

## **APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY**

### **2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition**

Legal Applicant: Boys & Girls Clubs of Wayne County Indiana, Inc.

Program Name: Project: ACES

Application ID: 14AC157149

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 references data from national and state sources to document the need for homework assistance and nutrition education in Wayne County, Indiana.

The applicant offers compelling and relevant data to document a need for nutrition education and obesity prevention for Wayne County youth. This includes evidence from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and local and state sources. In addition, the applicant provides evidence from academic sources linking the data to the proposed program.

The applicant cited an Education Week article from 2008 chronicling the drop-out problem and associated issues and noted that over-all conditions in Indiana reflect the national drop-out problem.

The applicant referenced an undated National Summer Learning Association report on summer loss in computation and spelling.

The applicant cited data from the longitudinal National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (most recent, 2011) and a 2011 CDC study regarding obesity prevalence and prevalence increases over time and the prevalence of adult and youth obesity in Indiana.

The applicant cited data from a 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) regarding the percentage of high school students in Indiana who are either overweight or obese; Indiana data was compared to national rates.

The applicant cited YRBS data regarding the descriptors Indiana High School students use regarding their weight and how they maintain/lose weight; this data was compared to national averages.

The applicant cited a 2007 study about Body Mass Index (BMI) increases during the summer.

The applicant cited a statistic from the Food Research Action Council regarding the prevalence of food insecurity in Indiana (22.7 percent) and noted that it serves at-risk youth as evidenced by 92 percent receiving free or reduced lunch and 41 percent attending schools failing to make annual yearly progress.

The applicant provides evidence of the top four reasons youth drop out of school. They state this from data given from the National Statistics on Indiana.

The applicant quoted Center for Disease Control reports of Indiana as the 15th in the nation in incidences of obesity in 2011. The applicant provided clear evidence from the CDC Youth Behavior Risk Survey of obesity in the state of Indiana.

Member activities are relevant to desired outcomes, and the model of program delivery is consistent with the presented evidence of similarly successful programs.

The applicant noted that club executive directors were surveyed regarding the number of Members respective clubs would need to get an idea about how many to request in the present proposal.

The applicant noted that each Member will be provided with an on-site mentor with experience in the Member's program area.

The applicant has a specific plan by which to incorporate their request for 165 Corps Members thorough the state of Indiana. They have developed pre-service orientation which includes a comprehensive manual of the program goals, services, activities and evaluation.

The applicant is proposing that all Members be a part of a Leadership Academy and participate in monthly conference calls. By becoming a part of the Leadership Academy and monthly conference calls, the AmeriCorps members will learn various leadership skills and policy and program changes that will enhance the program. They will also become valued members to the program and highly effective in solving the identified problems.

The applicant provided an assessment of a pre- and post-test, documenting marked improvement in the children's scores during the intervention.

The applicant describes and documents a record of program success. This documentation includes evidence of community partnerships, data-documented outcomes associated with academic success resulting from the organization's programming, and positive academic outcomes resulting from the applicant's AmeriCorps program.

The applicant documents an array of successful programs that are similar to their proposed programming in the areas of academics, and health.

The applicant provided information regarding the difference in average increases in math and reading for its participants before Boys and Girls Club had AmeriCorps Members and at the end of last year's program; before AmeriCorps average increases were 36 percent (reading) and 34 percent (math) and after three years of AmeriCorps members, average increases were 65 percent and 62 percent respectively.

The applicant states they met their performance measures targets for the last 2 years, however missed the percentage increase for reading/math fluencies target by 4 %.

The applicant increased their training opportunities with the AmeriCorps members to improve their skills and abilities at tracking their programs and services offered. Tracking their programs and services provides a helpful tool in assessing what they have done in the past and what is needed for the future.

Weaknesses:

The applicant describes a need for programming in three distinct areas – homework/ academics, health, and volunteering. Although the applicant offers evidence to describe the need in each area, they do not adequately describe how these are associated with one another. It is unclear why programming will focus on each area rather than on a specific need.

The applicant discusses reasons for high school drop outs, but fails to cite the source of the data.

The data provided by the applicant is relevant to Indiana, but is only tangentially relevant to Wayne County; it is unclear where the 100 sites eligible for inclusion in this program are located in Indiana and the extent of severity and prevalence in the areas surrounding those sites.

The applicant did not provide evidence that summer loss, weight issues or food insecurity in Wayne County is similar or worse than summer loss, weight issues or food insecurity in Indiana or nationally.

The applicant provided no data about the prevalence and severity of summer loss, weight issues, or food insecurity for Wayne County or for any of its sites.

While the pre and post–tests referenced by the applicant show that the applicant is likely able to conduct a successful program in that reading and math achievement scores increased from baseline, this type of data is not evidence of need.

The applicant provided no context for the percentages reported.

The applicant’s program seeks to address needs of young people in three areas. It is unclear how the program areas are associated and whether or not there may be a duplication of services.

The applicant did not provide the number of specific program sites so it is unclear whether the number of Members requested is sufficient/insufficient to carry out proposed services; the applicant does mention that it has five locations in Wayne County and provides services at 38 other locations, but was unclear whether Members will be serving in those locations.

The applicant did not discuss the distribution of Members by time (e.g., full time, quarter time, etc...) or location.

The applicant did not discuss how many Members would be assigned by program area.

The applicant did not discuss the specific activities Members will be engaged in and the role they are expected to fulfill.

The applicant doesn't fully describe performance outcomes for the past three years. They identify one measure for academic increases resulting from the program. It is unclear whether or not they met targets in other areas.

The applicant did not provide any information regarding whether it did not meet, met, or exceeded its performance measures for the healthy futures component of their program.

The applicant did not provide any information regarding whether it did not meet, met, or exceeded its performance measures for the capacity building component of their program.

The applicant referenced anecdotal evidence from parents and schools that programs are helping children in need by improving confidence and increasing homework completion, but offered no data to support this evidence.