

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Managing Director's Office

Application ID: 13AC147082

Program Name: GreenPHL

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 claims the AmeriCorps members they plan to attract, engage and rehabilitate have existing challenging problems and unique characteristics (no high school diploma, unemployed and with some, a criminal background). The applicant contends the AmeriCorps unique characteristics meet the criteria for serving this economically disadvantaged community.

(+) The applicant clearly states that "at-risk youth between the ages of 18 and 26 from low-income communities" will comprise their target community. Furthermore, the applicant explains that this population was selected in order to provide these youth with the opportunity to develop the skills required to obtain "meaningful work" and become "civically engaged" members of society.

(+) The activities such as weeding, painting, landscaping, and assisting in mechanical systems repair are integrated within several other plans and initiatives such as the Fairmount Park Natural Lands Restoration Master Plan, and the Citywide Vision, Philadelphia 2035. The application program is supported by the Mayor of Philadelphia and the Governor of Pennsylvania, which strengthens its potential for effectiveness and support.

(+) Target goals were established through a collaborative process involving numerous city agencies, and the key instrument which will be used to measure impact will be the project log. The impact data will be collected by the City Manager using industry standard instruments.

(-) The applicant's definition of the target community lacked necessary specifics such as the number of total citizens in Philadelphia and in Fairmont Park, and of these individuals, how many (or what percentage) are economically disadvantaged. The proposal also did not state the number of at-risk youth aged 18-26 that reside in Fairmont Park or Philadelphia.

(-) The applicant does not adequately document the extent or severity of the need to revitalize public lands. The application reports that there are 8,500 acres of underutilized or vacant lots in Philadelphia, but does not include a quantitative assessment of how many of these lots are city-owned.

(-) The applicant's request for 150 Members was not supported by specifics for the types of slots, service terms, and breakdown among the four City Departments and Agencies or job tasks in which they would serve. This created uncertainty as to how all of the service stated to be accomplished will actually occur.

(-) In several cases, the applicant does not explain how the proposed interventions are evidence-based or evidence-informed. For example, research showing that trees improve air quality or reduce storm water runoff was not referenced and the claim that trees "reduce air-related illness, lower summer temperatures and reduce noise pollution" was not substantiated. In addition, credible sources were not cited for the statements that the average rainfall in Philadelphia is 1 million gallons per year or that a greened acre decreases pollution by 80 to 90 percent.

(-) The data collection, measurement and reporting mechanisms lacked specificity to support the large amount and types of data from so many volunteers.