008, Schwab roundtable, the consortium of nonprofits endorsed the formation of an association and appointed a steering committee to complete additional research on the region's needs and create a work plan for forming the association. Additional research of this steering committee ultimately determined that a nonprofit association should be formed and the application to the IRS to secure a 501.c.3. designation was completed.

The United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierras acted as the fiscal sponsor until the IRS designation was secured. On November 22, 2009, the Internal Revenue Service granted ANN its 501.c.3. tax-exempt status.

BENEFICIARIES – The beneficiaries of ANN's programs include the 6,626 nonprofits in Nevada and the hundreds of thousands of families, individuals and communities in Nevada they serve.

## **Need**

*State in measurable and quantifiable terms the specific poverty-related need(s) identified by the community(ies) that the VISTA project will address, including the number of low-income people directly affected by the problem(s). If your program will operate at multiple sites, demonstrate a need in each community you propose to serve.*

### **Objective 1.1 - Identify Segments for Nevada's Nonprofit Sector & Economic Impact of Sector**

Surprisingly, there is no list of nonprofits that serve poverty-related needs identified by community or low-income families and individuals they serve in Nevada. In other words, the Nevada nonprofit sector has never been divided into segments like this. This VISTA project begins by identifying nonprofits state-wide that serve poverty-related needs and low-income clients as part of their missions.

Furthermore, a 2011 study entitled "Unify, Regionalize, Diversity: An Economic Development Agenda for Nevada" challenges Nevada's leaders to unify, regionalize and diversify its economic development policies. The report recommends putting immediate resources towards convenings of target industry and cluster actors in the regions—and their planning; cluster initiatives in the regions; other types of bottom-up sector development, including regional innovation districts, business plans, and regional export plans; and aligning the state's existing economic development policies, programs, and initiatives with the regions' sector strategies and cluster initiatives.

Creating segmented lists positions nonprofits to be leaders in convenings of target industry and cluster actors and creation of cluster initiatives in the regions as well as access funding from the newly created Catalyst Fund.

The 2011 study also states that "current concentrations of expertise and existing firms (or strong potential for industry growth and development) in Northern Nevada suggest that the state and its northern partners should focus their economic development work especially on niches within Clean Energy; Mining, Materials, and Manufacturing; Logistics and Operations; Aerospace and Defense; and Business IT Ecosystems. By contrast, state and regional leaders should build on Southern Nevada particular opportunities in Tourism, Gaming, and Entertainment; Business IT Ecosystems; Health and Medical Services; Energy Efficiency; and Logistics and Operations. For its part, finally, state and local leaders attending to the economic future of Rural Nevada can build on strong bases in Mining, Materials, and Manufacturing; Tourism, Gaming, and Entertainment; and Clean Energy."

While U.S. Congress data shows that 10% of all jobs are in the nonprofit sector, it is not known how many nonprofits in Nevada 1) participate in these job growth opportunity areas, 2) employ people in the niches mentioned above, or 3) are actively engaged in education and training to prepare low-income individuals for employment in these high-paying skill areas.

The seven industries identified in the report hold out a broad range of possible development and growth paths through their projected yield of a collective 80,000 to 125,000 jobs in the next five years. This means that the nonprofit sector could generate 8,000 to 12,500 of these new jobs. In addition, VISTA's could support programming that enables targeted individuals to obtain or train for gainful employment in low-skill but high-paying industries.

### **Objective 1.2 - Build Capacity in Business IT Ecosystems for Nonprofits in Target Sector Segments**

According to the Urban Institute, 69.9% of the nonprofits in Nevada have annual revenues less than \$250,000. Most have budgets under \$100,000. This means that most of the nonprofits that service the six Focus Areas in Goal 1 of the CNCS 2011-2015 Strategic Plan - economic opportunity, education, healthy futures, veterans and military families, disaster services, and environmental stewardship – do not have sufficient budgets to pay for adequate Business IT Ecosystems (i.e., customer service; back office; shared services; e-commerce; data centers; and automated services that lead to more effective and efficient-run nonprofits).

In addition, results from a 2011 ANN study of 160 Nevada nonprofits shows that 0% is accessing free Google Grants for up to \$480,000 per year in free marketing, 80% had poorly performing websites, and 90% are not utilizing free Business IT services available to them as nonprofits. There is need to assist nonprofits in building capacity in Business IT Ecosystems.

### **Objective 1.3 - Assist with Capacity Building Services to Nonprofits in CNCS-Focused Segments**

ANN is uniquely positioned to design and deliver capacity building Roundtables and professional development webinars and workshops to nonprofits that work in the 6 focus areas of the CNCS 2011-2015 Strategic Plan: economic development, education, healthy futures, veterans and military families, disaster services, and environmental stewardship. There is need to design and deliver unique capacity building services for nonprofits working in CNCS-focused areas such as creating infrastructure, developing forms and manuals, organization outreach, grant research and writing, volunteer recruitment and management, etc.

### **Objective 1.4 - Build Nonprofit Sector Database While Creating IRS Filing Training Modules**

In 2011, 1,207 nonprofits in Nevada lost their tax exemption status (15%). This happened largely because there was no quick or economic way to contact nonprofits to let them know that the IRS filing requirements had changed. While there is an IRS Master List of Nevada nonprofits that has names and addresses, there are no emails, websites or phone numbers to be able to contact nonprofits when needed.

There is need to grow ANN's database of emails, websites, phone numbers and contact information for the Nevada nonprofit sector. In addition, small-to-medium size nonprofits need help in completing the new 990-N (e-Postcard) online ([epostcard.form990.org](http://epostcard.form990.org)) and answering basic IRS filing questions. Otherwise, more Nevada nonprofits may lose their tax-exempt status in the future.

### **Objective 1.5 - Build Capacity in Social Media & Fundraising Online Campaigns for CNCS-Focused Segments**

On one day - November 17, 2011 – over \$413,000 was raised for over 400 nonprofits participating in Nevada's Big Give, the first time the event occurred in Nevada. Even though the event was an amazing success the first time out, campaign leaders comment that many nonprofits were unable to drive traffic to the event site and their customized sites. In other words, there is a need for nonprofits to build capacity in generating traffic, growing donor lists, and positioning their agencies to take advantage of online fundraising opportunities. In fact, in three recent online contests, Nevada nonprofits lost out on

being eligible to receive tens of thousands in private dollars because they were not online-fundraising-ready.

Similarly, due to limited resources, time and expertise, few nonprofits are able to take full advantage of the power of new Social Media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Linked In. Moreover, in a December 2010 study of 64 nonprofit leaders in Southern Nevada, Fundraising Using Social Media was identified as the number one area of focus for future capacity building events. There is need for nonprofits to be able to create and manage mission-specific Social Media Campaigns.

#### **Objective 1.6 - Assist in Nonprofit Marketing and Google Grants for CNCS-Focused Segments**

In 2009, only 10 nonprofits in Nevada applied for and received Google Grants. Even though most Nevada nonprofits are eligible for Google Grants, few actually apply. There is a need to assist Nevada's nonprofit sector in understanding the benefits of the program, how to apply, and how to manage Google AdWord campaigns that could result in up to \$480,000 per year in free marketing per nonprofit.

#### **Objective 1.7 - Become a Broker of VISTAs and Shared-VISTAs Based on Community Needs**

Many state associations like ANN are positioned to broker VISTAs and shared-VISTAs to nonprofits state-wide while creating a VISTA learning community. For example, Arizona has a strong VISTA Project in which they broker a large number of VISTAs. ANN has the capacity to assist in community needs assessments, VISTA training, recruitment and enrollment assistance, initial and ongoing support to the VISTA members, as well as ongoing training and professional development through a VISTA learning community that will be created.

#### ***Strengthening Communities***

*1. Describe current activities your organization and other organizations are undertaking to address the problems identified in your need statement. Describe how the proposed project will complement this work.*

#### **Objective 1.1 - Identify Segments for Nevada's Nonprofit Sector & Economic Impact of Sector**

Creating segmented lists expedites competitive capacity building to increase competitive access to current and future public and private resources, such as funding and resources from Nevada's banks in the areas of housing and financial literacy. For example, a representative from one of the largest Nevada banks last week told ANN that not only grant funding was available to eligible nonprofits serving low-income families and individuals but in-kind donations in the form of bank personnel and expertise (i.e., resources) were also available in the form of free training in financial literacy state-wide.

Many state associations of nonprofits have generated this data and can access it readily. For example, Alabama's nonprofit sector of over 21,000 nonprofits generates more than 227,000 jobs and contributes \$12.4 Billion to the state economy. Using these figures, we can estimate that Nevada's nonprofit sector has over 71,000 jobs and \$3.9 Billion in economic contribution. However, if you use U.S. and Nevada Labor statistics, it would appear that Nevada's nonprofit sector generates over 114,070 jobs. This project will gather data that accurately depicts the economic impact and employment by Nevada's nonprofit sector.

### **Objective 1.2 - Build Capacity in Business IT Ecosystems for Nonprofits in Target Sector Segments**

In a 2011 pilot project with 14 nonprofits state-wide, ANN's VISTA proved it was possible for a VISTA to be certified in Google Advertising Fundamentals and empower nonprofits take control of and build/maintain their own websites, create a social media campaign, apply for Google Grants, create back office shared services, and automate business processes and systems. This Project will expand this successful pilot project to more CNCS-eligible organizations.

### **Objective 1.3 - Assist with Capacity Building Services to Nonprofits in CNCS-Focused Segments**

Since 2007, ANN has offered 9,269 hours of professional development and capacity building to 2,432 nonprofit leaders. This Project will support and expand 2012 and future capacity building roundtables, workshops and webinars.

### **Objective 1.4 - Build Nonprofit Sector Database While Creating IRS Filing Training Modules**

ANN's database of nonprofit contacts has grown from 400 in September 2010 to 2,645 in November 2011. This growth was largely due to the initial work by ANN's VISTA. This Project will further grow the list, segment the list with the ultimate goal of reaching a significant portion of Nevada's 6,626 nonprofits and more than 71,000 employees and volunteers (source: Urban Institute).

### **Objective 1.5 - Build Capacity in Social Media & Fundraising Online Campaigns for CNCS-Focused Segments**

Prior to the first annual Nevada's Big Give on November 17, 2011, ANN provided a webinar to orient nonprofit leaders to fundraising online and prepare them to participate in the event. 64 nonprofit leaders registered. In addition, ANN's VISTA created in 2011 and is currently piloting a Social Media Campaign for ANN and its members using the top platforms of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Linked In. Future services will be provided by VISTAs and build on findings of the initial pilot campaign.

### **Objective 1.6 - Assist in Nonprofit Marketing and Google Grants for CNCS-Focused Segments**

In 2011, ANN's VISTA became certified in Google Advertising Fundamentals. In addition, webinars for 14 nonprofit agency leaders participating in the Nonprofit Website Project received information about Google Grants and AdWords. However, additional support will be provided in the form of small group and one-on-one training to build capacity to be able to take advantage of the opportunity for each nonprofit to receive up to \$48,000 per month in free marketing.

### **Objective 1.7 - Become a Broker of VISTAs and Shared-VISTAs Based on Community Needs**

Many state associations like ANN are positioned to broker VISTAs and shared-VISTAs to nonprofits state-wide while creating a VISTA learning community. For example, Arizona has a strong VISTA Project in which they broker a large number of VISTAs. ANN has the capacity to assist in community needs assessments, VISTA training, recruitment and enrollment assistance, initial and ongoing support to the VISTA members, as well as ongoing training and professional development through a VISTA learning community. This Project will share resources and build a consortium of state associations that are brokering VISTAs.

*2. Describe how the new infrastructure or organizational capacity created by your project will address the needs of the community and bring individuals and, ultimately, the community out of poverty.*

New infrastructure and organizational capacity created by this Project will allow nonprofits working with those in poverty to have adequate Business IT Ecosystems and skills to be more efficient and effective. Here are the performance measures used to demonstrate success:

Objective 1.1 - Identify Segments for Nevada's Nonprofit Sector & Economic Impact of Sector -  
Performance Measure: Increased number of organizations receiving capacity building services

Objective 1.2 - Build Capacity in Business IT Ecosystems for Nonprofits in Target Sector Segments -  
Performance Measure: Increased efficiency and effectiveness as well as number of new systems and businesses processes

Objective 1.3 – Offer Capacity Building Services to Nonprofits in CNCS-Focused Segments - Performance Measure: Increased number of organizations receiving capacity building services

Objective 1.4 - Build Nonprofit Sector Database While Creating IRS Filing Training Modules -  
Performance Measure: Increased number of organizations receiving capacity building services

Objective 1.5 – Build Capacity in Social Media & Fundraising Online Campaigns - Performance Measure: Increase dollar value of cash resources received by CNCS-focused segments

Objective 1.6 – Assist in Nonprofit Marketing and Google Grants - Performance Measure: Increase dollar value of in-kind resources received by CNCS-focused segments

Objective 1.7 – Become a Broker of VISTAS and Shared-VISTAS Based on Community Needs -  
Performance Measure: Increase number of community volunteers, services that meet regional goals, and agencies receiving capacity building services

*3. How will you involve the community to ensure the sustainability of the proposed project?*

Creating segmented lists and capacity building opportunities uniquely positions nonprofits to competitively access funding from the newly created Catalyst Fund, as well as private funding from Nevada's Banks and corporate supporters (approximately 50% of the budget for continuing the Project). In addition, the proposed Project will draw from the community of nonprofits and vendors who serve nonprofits in membership and fee-for-service events (approximately 50% of the budget for continuing the Project). ANN has developed a sustainable business model and Sustainability Strategic Plan that includes funding from at least 6 different revenue streams.

### ***Organizational Capacity***

*1. Address your organization's capacity to manage the proposed project including previous experience working with community volunteers and/or national service participants. Was your organization previously assigned VISTAs? If so, specify the sponsoring organization (if different from your own), years and number of members. Briefly describe how the proposed service activity differs from what your members did*

*previously. Also, if your agency is currently receiving other CNCS resources, specify which program and the number of members.*

ANN currently has one VISTA who started April 1, 2011. This VISTA has piloted a Nonprofit Website Project and is creating a Social Media Campaign. Future VISTAs will build on the successes and systems created, as well as expand services to Southern Nevada.

In 2011, in coordination with Nevada Volunteers and the University of Nevada, Reno, ANN piloted a Skills-Based Volunteer Project for nonprofits. In addition, ANN has provided over 200 hours of capacity building training in volunteer recruitment and management since 2009. A valuable resource for working with community volunteers is the recent addition to ANN's Board of Directors of Lisa-Marie Lightfoot, Director of Volunteer Services for the Washoe County School District.

*2. What resources are available to support the project? Identify the names of partner organizations. Is your organization able to contribute financially for all or some of costs related to VISTA(s) and Leader(s)? Please indicate if you are able to support a cost-share member (approximately \$10,000-12,000/year).*

ANN will provide in-kind support: office space, equipment, phone, supplies, professional development, supervision, reimbursement for travel, reimbursement for certification, etc. (value = \$5,000). The training and mentoring in Business IT Ecosystems is valued at \$10,000.

In addition, ANN may be able to support a cost-share member. This is dependent on securing a grant and/or corporate support.