

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2012 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant Name: Jennings Public School Program Name: Lead to Read (Successful Service)	Application ID: 12AC133345
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For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. This feedback is provided on a restricted basis and cannot be shared or distributed outside of your organization. We hope you will find this information helpful in completing applications to our future grant competitions. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of your application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory.

Reviewers Summary Comments:

- The applicant presents a proposal that is based on two years of proven practice, a practice that is already demonstrating a highly effective means for both literacy improvement and for the involvement of AmeriCorps.
- AmeriCorps recruitment, selection, training and mentoring during service are all well outlined. Connection to past AmeriCorps members, recognition of time served, and encouragement towards an alumni association are all important factors that will help Members stay connected, involved civically and become more likely to continue in a lifelong commitment towards service.
- The applicant states that 40 half-time Members will be placed into 17 slots, and identifies how much each school will fund in support of the AmeriCorps members they select. However, the number of Members, number of slots and matching funding from schools do not line up. There are six slots unidentified within the proposal and matching funds are not in alignment with the proposed number of Members, slots and school funding.
- The applicant describes many powerful experiences that will be offered and implemented for Members; however, it is not clear how these experiences will directly lead to the community impact.
- While the applicant includes many significant details in each criterion such as demographic information in Criterion 1, some of the daily duties and theory of change in Criterion 2, the value added by AmeriCorps in Criterion 2, limited information about the evidence-based data for the intervention selected in Criterion 3, and the powerful experiences by AmeriCorps in Criterion 4, the applicant provides limited information about the type of needs and target population and tells us little about how the experiences will be made relevant to Members of underrepresented groups.
- The applicant documented the intervention need, improvement of literacy performance, with undated statistical data from the statewide school reading assessments and undated benchmarks for reading and

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math assessments for all elementary schools.

- The applicant describes in detail how the AmeriCorps members will benefit the host communities by engaging the targeted communities in the Lead to Read program to improve literacy performance. All 40 AmeriCorps slots will be in the 17 school districts to provide one-on-one and small group literacy intervention during school hours for the school term, September 1 through May 31. Each Member will be assigned to a focus group with different grade levels, maintained as a caseload of 15-20 students. In collaboration with their assigned teachers, AmeriCorps members will plan daily and weekly schedules and use district adopted core curriculum.
- The applicant identifies 40 half-time slots to serve in the host communities; however, the total number of slots assigned to the 17 school districts adds up to 36, not 40.
- The applicant clearly states that an increase in the percentage of target students reading at or above grade level is the desired result, with the ultimate goal being students maintain their grade level as they progress to higher grades. AmeriCorps members and volunteers will support 500 students with 75% of the students completing the program annually. To measure student progress, AmeriCorps members will track daily activities on the Lead to Read form and enter data in OnCorps as well as conduct three formal assessments annually.
- The applicant describes a diverse recruitment and outreach plan. Opportunities to become AmeriCorps members will be advertised in local newspapers in the eight-county region; area universities and colleges will be contacted and provided program materials. The applicant will seek opportunities to speak at various student forums to recruit college students and/or graduates. The applicant will employ a two-part process to select Members. This process involves district superintendents conducting the first interview and having the Lead to Read Program Director conduct the second interview.
- The applicant presents the needs of the community as well as what AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be doing. Success of the program as a current grantee was supported through documentation.
- However, the applicant does not address how the success of the program will be reported. The applicant was inconsistent with the number of volunteers each Member was encouraged to recruit.
- The applicant adequately describes community makeup, identified needs/interventions, and desired results. The role of AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be an essential part to meeting program goals.
- The applicant did not provide sufficient information that addresses the overall improvement wanted at the end of the three-year cycle.