

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: FoodCorps, Inc.

Application ID: 13ES147079

Program Name: FoodCorps Connecticut

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 states that obesity is caused by a lack of knowledge as well as access to healthy foods. The applicant supports this statement with studies cited in the Journal of the American Medical Association 2003, Centers for Disease Control, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The applicant supports the relationship between obesity and knowledge with credible studies.

(+) The applicant supports the selection of the five counties in Connecticut as their targeted area with some relevant and recent statistics. Statistics taken from End Hunger Connecticut show that the area where the applicant proposes working have free or reduced lunch eligibilities ranging from 70.1% to 98.8%. Food insecurity rates range from 15.5% to 21.2%.

(+) The applicant also targets community Members and parents by involving them in the community gardens to be established. This expands the reach of the proposed program by exposing parents and the community to exercise and the healthy foods they have grown. It will enforce health behaviors in the home by involving the parents.

(+) The applicant supports the use of AmeriCorps members as filling a gap of providing a healthy food environment above and beyond what current employees can do because the schools are often resource poor while at the same time working with the most at-risk children.

(+) The general roles and responsibilities for the AmeriCorps members are well developed. This is seen in the applicant's expectation of the Members to deliver food and nutrition education, to expand school garden programs and to increase access to healthy food. The use of these three strategies is supported by recent recommendations from the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity

(+) The applicant will measure success of the curriculum in the school setting by determining frequency of local purchasing by the school food service. The greater purchasing from local farmers supports greater use of healthy foods in the school menu. Ultimately, the applicant states that changes in the state nutrition curriculum and integration of school gardens into state education standards will be due to the long-term success of its program.

Changes in the state education standards, as it relates to nutrition, can be used as a measure of success of this program.

(-) The application does not mention rates of food insecurity in the population areas to be served.

(-) Although general roles and responsibilities for the Members are developed, specific information of how the nutrition education will be delivered, a plan for expanding the school garden programs, and increasing use of local food are not listed.

(-) The applicant states that there are no studies in the literature to show the value of these types of programs. The applicant states that these are only preliminary studies. Thus, the applicant cannot show or support the potential success of their program.

(-) The applicant states a three pillar of Service Plan will be implemented but this is not described as an evidence-based curriculum. The three pillars are Knowledge, Engagement, and Access. This is not further described with program plans and activity guidelines. The lack of an evidence-based program can result in inconsistencies in program delivery. These inconsistencies can also affect the AmeriCorps members learning experience.