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VISTA Site Discontinued after Members Served Outside Scope of Grant and Performed Staff Duties

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DATE ISSUED 09.19.2016

Closed 9/19/16

Acting on a Hotline complaint, CNCS-OIG investigators determined that VISTA participants at Community in Schools of Hernando County (CIS-Hernando), Brooksville, FL, were assigned direct service tasks beyond the scope of the grant, and displaced employees by performing staff functions. The VISTAs were supposed to improve the conduct and academic performance of at-risk youth by recruiting volunteers to serve as tutors and mentors. Instead, CIS-Hernando assigned them to collect and distribute food, clothing, and school supplies to students and their families. One VISTA regularly served in the school office, answering phones, undertaking general office work and filing discipline reports. Another VISTA was paid to advise an unrelated organization, without CIS-Hernando's approval.

Overall, CIS-Hernando staff did not provide proper oversight to ensure that the VISTAs' time was used for the intended purposes and consistent with program requirements. Investigators also found project records to be in disarray, missing or incomplete.

As a result of this investigation, CIS-Florida did not renew its agreement to assign VISTAs to the Hernando site. The agreement terminated on August 22, 2016.

Case ID: 2016-020

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