

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys and Girls Club Application ID: 14AC156319

Program Name: Vermont Youth Development Corps

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:

Strengths:

The applicant addresses a need for services on behalf of military families in Vermont. For example, the applicant describes issues affecting the rural population of Vermont and the lack of community cohesion that is caused by the lack of a military base in the area.

The applicant provides well documented data about the community need being addressed. As an example, the data sources are within the last five years or earlier. The applicant also gives well-supported data from local, state, national and government sources as well as studies.

The applicant provides well documented community need by describing a solid picture of military families in the State of Vermont with no active duty base for support as well as how that environment leaves families without important family services and support.

The applicant addresses a clear community need for obesity services for the youth population of Vermont by providing percentage data for youth who are obese.

The information provided by the applicant adequately demonstrates the lack of physical activity opportunities for youth in Vermont and describes how that correlates to health as well as obesity issues within families, by citing the decrease in available physical activity programs and activity levels of youth being less than one hour per day.

The applicant addresses compelling needs for investing in Healthy Futures for residents of Vermont. For example, 25.8% of Vermont youth in grades 9-12 are overweight or obese. The applicant provides well supported data from national research which provides a correlation between hunger and its negative impact on academic performance.

The applicant's logic model addresses the needs of the population in the activities and outputs of the program.

The applicant aligns the logic model with the program and provides detail on all aspects of the program.

The applicant has presented a comprehensive program utilizing AmeriCorps members in community sites throughout Washington County, Vermont. For example, 26 Members will serve at least 4,000 individuals providing health/nutrition services to youth and information as well as assistance to military families.

Members will recruit 170 or more volunteers to provide additional service.

Over the previous three years, the applicant demonstrates a successful history of past performance accomplishments. For example, the applicant provides statistical information about number of military families served and the percent of positive change in participants.

The Vermont Youth Development Corps (VYDC) has had three years of experience in successful program execution by providing statistical data on the percentage of military families served as well as the percentage of positive change of the participants being served.

The applicant indicated that they have exceeded their performance measures in the past and in 2010 was named one of the 52 most innovative AmeriCorps Programs.

During the past three years, the program has provided quality service for a large number of youth and adults.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides limited data on military youth and indirect data on how military youth are affected by obesity. For example, the applicant describes how military youth may suffer from anxiety and depression, which can lead to obesity, but there is no substantiated data to support how many military youth in Vermont are obese.

The applicant addresses poverty and obesity, but does not provide information on the poverty rates of military families or address whether this is a problem.

The statistics provided on obesity does not identify military youth as at-risk.

The applicant does not provide local nor state statistical data to support the needs of military families. The applicant cited national data that indicated more than half of children of deployed armed forces personnel demonstrated increased fear, anxiety, as well as behavioral problems and rural military families not having access to strong support networks. The applicant indicated that a December 2009 deployment directly affected 920 military children in Vermont, but did not discuss any negative impacts the deployment of a parent had on these 920 children.

The applicant's citations and references do not describe the program models studied in enough detail to determine the level of evidence. For example, evidence is unclear about the age range of the target population as well as other factors to determine if the studies cited match the proposed program activities.

The applicant provided unclear evidence. For example, titles of studies are given without citation or dates. Thus, making it difficult to decipher the type of research or the source of the research being cited.

Applicant does not always provide citations for evidence. For example, the applicant states “studies state” without citing studies or providing any supporting data.

It is unclear if the applicant will replicate any of the interventions cited in the evidence or how interventions will be accomplished.

No significant weaknesses identified in the Past Performance section.