

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Milwaukee Christian Center - YouthBuild

Application ID: 15AC167822

Program Name: Milwaukee Christian Center - YouthCorps

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 strong evidence to support the need for education, leadership, and workforce development in the communities served through this program.

The applicant provides strong evidence to substantiate the need for a trained workforce in the specific areas of the community and provided documentation relevant to various ethnicities within the community.

The applicant presented a compelling case as to how the Members would gain skills and education that would produce significant and unique opportunities for the Members to be job ready after their term of service in high paying jobs.

There detailed evidence that the Members will receive high quality training that will produce effective service and skills that will be transferrable in life after AmeriCorps.

Members, Supervisors, and volunteers receive training regarding rules and prohibited activities and the applicant additionally describes an innovative and unique business card that is distributed to Members to carry with them to remind them of the regulations.

The applicant has a strong plan for meaningful service opportunities and reflection for Members as a result of Members completing various activities including mandatory 100 hours of service, various trainings, daily reflections, and weekly journaling.

There is a strong recruitment plan where Members are recruited from specific areas in the community so that when they return to their home community they will have the skills and experience to gain employment in their home community and should become productive citizens.

Citing reports from reputable sources, the applicant clearly explains how poverty and racial disparity have resulted in the dual problems of lack of education and affordable housing in the target community. The proposed interventions are designed to effectively address these issues.

The applicant clearly demonstrates compelling need among the target population through current data cited from

credible sources that substantiates low education levels, few leadership opportunities, high unemployment rates, and lack of affordable housing

The applicant provides a thorough description of the activities that the part-time Members, full-time Members and volunteers will be engaged in.

In addition to practical training in home construction; Members receive comprehensive classroom training in requirements around prohibited activities, GED preparation or academic remediation, job readiness skills, First Aid and CPR, and preparation for various construction-related certifications. All trainers are certified instructors and/or have expertise in their fields.

Program focus on academic remediation, GED preparation, on-the-job training in home construction, and opportunities to complete building-trade certifications is evidence of significant efforts to increase Member future employability.

The applicant ensures meaningful service opportunities for Members such as planning and implementing a project to address a community issue of their choice. Reflection is incorporated through weekly journal entries as well as through oral discussions at daily meetings.

There is a deliberate effort to instill an ethic of service by requiring Members to complete three hours of community service per week in projects that include reading with children and neighborhood cleanup.

Comprehensive program components involving volunteer recruitment and serving as rotating crew leader and Youth Leadership Council member provide opportunities for AmeriCorps members to develop effective leadership skills that can be used for public and community service beyond the service term.

The data is compelling concerning the high unemployment rates for 16-24 year olds in the Member service area, and supports the need that the YouthBuild program fills in preparing participants for high-growth, high-wage jobs in the construction industry (including gaining a flexible skill-set which further strengthens their future construction job opportunities).

The member training plan is strong and includes thorough multi-skillset subject-matter training and certification relevant to the construction field.

Members will gain significant skills and training as a result of their service that they can use in their futures.

The range of specific training is substantial and covers job training skills and communication related training; educational support for GED completion is also provided.

The proposal's community service plan is meaningful, detailed, and indicates Members will participate in a range of community projects.

The logic model contains good detail, flows well between components of the logic model, and clearly connects member outcomes to community impact.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to identify the quantity of hours that Members will actually engage in and therefore it is difficult to determine how much of the Member's time is spent training and how much time is actually spent engaged in work

to meet the needs identified in the project beyond training of the Members.

The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence to show that the activities are likely to produce the stated community outcomes.

The proposal has little information about the AmeriCorps program specific training that Members will receive.

The application lacks detail concerning meaningful connections with fellow Members. Also, the Member Experience section does not provide information about opportunities Members will have to connect to the broader National Service network.