

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation

Application ID: 15AC167952

Program Name: Marshfield Clinic AmeriCorps Afterschool

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 clearly describes the target-service area consisting of 37 counties located in rural northwestern Wisconsin and the academic case-management services 30 fulltime AmeriCorps members will perform for economically-disadvantaged students (grades K through 8) participating in its proposed afterschool programs.

The applicant provides extensive research-based data that strongly demonstrate that afterschool programs are an effective intervention for improving academic performance; and how its proposed "Academic Plus" afterschool program will be implemented in at least 12 sites. The roles of the 30 AmeriCorps members are clearly defined and incorporate the tenants of afterschool programming.

The applicant provides a detailed and comprehensive description of the training AmeriCorps members and volunteers will receive that is evidence-based and results oriented. Members will be thoroughly trained on the components of Academic Plus and how to implement it, academic skills coaching; as well as case management activities.

The applicant provides a detailed description of the support and guidance AmeriCorps members will receive from supervisors that enable them to provide high-quality service; as clearly evidenced by AmeriCorps members having weekly meetings with their supervisors and two performance evaluations in order to document issues/challenges and successes.

The applicant's recruitment strategy is well-documented and focused. The applicant specifically describes how Members are recruited by local host sites with assistance of the applicant's program staff which are supplied with "recruitment tool kits" consisting of flyers, sample position descriptions, and suggestions of recruitment methods proven successful by others.

The applicant presents compelling data and evidence which compares the target with peer or state and national statistics from current sources to support the need to provide high-quality, academic afterschool programming.

The applicant presents a comprehensive, well-designed plan describing Members and volunteers activities.

The application clearly describes a well-designed training plan provided by staff and university professionals.

The application describes a complete, local recruiting plan, including the use of kits containing many helpful tools.

The applicant provides data pertinent to the state and the community problem/need to be served and establishes the need to provide this type of program to serve the area youth.

The proposed program is supported by current research studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed intervention with the targeted students.

The AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training prior to the start of the program, will have access to an online training portal throughout the service year, and will be provided additional targeted training at midyear. The trainings proposed are aligned with the program goals.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide any statistical data on the academic performance (such as low math and reading levels, and poor attendance) of students in the 37-county target service area. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the prevalence and severity of need for case management services that will improve academic performance and student engagement.

Because the applicant did not provide convincing evidence for need of academic case-management services or poor academic performance in the target-service area, it is difficult to ascertain how all elements (such as the problem and activities) of the logic model are clearly aligned with the proposed outputs and outcomes.

The applicant does not provide any information on how the AmeriCorps workers will leverage the volunteers they are required to recruit.