

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Philadelphia Youth for Change, Inc.

Application ID: 14AC157744

Program Name: YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

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 presents compelling data to support the need of adequate food resources for economically disadvantaged families in Philadelphia. Supporting data for this need contained local and national comparable data to show the severity of the need with Philadelphia being the 4th highest city in the U.S. in terms of food hardship.

The applicant provided specific relevant data to document the need and evidence to support the choice of intervention.

The local needs for adequate food and increase in income/employment were supported with sufficient recent credible data sources such as the 2011 Education Law Center Study, the 2011 CLASP policy study, and the Pew Charitable Trust Philadelphia 2012 State of the City Philadelphia Report.

The need of having more young people complete high school education is adequately connected to creating avenues for more career options and greater opportunities for employment.

Sufficient comparison data are given for the low rates of high school graduation (55%) in Philadelphia schools as compared to the entire state of Pennsylvania. The data adequately demonstrate the severity of the need for higher education attainment and greater employability skills.

The data provided demonstrated prevalence (e.g., reported the number of youth people who don't graduate from high school on time/at all; reported unemployment rates; and poverty rates).

The applicant provided evidence of local and national trends.

The data provided are from governmental websites (e.g., Census Bureau).

The data are recent and related to identified need/issue that the project is intended to address.

The applicant adequately describes the activities of the 30 quarter time AmeriCorps members, and those activities adequately align to address the established community needs of increase in employment, decrease in poverty, and increase in food security.

The Youth Build activities are well detailed for the quarter time members' community service and job-building skills which will occur through the Share Food program in Philadelphia.

The applicant describes in great detail the process that participants will go through while in the program. For example, participation in 450 hours of community service—half the year will be spent building academic skills while the other half will be spent developing vocational and soft skills.

The program will use a rigorous, competency-based curriculum.

The program is learner centered and focused on industry training rather than high school content.

The proposed program is tailored to the target audience and is context specific.

The applicant meets or exceeds its outcome goals for graduation rate outcomes, number of hours of technical assistance to the community by AmeriCorps members, number of AmeriCorps members earning industry certifications, and community satisfaction of service given by program Members.

The applicant has significant experience implementing programs similar to the proposed program and working with audiences similar to or the same as the targeted audience.

The applicant provides strong evidence of past performance such as the number of participants served, the number of participants who completed the program, the number of participants who earned high school diplomas, the number of computers refurbished, and the number of technical assistance hours.

Weaknesses:

Insufficient details are evident to describe the content and methodology of the curriculum which will be utilized by the AmeriCorps members as the means to gain high school graduation competency. The lack of specificity of curriculum and methodology beyond naming subjects to be covered does not support this intervention as being highly effective in solving the problem of lack of high school curriculum completion.

It is not clearly explained why the applicant selects 10 percent of the selected AmeriCorps members who are not economically impoverished, whereas the applicant states the strong severity of Philadelphia problems exist with economically impoverished families and young people.

The applicant does not fully explain the AmeriCorps full-time Members' activities and correlation to the interventions in the logic model as compared to the quarter-time Members' activities.