

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Morehead State University

Application ID: 13AC145828

Program Name: MSU Corps

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. 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 the 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. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant clearly explains how the need for AmeriCorps services was determined through Response to Intervention processes.

(+) The applicant provides several data points that support the fact that the target communities are economically disadvantaged. Such as, the percentage of families in the target area that live below the poverty guidelines is higher than the rest of Kentucky and the nation.

(+) The applicant makes a relatively clear case for the severity of need in the targeted counties. For instance, the Unemployment Rates and post-secondary enrollment data support a genuine need for improvement in services in the area.

(+) With the extensive evidence of the needs in the targeted areas, the applicant does identify why the population in general was selected as well as the use of the Response to Intervention process that was used to select specific students to receive the services.

(+) The applicant demonstrates that poverty and low academic performance are part of cycle that leads to variety of societal issues such as higher incarceration rates, lower levels of civic involvement and higher levels of single-parent households.

(+) The applicant clearly indicates that the AmeriCorps members as tutors can provide more consistency than volunteers who are not specifically scheduled to assist the at-risk youth.

(+) The applicant indicates that 30 full-time slots are requested to address the needs of the targeted schools. This appears to provide effective alignment between the slots, members and the project that is proposed.

(+) The applicant clearly articulates how it will measure performance through the use of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments administered three times per year.

- (+) The applicant describes how it will utilize an external evaluator to conduct sound evaluation activities and produce annual progress reports that will capture qualitative and quantitative data for the purpose of measuring program impact.
- (+) The applicant provides a description of evidence-based and evidence-informed methods and measures, and describes the use of a State-approved, evidence-based assessment to determine impact.
- (+) The applicant will also provide intake and exit forms for each students. These will also document attitude and behavior changes that may occur based on the interventions. These efforts will provide clear measurement of the impact of the program.
- (+) The applicant described evidenced-informed measures, such as collecting data on students entering and exiting the program, which they will use to measure progress and report results.
- (+) The Measure of Academic Progress assessment will be given three times a year. These assessment scores will be used to address the student needs, and will also be reported to the AmeriCorps Program Director who will then compile the data to compare the impact of the interventions. These efforts provide a clear picture of the measurements used and the process of reporting the program data.
- (+) The proven community impact of the previous work with a tutorial model with similar at-risk students was used to set the performance target at 85%. This provides appropriate support for how the applicant determined the performance targets.
- (+) The proposal further illuminates the academic challenges faced by schools and students in the target communities by comparing the local statistics with state and national statistics. Forinstance, the proposal demonstrates that the graduation rate is 5% less than the state average and 8% less than the national average.
- (+) The proposal notes that the AmeriCorps members will provide consistent support for students that the schools have been unable to provide with community and parent volunteers. Due to competing commitments, these previous volunteers have not been able to provide regular and consistent volunteering.
- (-) The applicant did not provide enough information on exactly what the AmeriCorps members would do or state what grade levels they would be working with and how that might differentiate the instructional methods or process.
- (-) Although the applicant defines the impact on the student success and student achievement resulting from the tutoring interventions, the applicant does not clearly describe the impact of the AmeriCorps investment on the identified problems of drop outs and low post-secondary education.
- (-) While measures that assess the impact of tutoring are provided, details regarding how the intervention will have a measurable impact on the overall community are limited.
- (-) The applicant notes that Members will track progress throughout the year and at the end of the year will compare the scores for three administered MAP tests given at the beginning of the year, the middle of the year and the end of

the year with teachers and school administrators. It is unclear if the middle of the year MAP score will facilitate a formative evaluation of student progress allowing for adjustments to be made at the mid-year point.