

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Northwestern Connecticut AHEC

Application ID: 13ED147399

Program Name: AHEC 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 provided clear, easy to understand incidents of man-made disasters (mass shootings) and adequate documentation that included many examples of public shootings and direct correlation with mental health issues of the shooter as a key, contributing factor. These incidents provided sufficient evidence as to the importance of this program.

(+) The applicant provided sufficient data and evidence that though the public is aware of their vulnerability to man-made disasters through recent public and mass shooting events, strategies need to be developed to improve access to mental health care and enable those suffering from depression or mental health disorders to have better access to treatment.

(+) The applicant explained that due to budget decreases the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) is unable to hire staff to pursue this training, but are hoping to provide resources necessary for Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training that would otherwise not be available. The applicant hopes this will bring change in communities across the country.

(+) Part of the community impact will be measured by Members conducting evaluation activities, along with follow-up evaluations to track changes in attitude and behavior as a result of the training. These evaluations will be important for understanding the operation of the program and its effectiveness.

(+) The applicant adequately described that MHFA is an evidence-based program with outcomes that can be measured. It is used to train a large cross section of the population with the skills to identify mental health issues early and to help individuals get the treatment they need before dangerous situations develop. Those trained will: increase the recognition of mental disorders, have a better understanding of treatments, have more confidence in providing help to others, mitigate stigmatizing attitudes of those with mental illness, and decrease social distance from people with mental disorders.

(+) The applicant provides convincing evidence for measurable impact upon the target community by citing evidence

from the replication of MHFA in 14 countries.

(+) The applicant's program is expected to educate laypeople to recognize some basic symptoms of mental illness or crisis and offer in-depth training to volunteers, thereby validating the activities as stated in the application.

(+) The applicant will report the number of individuals that receive AmeriCorps-supported services in disaster mitigation. That number of individuals will directly measure community support.

(-) The applicant did not present sufficient information about the five-day training program.

(-) The applicant did not describe the target community(ies) in terms of economic disadvantage.