

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

FY2012 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant Name: City Year, Inc.	Application ID: 12AC134222
Program Name: City Year Chicago	

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 effectively demonstrated a compelling community need—addressing high drop-out rates —by presenting a variety of evidentiary resources: Chicago Public School (CPS) District reports, ISAT test scores, University reports, and national statistical reports. These reports note significant academic achievement gaps among low-income and minority students in the target communities as compared to other students in the district, state, and nation.
- The applicant presents a highly effective means of solving the identified community need by utilizing AmeriCorps members. Members will efficiently deliver comprehensive support within the targeted schools by providing a full-time model that has been effective in increasing academic performance (59% of 6th-9th grade students improved at least one letter grade in English/language arts), improving attendance (58% of those students had improved attendance), and increasing the capacity of CPS teachers to work with students in small groups.
- The applicant presents a strong and detailed evaluation plan designed to ensure continuous self-assessment and improvement through the use of formative/summative evaluations and many levels of reporting (applicant staff, board, school district personnel, etc.).
- The applicant presents a highly effective plan for recruiting a diverse membership base. The recruitment plan includes networking with identified recruitment partners (colleges/universities and community-based organizations) to yield an applicant pool of 1,000 prospective Members.
- The applicant describes the experience, dedication and human-power to accomplish most, if not all of the goals and objectives presented with a great margin of success.
- The applicant adapts the U.S. Army's model of "Be, Know, Do" to build Civic Identity, Civic Capacity, and Civic Action within each Member. They describe a well-developed training program that has opportunities for team building, reflection, and professional training; basic and advanced training academies, and a support network for Members.
- The link between community needs and the AmeriCorps member activities is identified. Adequate information is also provided regarding the severity of the dropout rate and the need for increased student engagement.

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- The applicant provides general evidence of WSWC's success for City Year, Inc. as a whole, not just for Chicago schools.
- Students will be selected for Focus List using baseline EWI data provided by CPS' Department of Graduation Pathways, which looks at average and below academic performance and attendance.
- The applicant maintains an evaluation calendar that includes deadlines for collecting baseline data, mid-year data and end-of-year data on student performance. Summative reports are produced mid-year and year-end and are distributed to the applicant's staff board, personnel and key sponsors.
- It is not clear how on-going data will be incorporated into the day to day mentoring and individualization planning. Also a strategy to measure behavioral improvements is not fully established.
- The applicant defended the need in their community with local academic indicators and provided a realistic description of their proposed activities based on previous experience. The activities described are linked to desired outcomes and use research based interventions.