

# Resilience AmeriCorps Academy Preparatory Work

# PREPARATORY WORK CONTENTS

- I. Overview and Instructions
- II. Resilience Resources
  - A. Introduction to Resilience Webinar
  - B. Introduction to Resilience Readings
- III. Exercises
  - A. VISTA Biography and Project Description
  - B. Introduction to Risk
  - C. Engaging Stakeholders



# OVERVIEW AND INSTRUCTIONS

The Resilience AmeriCorps Academy will bring together a diverse group of AmeriCorps VISTA members, local community partners, and Federal representatives to help orient AmeriCorps VISTA members to their year of service, as well as to provide an opportunity for collaboration on resilience planning.

This Academy will launch the second cohort of Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA members. The three-day event will be an interactive workshop providing background information on resilience approaches and planning elements, and ample facilitated discussion time to apply resilience concepts and surface potential project implementation considerations. You will also build connections with their fellow cohort members, supervisors, and other partners who can support them during their term of service.

This preparatory work will begin to orient you to the concepts and activities that you will dive into during the Academy. These exercises will provide the foundations that will be built on during the training. Complete the preparatory work as a team at your project site and use your local contacts and information at your organization as a resource. You should reference Project Applications and VADs as needed. Successful completion of the preparatory work will allow you to have more targeted discussions and conversations with federal resource partners and subject matter experts

Both VISTA members and project supervisors should review the Resilience Resources. For the exercises, VISTA members should take the lead, with project supervisors providing information as needed. Both VISTAs and project supervisors should review the end products together and make any final edits prior to the Academy. Together, VISTAs and project supervisors should identify a list of questions they would like to be answered during the training. Be sure to bring your completed worksheets and your list of questions, along with all other items referenced on the final page of this packet, to the Academy.



# INTRODUCTION TO RESILIENCE WEBINAR

This 50-minute webinar presented by The Rockefeller Foundation introduces many key terms and concepts about resilience that will help you complete the preparatory work exercises, and that you will apply in depth at the Resilience Academy. By using the Cedar Rapids 2008 Flood case study, the webinar explains what resilience is, why we care about it, and how understanding risk and vulnerability can help maximize the resilience dividend in projects and programs.

**The guide on the next page directs you to segments of the webinar that are particularly relevant to Resilience AmeriCorps communities.** You are welcome to watch the entire webinar straight through, if you prefer.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE WEBINAR](#)

Please note: this recorded webinar was conducted for local governments participating in a different program, the [National Disaster Resilience Competition](#). Therefore, it references projects conducted at the city level. However, the concepts presented are relevant to local communities of a variety of sizes and scales.



# INTRODUCTION TO RESILIENCE WEBINAR

## **1:45-10:27 – Cedar Rapids case study (~7 minutes)**

As you know, Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA projects are focused specifically on anti-poverty work. Resilience building at the community level is critical for making poverty alleviation programs more effective, robust, and sustainable. In particular, the work of building resilience can be an opportunity to uncover the roots of a poverty problem by understanding how different risks play off each other. However, conducting community resilience work in a way that decreases poverty requires engaging and assessing the needs of low income populations first and foremost. While you watch this section, think about in what ways, and to what extent, the work conducted in Cedar Rapids may have contributed to anti-poverty work.

## **10:28- 15:14 – Introduction to resilience concepts (~5 minutes)**

In particular, notice that in order to effectively increase resilience, plans and projects must incorporate projections of the severity and frequency of *future* shocks and stresses. This section of the webinar touches on similar ideas to the preparatory reading, “The Resilience Dividend.”

## **19:14- 25:11 – Understanding Risk and Vulnerability (~6 minutes)**

You will use the concepts presented here to complete the preparatory work exercises.

## **25:12 – 32:15 – City Resilience Framework (~7 minutes)**

For those who prefer reading to watching a webinar, this information comes from the City Resilience Framework Report. Also, note that the City Resilience Framework is just one way to understand resilience. You will be exposed to additional frameworks during the Resilience AmeriCorps Academy.

## **33:30-40:05 – Cedar Rapids case study application of the City Resilience Framework (~6.5 minutes, optional)**

## **43:49-46:10 – Resilience Dividend (~2.5 minutes)**

This section of the webinar touches on similar ideas to the preparatory reading, “The Resilience Dividend.”



# INTRODUCTION TO RESILIENCE READINGS

## The Resilience Dividend

The introduction to *The Resilience Dividend* by Judith Rodin, the President of The Rockefeller Foundation, provides further clarification on the definition of resilience and the resilience dividend. Considering the impact of Superstorm Sandy on the New York region, as well as urbanization, climate change, and globalization, this short read reinforces lessons from the webinar and stresses the importance of resilience planning.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE READING](#)

## A Disaster in the Making: Addressing the Vulnerability of Low Income Communities to Extreme Weather

This short article introduces key concepts to explain why resilience building at the community level is critical for making anti-poverty work programs more effective, robust, and sustainable.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE ARTICLE](#)

## Risk Driver: Poverty and Inequality

This longer article explains how poverty is both a driver and consequence of disasters, and the processes that further disaster risk related poverty are permeated with inequality. It links out to stories that illustrate this point. This article has a global perspective, and uses examples from developing countries, but the concepts presented are applicable to U.S. communities as well. Think about which challenges and strategies apply best to your own service community.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE ARTICLE](#)



# VISTA BIOGRAPHY AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CNCS would like to help share your national service story on our National Service Blog and/or with your local media, but to do that we need you to answer a few questions. Your answers can be as short as two to three sentences or feel free to just jot down a few bullets. Please send your answers to [pressoffice@cns.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cns.gov). Feel free to contact the press office via email, or phone (202-606-6775) if you have any questions.

- Contact information (email, telephone number)
- What are the best times to reach you?
- Where is your hometown? (with zip code if possible)
- What is your Alma Mater? What did you study? (if applicable)
- Is this your first time serving in AmeriCorps? If not, give us a brief overview of your previous service experience.
- Just a few sentences of what you are doing for your service and what problems will you be addressing in the community you are serving in.
- What does resilience mean to you? How are you helping build community resilience during your year of service?
- Who/what inspired you to serve? Or what inspired the development/extension of your service?
- Tell us what you hope to accomplish in the next year.
- What are your plans after you finish your year of service?



# INTRODUCTION TO RISK EXERCISE

## Assess Shocks and Stresses

### Purpose

This exercise will establish a common understanding of your service area's shocks and stresses. This information will inform other preparatory exercises, and activities at the Academy. At the Academy you will be asked to think about the consequence and likelihood of each of the shocks and stresses that are relevant to your service area.

### Instructions

Total Time: 45 minutes

#### Step 1 | Perform a quick search of your service area's physical, social and economic history. (30 minutes)

- Use resources available at your organization or online.
- Time permitting, talk to a local community-based organization or neighborhood resident.
- Reference Project Application and VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), as needed.

#### Step 2 | Review shocks or stresses (10 minutes)

- From the list of shocks and stresses on the next page, make your own list of a few that pose the greatest risk, based on your current perceptions
- Add any additional shocks and stresses not represented
- Bring your list to the Resilience Academy



# INTRODUCTION TO RISK EXERCISE

## Assess Shocks and Stresses

### Shocks

Blackout	Hurricane
Cyber Attack	Infrastructure Failure
Disease Outbreak	Market Crash
Earthquake	Mudslide or Landslide
Extreme Cold	Riot/Civil Unrest
Extreme Heat	Severe Ice Storm
Extreme Rainfall	Severe Storm
Fire	Snow/Blizzard
Flood	Terrorism
Freezing	Tornado
Hazardous Materials Accident	Tsunami
	Volcanic Eruption

### Stresses

- Aging Infrastructure
- Changing Demographics
- Crime & Violence
- Drought
- Environmental Degradation
- Food Shortage
- High Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Lack of Affordable Housing
- Lack of Social Cohesion
- Poor Air Quality
- Poverty/Inequity
- Sea Level Rise
- Shifting Macroeconomic Trends
- Water Shortage



# INTRODUCTION TO RISK EXERCISE

## Identifying Vulnerable Populations

### Purpose

This exercise will establish a common understanding of your service area's priority shocks and stresses, and an understanding of who is most vulnerable. This information may help identify actions for your project implementation plan.

### Instructions

Total Time: 30 minutes

**Step 1 | On the worksheet on the next page, list the top three shocks and stresses in your service area. (5 minutes)**

**Step 2 | Identify vulnerable populations most affected by these shocks and stresses. (10 minutes).**

- Who are the most vulnerable to shocks and stresses?
- How do you distinguish the different vulnerable populations?
- How are they more vulnerable to risk than other groups in the project community? What makes these populations more vulnerable than other populations in the project community? In the region? In the nation?
- Reference Project Application and VAD, as needed.

**Step 4 | Complete the rest of the worksheet. See sample worksheet on page 12 for reference. (15 minutes)**



# Worksheet 1: Developing a Risk Approach

ORGANIZATION NAME

**Top Shocks**

**Top Stresses**

**Vulnerable Populations**

**Target Neighborhood**

# SAMPLE Worksheet 1: Developing a Risk Approach

ORGANIZATION NAME

## Top Shocks

- *Severe storms/hurricanes*
- *Flooding*
- *Sea level rise*

## Top Stresses

- *Land subsidence*
- *Poverty*
- *Unemployment*

## Vulnerable Populations

- *Low-income coastal communities*
- *Disabled and isolated seniors*
- *People of color*
- *Disconnected youth*

### Service Area

North River End  
Neighborhood

# IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS EXERCISE

## Identifying Stakeholders

### Purpose

This exercise will identify key stakeholders and begin a conversation about who to engaged both for the success of the project and to build resilience more broadly. Use the worksheet on the next page to complete the exercise, and reference the SAMPLE worksheet on page 15 for help.

### Instructions

Total Time: 45 minutes

#### Step 1 | Identify key stakeholders. (15 minutes)

- Using notecards, sticky notes, or small pieces of paper, list out different stakeholders in your service area.
- Consider stakeholders during each phase of the project to maximize value and ensure success. Stakeholders might include but are not limited to: residents and community members; community and faith-based organizations or other non-profits; vulnerable groups such as seniors, the homeless, or disengaged youth; small business owners; city agencies.
- Reference Project Application and VAD, as needed.

#### Step 2 | Map stakeholders. (10 minutes).

- Using the matrix on the next page (Worksheet 2), place each stakeholder in a place that reflects that stakeholder's influence on, and interest in, the project.

#### Step 3 | Evaluate stakeholders. (10 minutes).

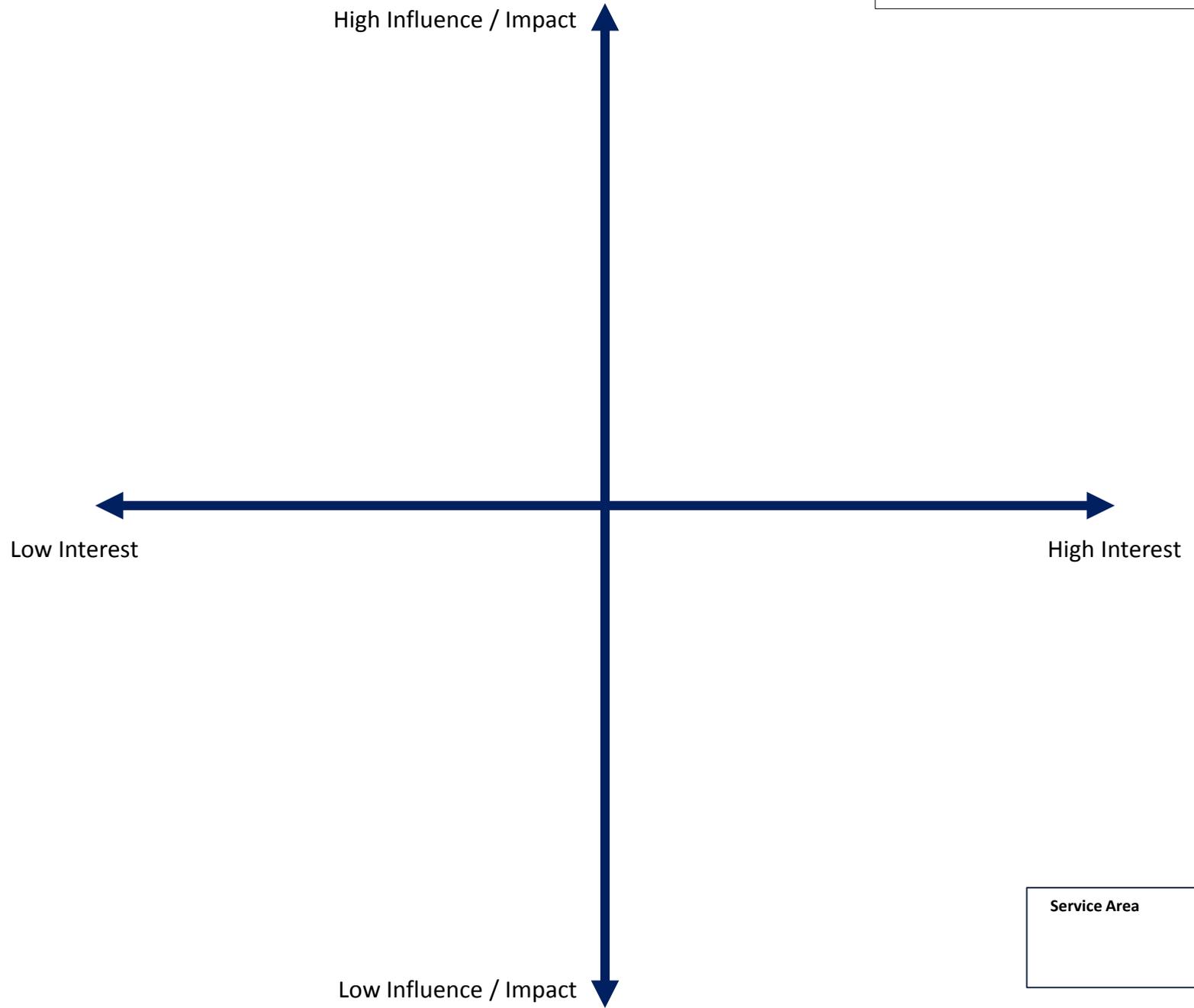
- Use dots to mark which stakeholders you plan to prioritize.
- Which stakeholders should help design and implement the project and/or ensure its success?

#### Step 5 | Revise the worksheet as necessary and bring it with you to the Academy.



# Worksheet 2: Identifying Stakeholders

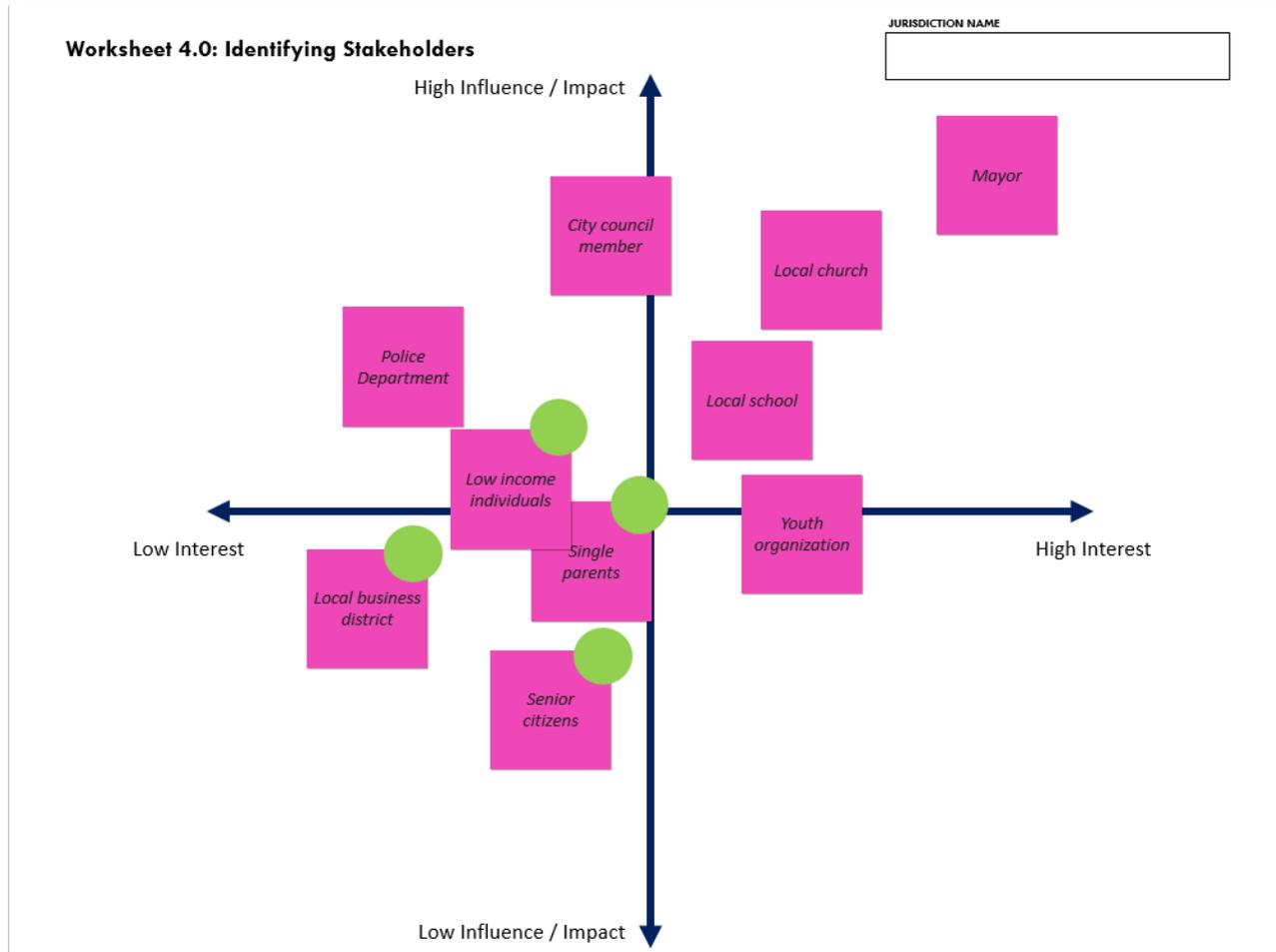
ORGANIZATION NAME



Service Area

# IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS EXAMPLE WORKSHEET

## Identifying Stakeholders



# RESOURCES TO BRING TO ACADEMY

- Worksheet 1: Developing Risk Approach
- Worksheet 2: Identifying Stakeholders
- List of questions
- Map of your service community
- Project application
- VISTA Assignment Descriptions (VAD)
- Any relevant project site orientation materials

Also, before you arrive, make sure you email the information requested on page 7 of this packet to the CNCS Press Office.

