

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

FY2012 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

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| <b>Legal Applicant Name: Community Corrections Improvement Association</b> | <b>Application ID: 12AC133931</b> |
| <b>Program Name: Each One Reach One AmeriCorps Project</b>                 |                                   |

*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:**

- Overall, the applicant has provided a solid proposal with good activities and research- and evidence-based design.
- The applicant has not fully demonstrated the specific components within the project activity categories.
- The applicant has not clearly identified how much training, reporting and other information each Member will be required to submit.
- The applicant begins with a solid research background, connected to risk factors and specific consequences within the community. The applicant has identified categories and names for programs that appear to be based on research and related directly to community characteristics and needs. Theory of Change is well documented and discussed.
- The applicant presents a persuasive case that AmeriCorps members can provide services to increase youth success in the community. They quote current research (2010 U.S. Census, United Way 2010, 2010 Iowa Department of Education, Casey Foundation, 2011 Institutional Analysis, and Iowa Child and Family Policy Center Kids Count 2011) to support their statement that youth who come from families in the child welfare system are at-risk of involvement or already involved in the juvenile system and will not succeed in life.
- The applicant provides information to support the needs of their target community in this proposed project. The system involves offenders living in urban high crime and poverty neighborhoods located in Linn, Johnson, and Tama Counties. These areas are targeted because of high risk factors that contribute to youth criminal behavior.

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- The applicant outlines specific slots and the number of AmeriCorps members needed and explains how the different slot types align with the program design and activities. For example, to provide out-of-school support to at-risk and high-risk youth: 21 Members full-time, and six quarter-time for summer; for 51 families in the child welfare system: three Members full-time; for veterans: three Members, 1 full-time and 2 half-time; and for mentoring: three full-time Members.
- No substantial data or narrative is provided to support how the impact will be reported on an annual basis for this project.
- The applicant did not describe the roles of the volunteers recruited in this project. More information is needed to determine the impact of the volunteers in the target community.
- The applicant provides a well-documented case for the need of 49 AmeriCorps members to provide mentoring and out of school programming to youth who are at-risk of or already involved with the juvenile justice system; and includes data regarding poverty rate increases, gaps in reading proficiency, and data showing high percentages of children from homes where a significant adult is incarcerated. The value added by AmeriCorps members is their ability to address barriers to change through an intensive level of support. A detailed and varied list of tasks that AmeriCorps members will focus on to improve the community is included in the application.
- The applicant describes interventions that are well-supported by research, such as one federal government review that found family meetings to be an effective method for assessing the needs of families and engaging partners. Several validated best practices are detailed that provide a clear picture of expected impact demonstrated by increases in self-esteem, social/emotional readiness for school, school attendance, engagement and achievement.
- Overall, the applicant convincingly links the need for mentoring and support services to anticipated outcomes and provides a clear rationale to support the effectiveness of AmeriCorps members as mentors for the target population.
- The applicant presents a persuasive case that poverty increases risk factors that lead to poor school performance in youth and increased recidivism for ex-offenders. Service areas were selected based on need as documented through U.S. Census, School District Free/Reduced Lunch, Department of Corrections, and Child & Family Services Review. Proposed interventions are supported by research from the Mentoring Resource Center, Center for Disease Control, and ACT, 2011.
- The applicant utilizes Member recruitment and selection strategies that led to a 92.5% retention rate last year. The proposed program targets populations in areas to be served by AmeriCorps members and indicates 10% of Members to be retired baby boomers, veterans, and people with disabilities.
- The applicant indicates that youth will increase self-esteem and school readiness; and that offenders, veterans, and families in the child welfare system will increase life skills and stability in housing and employment; but the applicant does not provide targets for the three-year funding cycle.