

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Michigan Association of United Ways

**Application ID:** 13AC147977

**Program Name:** MI Veterans Coalition Outreach AmeriCorps Program

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 outlines intentions to help veterans access medical benefits, compensation, pension, and educational and vocational rehabilitation by stating they will identify and directly help veterans access benefits and resources through the 10-10EZ Benefits Guide & Survey (10-10EZ). The applicant will also develop networks within the veteran community to identify impediments to benefit access.

(+) The applicant clearly lists the unemployed and homeless veteran population as the intended target. The applicant cites the Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness as showing 13% of individuals experiencing homelessness are veterans. The applicant also cites the 2011 Michigan Public Radio Report as showing Michigan's unemployment rate for Afghanistan and Iraq veterans at 29.4%, which is an increase of 14% from the previous year.

(+) The applicant provides data to substantiate the need for veteran services in target area: for example, Michigan has the 11<sup>th</sup> largest veteran population in the United States, and ranks 53<sup>rd</sup> out of 53 states and territories in total veterans' benefits assessed.

(+) The applicant clearly articulates the number of AmeriCorps members requested (20) and the full-time nature of the requested slots. In addition, the applicant provides specific information related to how the AmeriCorps members will be allocated to various program sites. For example, five full-time Members will work regionally and 15 will be located within organizations currently providing services or where veteran's congregate, increasing the likelihood that the target population will be reached.

(+) The applicant clearly describes AmeriCorps members' roles and responsibilities in their plan to utilize the 10-10EZ system to assess veteran needs. AmeriCorps members will become peer leaders, manage volunteers, attend veteran meetings, distribute literature so that community organizations use the 10-10EZ Survey, and train volunteers on the use of the survey.

(+) The applicant provides specific, quantitative outcomes to be accomplished through the proposed AmeriCorps project. For example, at least 15,000 veterans will receive information about veteran's resources and benefits, 650

groups and organizations will be trained to use the 10-10EZ Survey, and at least 25 of those groups will become national service sites or teams.

(+) The applicant provides strong evidence supporting that the proposed AmeriCorps program is both evidence-based and evidence-informed. Specifically, the proposed program is a replication of a successful program (Washington Vet Corps) which provides support, resources, and information to veterans transitioning into civilian life, impacting the lives of over 3,000 veterans accessing GI Bill benefits and over 300 accessing other services.

(+) The applicant explains that by the end of the three-year grant cycle, 15,000 veterans will be reached, 650 organizations will be educated on the 10-10EZ system, and at least 25 of these organizations will serve as national sites.

(-) The applicant does not provide information on how the existing AmeriCorps programs (Community Navigators and the Veterans Coalition Outreach AmeriCorps Program) have generated evidence-based and/or evidence-informed information and how this was utilized to inform the proposed program design.

(-) The applicant does not provide source data or dates for the statistics used to support the need for the project. This lack of information makes it difficult to determine the extent/severity of the community problems(s) the AmeriCorps member will address.

(-) The applicant does not provide information to determine what the organizations or program sites will accomplish that it could not be accomplished through existing staff and/or volunteers. While they state that AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers per year, they do not identify how this exceeds what they could do without AmeriCorps members.

(-) In the Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification, the applicant states they currently host two other AmeriCorps programs: (1) Community Navigators; and (2) Veterans Coalition Outreach AmeriCorps Program. They do not distinguish how the proposed AmeriCorps project is different than these two additional programs. This lack of discussion makes it unclear as to what the proposed AmeriCorps program will accomplish that cannot be accomplished by the existing programs.