

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: American Red Cross of Indiana

Application ID: 14AC156901

Program Name: American Red Cross of Indiana

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:

Applicant states a response to over 1,600 natural and man-made disasters. This is an average of 133 incidents a month and is a significant call volume for an emergency response group.

Applicant has presented a compelling amount of data on the need for these services in rural areas.

The applicant cites the number of disasters (1,600) that American Red Cross (ARC) of Indiana responded to during the last fiscal year, and this appears to be a significant number.

The applicant clearly articulated the struggles faced by the agency in the recruitment of volunteers and in responses to disasters in rural versus urban communities in Indiana.

The comparison of rural versus urban disaster preparedness and response challenges is an effective supporting argument, given the disparities in (lack of) human, social, and financial resources coupled with widely dispersed population, for the need to increase rural disaster response capacity.

In support of the Theory of Change, the logic model and narrative present a well-aligned, detailed, accountable path in using AmeriCorps members to expand community disaster resiliency.

The applicant's Theory of Change and logic model shows they are well aligned in each of the areas of inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Distribution of AmeriCorps members across the nine districts (encompassing the 80 rural/non-metropolitan Indiana counties) is an effective strategy to assure intervention has the greatest opportunity to reach the targeted recipients having the least available resources (e.g., remoteness, low population density, low financial and political capital, greater communication barriers - Ref. Rural Assistance Center).

AmeriCorps members will experience on-the-job training at disaster sites, which will prepare them with real world experience and make them more effective in recruiting and training volunteers impacting the identified needs.

The applicant measured its impact on the stated needs and made enhancements to its program after external evaluations were conducted in 2008 and 2011.

Applicant has a strong history of providing disaster assistance for 130 years. Their experience in disaster response, along with how they have worked to become more effective indicates they have a good working model of disaster preparedness, and they present clear and compelling evidence of the positive impact they have had on the stated need.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not reference the number of volunteers who responded to the 1,600 disasters in FY13.

The applicant does not clearly establish that there is an unmet need in response to disasters in Indiana.

The applicant does not address how the expected increase of an additional 2,600 disaster volunteers will impact the response or how it would be detrimental to not implement the program.

Applicant states a lack of resources (i.e., financial, social, political, human) available in rural areas, but there is very little data to reinforce this statement.

The referenced 1,600 disaster responses in 2012-13 is a statistic the applicant does not clearly attribute to the extent/scope of disaster preparedness in the 80 targeted counties, and it offers no comparative results by which to judge relative magnitude (i.e., decreasing, stable, growing) of the problem.

The need for additional disaster response capacity is weakly supported without more evidence of its dispersal across the target counties.

No significant weakness was noted in the AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact section.

No evidence noted in the Past Performance section.