

PITTSBURGH HEALTH CORPS
Member Service Description

I. Site Information

Site Name and Location:

Allegheny County Health Department
Chronic Disease Prevention
907 West Street, 2nd floor
Wilkesburg PA 15221

Organization Description and Mission:

ACHD is responsible for protecting the public health and environment for more than 1.2 million county residents. Our mission is to “assure quality public health services by promoting individual and community wellness, prevention injury, illness and premature death or disability, and protecting the population from harmful effects of chemical, biological and physical hazard within the environment.”

The Chronic Disease Prevention Program works to improve the quality of life of county residents by enabling them to prevent, detect and/or manage heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer. This program addresses health inequities in the community. To this end, ACHD engages in developing collaborations and partnerships necessary to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes within municipalities county wide.

Critical Community Need(s) to be addressed through member service:

Improve healthy eating, safety, and frequency of activity for youth in Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh. The service member will address this need through community engagement and implementation of school-building based nutrition and physical activity education programming for youth and families.

Pittsburgh’s Homewood neighborhood has about 9,200 residents, 95% of whom are African American. The neighborhood has a high level of concentrated poverty: the childhood poverty rate exceeds 50%, and 87% of children are eligible for the National School Lunch Program. The failure of this neighborhood to provide adequate infrastructure, nutritious food and safe places to be active makes residents vulnerable to experience health disparities. The Homewood Children’s Village is a newly formed community organization whose mission is to improve the lives of Homewood’s children and to reweave the fabric of the community. The Homewood Children’s Village (HCV) will be a primary partner to collaborate with to reach this community.

Increase number of Allegheny County children walking to school through a pilot Safe Routes to School (SRTS) campaign in a selected school. The service member will assist with SRTS implementation by providing education, training and walking facilitation to parents, staff and students.

The number of school children walking to school has been decreasing for the past few decades. In general, opportunities for physical activity during the school day and after school have also diminished. Children are thus being set up for sedentary lifestyles, in opposition to moderate daily physical activity that has long been recognized as an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Safe Routes to School is a program that is designed to be used by schools and traffic safety advocates to promote safe walking and biking passage to school.

Increase awareness of farmers markets and community gardens by Allegheny County residents through organization and promotion of a comprehensive Community Garden and Market Toolbox. The Toolbox is to be a resource guide that will identify local community gardens, farmers markets, local gardening non-profit organizations and recommended resources. The member will serve the community by creating the Toolbox and by answering community questions as referred by garden organization, Grow Pittsburgh.

There are a variety of agencies and organizations in the County covering some aspect of community gardens and/or farmers markets. However, currently there is no reliable way to locate this variety of resources serving the County. The interest of the last few years in community gardening and local produce has led to the realization of the need for the coordination of all the available resources. Grow Pittsburgh is a non-profit organization that assists community groups in developing garden projects and has expressed an inability to keep up with community requests for information about starting or locating gardens.

II. Service Description

Service Activities/Responsibilities:

By the end of the service year, the Corps member will:

- Complete ACHD orientation training and attend at least one public health conference.
- Research evidence based or promising programs for increasing physical activity and healthy eating behaviors in youth.
- Collaborate with HCV and their community advisory coalition to select at least one and up to two of the youth physical activity and nutrition programs to implement in Homewood.
- Develop a survey tool to evaluate the youth program
- Contact Homewood schools about possibility for implementing the selected program(s) in school or after school.
- Engage in community outreach to encourage participation in activities with HCV by attending four health fairs and/or other similar events.
- Implement at least one new 8-12 week program for youth on healthy eating, safety and physical activity.
- Evaluate youth program and summarize results.
- Attend five web based seminars to learn about Safe Routes to School and other school walking advocacy programs and strategies.
- Contact schools via phone, email, and/or letter in targeted area for SRTS program presentations and schedule at least four presentations.
- Educate parents, staff, administration, etc on SRTS
- Help lead SRTS walk day and walking school bus events, at least two.
- Evaluate success of walking program using existing survey tool for parents and school staff.
- Research existing resources in Allegheny County for farmers markets, community gardens, edible gardening organizations and resources.
- Organize research into a comprehensive Community Garden and Market Toolbox.
- Form partnerships with organizations whose clients would benefit from information in the Toolbox and promote the use of the Toolbox to these partners.
- Implement toolbox in community by helping community groups utilize the resources as referred to for help from partners

Overall Service Goals:

1st Quarter Goals:

1. Complete orientation in department and shadow staff performing various duties.
2. Research evidence based nutrition and physical activity programs and promising strategies.
3. Review Safe Routes to School program information and learn about other walk to school programs.
4. Gather information about Allegheny County farmers markets, including dates, hours, acceptance of WIC/EBT and locations.
5. Gather information about Allegheny County community gardens, including contact information and eligibility to join.

2nd Quarter Goals:

1. Collaborate with HCV to implement action plan to begin at least one new youth physical activity and nutrition program in Homewood.
2. Contact schools in target area for SRTS program and schedule at least four presentations to school staff and parents.
3. Implement health fairs and outreach to the community.

3rd Quarter Goals:

1. Develop evaluation tools/surveys for programs.
2. Implement youth physical activity and nutrition program.
3. Organize garden and farmers market research into a comprehensive Toolbox resource guide.

4th Quarter Goals:

1. Promote use of farmers market resource guide by other agencies and community partners.
2. Help community groups implement Toolbox in their community. Reach three community groups as referred by Grow Pittsburgh or other community partners.
3. Evaluate effect of initiatives and activities conducted over the year.
4. Assist in leading walk to school activities and trainings.

III. Performance Measures: The PHC AmeriCorps program is based on National Health Corps Performance Measures. The site specific performance measures are below:

1. Individual & Group Health Education Instruction

Service member will assist in educating school administration, staff and parents on the health benefits of encouraging children to walk to school. At least four presentations at different schools will be conducted. Service member will have the opportunity to assist in at least two walk to school day programs and assist in training parents, teachers and other adults in conducting a walk to school event or walking school bus. In total, will educate and/or train at least 250 adults.

2. Number of children and youth engaged in in-school or afterschool physical education activities with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

Service member will partner with the Homewood Children’s Village implement a new physical activity program for youth using an evidence based curriculum or promising strategies for reducing childhood obesity. The program should take place over 8-12 weeks and reach at least 20 youth.

3. Number of children and youth receiving nutrition education with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

Service member will partner with the Homewood Children’s Village to engage youth in a new in school or afterschool nutrition education program to reach 20 children and take place over 8-12 weeks.

Professional Development and Promotion of Public Health and Health-Related Careers:

The member will be offered opportunities to learn about the Allegheny County Health Department and the variety of programs and services offered. Throughout the year, the member will attend one or more public health conferences covering topics such as health disparities, cultural competency and nutrition. In addition, the member will be included in opportunities for webinars also covering the previously listed topics.

IV. Logistical Information

Expected Schedule for Providing Service at Site:

Monday through Friday, 8:30am – 5:00pm

Half hour lunch

Occasional evenings or weekends with regular hours adjusted accordingly

Orientation Plan:

Member will complete department orientation training and will have the opportunity to shadow the CDP staff to gain an understanding of everyone’s role. Materials will be given to the member to learn about key chronic diseases, prevention topics and best practice strategies. The member will have the opportunity to attend at least one reimbursed public health conference during the year. Mentoring will be offered consistently throughout the service year and goals discussed with the member.

ACHD staff at this site will be given the opportunity to meet the service member and will be provided with information about the Health Corps program, the member and his or her role and activities.

Service Location(s) if different from site address:

While the service member will be based out of the Wilksburg office, there will be work and programming that will take place at other locations in Allegheny County including various City of Pittsburgh neighborhoods such as Homewood as detailed above.

Additional Info (parking, transportation, ID) How does the member need to travel to perform service duties?

Please check one Bus Car None

Member Qualifications:

College graduate preferred

Excellent communication skills

Familiar with Microsoft Office programs including PowerPoint and Publisher

Able to speak to groups, lead lessons and perform outreach to individuals

Comfortable interacting with diverse community partners