

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

Application ID: 15AC167815

Program Name: Vermont Housing and Conservation Board AmeriCorps

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 summary 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 provides a comprehensive description of the proposed activities to include rapid re-housing, case management, shelter assistance, and invasive species management. The activities are logically connected to the identified needs and to the desired outcomes of improved affordable housing and the preservation of open spaces and ecosystems.

The applicant cites specific and relevant data from reputable sources that well document the identified needs of insufficient affordable housing services and threats to open spaces and healthy ecosystems, making a compelling case that these problems are widespread in the communities to be served.

The training plan has a solid curriculum designed to prepare Members for service activities. Highlights of the plan include ongoing training sessions throughout the service year given by subject matter experts and the opportunity for Members to attend national and statewide conferences.

The applicant presents an acceptable plan to train Members with regard to prohibited activities. The plan provides a description of how the training will be reinforced through continuous monitoring including daily on-site supervision, timesheets, and formal evaluations.

The applicant clearly describes the need for affordable housing opportunities services, healthy ecosystems and reducing threats to open spaces by using recent and relevant state and national statistics. The data that is provided indicates a significant and compelling level of need in the communities to be served.

The proposed member activities of delivering affordable housing and environmental education/stewardship services are logically connected to the needs identified by the applicant and to the outcomes of improved affordable housing services, volunteer mobilization and environmental education and stewardship.

Members will have sufficient opportunities to engage in activities such as independent service projects and in the statewide launch that will provide a meaningful service experience.

The Regional AmeriCorps Recruitment Envoy serves as a suitable tool to recruit Members from the communities where the program operates by using stories and experiences of current AmeriCorps members.

Members are able to provide information on the duties, requirements, and advantages received through participating in the program.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not sufficiently explain how the program will encourage continued engagement in public and community service beyond the AmeriCorps term.

The logic model does not provide any measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served or acres stewarded) for any activities provided.

AmeriCorps members service activities such as providing case management services, housing identification and placement, general shelter assistance, and financial literacy training are not sufficiently unique from services provided by staff at partner agencies.

It is unclear how some member activities related to case management and housing placement are distinct from the roles of existing staff.

The application does not sufficiently describe how Members will develop an ethic of and skills for active and productive citizenship or how they will be encouraged to continue to engage in public and community service.