

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** LIFT

**Application ID:** 13ED146532

**Program Name:** : LIFT AmeriCorps\*National Direct 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 provides information to support the extent of poverty within the targeted communities by using 2010 census data. Specifically, LIFT programs operate in low-income communities in eleven sites in Boston, Chicago, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia. For example, in the neighborhood served by LIFT New York, there is a 13.1% unemployment rate with 28.3% of residents receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- (+) The applicant cites evidence to suggest they succeeded impact goals in previous grant cycles in that their performance outcomes surpassed those of the entire 01-02 program year. By the end of the year, the applicant reported doubling its client numbers and increased volunteer engagement by 450%.
- (+) The applicant provides strong evidence of LIFT's increased ability to provide services to clients. Specifically, the applicant states that one AmeriCorps member leverages 25-30 additional direct service volunteers. In addition, AmeriCorps members helped LIFT increase direct services to clients by 57 percent and engage 33 percent more volunteers than they could have without AmeriCorps members.
- (+) The applicant provides support for the proposed intervention by discussing external research including that from Kretzmann & McKnight, Seligman, and Sen. In addition, the applicant cites a study by CFED which demonstrated the impact of additional family income on student school performance, purchasing power, and long-term financial wellness.
- (+) Proposed slots align with existing program design and activities and they also include expansion into an additional service area to its recently launched site in Los Angeles while continuing important work in Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C, New York, and Philadelphia.
- (+) The applicant provides a comprehensive work plan with three specific areas for AmeriCorps activities: (1) place clients on the path to economic stability and well-being; (2) volunteer recruitment, training, and support; and (3) community partnerships. In addition, the applicant lists specific tasks that AmeriCorps members will perform within

each of these areas. For example, with regards to placing clients on the path to economic stability and well-being, AmeriCorps members work one-on-one with clients to find jobs, secure housing, enroll clients in public benefits/tax credits, and obtain referrals for social services in addition to maintaining records within the applicant organization's online case management system.

(+) The applicant explains the use of its case management system in measuring and tracking the program's impact providing evidence-based data to support the intervention planned through this program.

(+) Evidence-based interventions and measurable community impact are based on the project's experience and past impact in the areas of employment and self-esteem.

(+) The applicant provides qualitative and quantitative data, and internal and external research to support program design. The applicant states that at the end of the grant period (July 2013-June 2016), they will have placed 30,000 individuals on a path to economic success, providing job placement services to 15,000 clients, and securing 1,275 job placements.

(+) The applicant provides evidence-based data to support enhanced outreach to veteran population such that they will also serve 1,050 veterans, helping them achieve outcomes which improve their quality of life.

(+) The applicant describes evidence from previous work and projected evidence-based measures that will positively impact community outcomes. For example, the applicant has engaged Keystone Accountability, a highly respected London-based evaluation firm, to help create a comprehensive system for gathering client feedback. They also reported that they completed a quantitative assessment that shows that each applicant secured 2.5 major outcomes (jobs, housing) for every client engaged in a long-term relationship with an AmeriCorps member or volunteer. They also reported generating \$13.7 million in wage increases, tax refunds, public benefits, and housing assistance for clients, providing a \$1,245 value per client.

(+) The applicant provides a two-year history of internal data, qualitative assessments, and field research showing a direct correlation between the number of resource connections and successful outcomes secured.

(-) The applicant does not explain why they chose these specific locations or zip codes in target cities.