

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** City Year, Inc

**Application ID:** 15AC168393

**Program Name:** City Year Columbus

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 significant details regarding the AmeriCorps members' daily activities and there is a strong alignment between those activities and the chosen intervention.

The applicant clearly links every facet of the chosen intervention with each aspect of the need statement. The proposed activities (small group tutoring in English and Math, classroom support, homework help, and attendance incentive programs) address each of the elements of the need statement (low scores in English and Math, poor attendance rates) as they relate to the end goal of increasing graduation rates.

Supervisors on several levels will have frequent and meaningful engagement with AmeriCorps members, including daily check-ins, weekly meetings, and on-site supervision.

AmeriCorps members will receive several trainings to prepare them for post-service life. The applicant also clearly demonstrates past success in placing City Year Members into Teach for America positions.

The problems and needs to be addresses by the proposed project are well-documented and backed up with relevant research data.

The applicant clearly describes how it plans to address low graduation rates and drop-out rates, and also how it plans to increase student retention rates.

The AmeriCorps members who will be engaged in meeting the educational needs of the targeted, student population represent an age group that is well within the criteria used to guide the mentoring activities of the project.

The AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training in areas that relate directly to the services they will provide in support of the proposed project.

The applicant has extensive experience successfully administering other AmeriCorps-funded projects.

The elements of the program that address ELA and math scores are clearly linked to the high drop-out risk indicators the program is designed to address.

The logic model is detailed and flows well, outlining more detailed outputs and outcomes than are described in the narrative.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not place the community's need within the context of state and national statistics; as such, it is difficult to judge whether this need is prevalent relative to other areas.

The applicant does not offer very specific details regarding the methods of recruiting Members locally.

While they do mention the intention of working to develop relationships with local feeders, this does not lay out a specific plan for doing so.

No information is presented describing the root causes for the problems that are to be addressed.

No information is provided concerning the criteria that will be used to select individuals who will serve as Members of the six-AmeriCorps teams.

No information is provided which clearly describes topics that will be covered in the social-emotional initiatives that will be implemented as a part of the proposed project, including the Social-Step program for elementary schools.

The applicant failed to clearly describe the guiding principles that will be covered in the training programs of the proposed project, including the topics that will be covered in the leadership development and Idealist's Journey curriculum.

The applicant failed to clearly describe the protocol procedures that will be followed for recruiting Members locally.

The applicant failed to describe the types of questions that will be included in the survey instruments to be administered to school principals, teachers, and AmeriCorps members.

No information is provided concerning the nature and purpose of the Family Literature Nights that will be held as a part of the proposed project, including who will be involved in such activities.

No information is provided describing how the confidentiality of the data that is collected through survey instruments will be protected and stored.

The applicant failed to name the peer-review journals that it plans to submit articles concerning the salient features and outcomes of the proposed project.

The applicant does not make a clear link between the proposed intervention (ELA and math tutoring, mentoring, and physical improvements to school facilities) and the root causes of the problem (high poverty rate).

No information about the physical school facilities needing improvement is given in the problem statement, and no data is provided to document the need for this intervention.

No state, regional, or national data is given to illustrate that the attendance rates are a prevalent and severe problem in the target communities.

It is unclear exactly what role the volunteers will play or how their activities will affect the program outcomes.

The narrative of the theory of change and logic model refers to Whole School Whole Child program but provides no details about what this program entails.

There is little connection between the logic model in table format and the narrative describing it.