

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative

**Application ID:** 15AC168250

**Program Name:** Family Resource Youth Service Corps (FRYSC)

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 sufficiently describes the proposed intervention, including the specific tutoring model to be utilized, the number of hours of service provided, and the rationale for the hours to be provided.

The program activities are directly linked to the identified educational needs in the community.

The applicant adequately documents the level of need, citing local, state and national data regarding the link between poverty, third grade reading levels, and high school graduation.

The compelling data provided document the long-standing poverty levels and the impact this has on achieving positive educational outcomes.

The program design incorporates recent research findings on the effectiveness of intervention strategies with the at risk populations to be served, directly linking activities to anticipated outcomes.

The applicant provides a concise logic model that coherently connects the activities to be undertaken and the anticipated short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.

A sufficient line of supervision is described with duties noted at various levels within the program activities. The applicant adequately documents that supervisors will be trained at all levels to ensure program regulations are adhered to and expectations met throughout the project with persons responsible for carrying out supervision activities identified by position titles.

The applicant adequately describes activities that will allow AmeriCorps members to gain skills that can be carried over into future employment and community involvement. For example, the applicant notes that many former AmeriCorps members continue their engagement by going into teaching after leaving the AmeriCorps tutoring and mentoring program, utilizing the skills and knowledge gained to impact student achievement.

The applicant provides specific details regarding the training to be provided to AmeriCorps members. This includes initial training regarding the AmeriCorps program and training in literacy interventions with opportunities for practice as well as in-service training provided on an on-going basis through the school sites.

The applicant details a well-described and well-documented problem in the community that deals with low income students who have low achievement levels.

The applicant presents a series of proposed educational services and activities designed to provide reasonable academic and social supports to raise student achievement levels in target schools.

The logic model and theory of change are consistent in their presentation of the proposed intervention and expected outcomes.

The description of the proposed intervention includes a thorough depiction of the unique roles that the AmeriCorps members and leveraged volunteers will have in implementing the program, the duration and dosage of the intervention, the number of children who will be impacted by the interventions and the mechanisms through which the proposed interventions will lead to the intended outcomes.

The plan to train Members to implement the programs is comprehensive and includes training from a literacy specialist, attendance at research presentations, and support and mentorship from instructional teams at the schools increasing the probability for skills advancement for Members and successful implementation of the proposed program.

The application describes a number of opportunities for Members to connect including the three-day orientation, monthly conference calls and through attendance at a conference all which will help build esprit de corps.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not adequately articulate the activities of the mentors within the school setting. It is unclear how the mentor activities are different than that of tutors.

The applicant does not thoroughly describe the theory of change as it is incorporated into program activities.

The applicant does not provide sufficient information regarding the frequency and specific activities of the supervisor to ensure that high quality guidance is provided to AmeriCorps members.

The activities listed for supervisors focus on logistics such as time-keeping with limited information on how they will ensure Members receive high-quality guidance regarding their role in achieving short- and long-term outcomes at their assigned sites.

Little information is provided regarding the recruitment of AmeriCorps members from the communities to be served.

The applicant does not articulate a sound plan to ensure that Members establish connections with each other and the larger community of AmeriCorps members.

Information is provided regarding the acknowledgement of length of time with the program; however, this does not address the quality of the commitment to service activities and the AmeriCorps program.

In addressing the need for the project and how it will address the problem, the applicant provides a very general statement that lacks detailed information concerning how the specific efforts such as tutoring, mentoring, and basic

needs support will impact on reading and literacy in each of the grade levels of the school.

The applicant provides data identifying the level of poverty but does not identify sources and dates associated with the data.

The applicant provides outcomes that are not measurable in terms of the various inputs provided. For example, the outcome states that there will be changes in academic performance and readiness levels.

The applicant does not provide any specific indication of how much change is expected to take place as a result of the many hours of tutoring and the amount of dosage of services being provided.

It is unclear what the overall expectations will be in terms of improved student achievement as a result of the services provided.

The training provided to full-time Members consists of three days of instruction on the reading model that was adopted. It is unclear if the Members will receive training in mentoring and other activities in which they will provide services.

Quarter time Members will receive only a half day of training. These levels of training are minimal and do not have follow-up sessions identified. No mention is made in the application of prohibited activities on the part of AmeriCorps members.

The role of the supervisor in the project is one of making sure that Members comply with rules and regulations. While supervisors are trained, it is unclear how long the training is and what is included in the training process.

The information describing the supervisory activities focuses almost entirely on administrative procedures.

The applicant does not address the issue of recruitment of Members. It is unclear how the applicant plans to identify, recruit, select, and hire full and part-time Members for the project.

While state-wide rates were provided, the application did not include poverty or literacy statistics for the targeted communities making it difficult to identify the relative need within the identified communities.

The absence of literature documenting the effectiveness of the proposed Reading Mastery Curriculum and Reading Buddies program models coupled with the lack of documentation of outcomes from past experience of AmeriCorps members employing these curricula within this program make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the proposed programs in increasing literacy within the target population.

The description of the supervision provided in the application is lacking the types of support and supervision that will be provided to Members to facilitate their successful implementation of the intervention.

The application does not address plans for member recruitment so it is unclear if Members will be recruited from the targeted communities.