

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Colorado Parent and Child Foundation (HippyCorps)

Application ID: 15AC168407

Program Name: Colorado HIPPYCorps

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 Member-training curriculum supports a high-quality Member experience with the inclusion of an additional review of allowable and prohibited activities during campaign season to prepare Members to comply with AmeriCorps regulations.

The applicant provides compelling data to describe how lack of parental engagement in preschool learning activities, particularly among economically disadvantaged children, can precipitate lifelong underperformance and also aligns service delivery to Colorado's communities with linguistic and social isolation.

The applicant clearly describes the program design model used in high need counties in Colorado and how AmeriCorps members will serve the community by implementing a home-visiting parent and child program fostering better parent/child interaction leading to the goal of improved school readiness and long-term school success.

The applicant narrative appropriately connects member service by engaging one-on-one relationships with parents in the delivery of age appropriate curriculum on a prescribed and structured plan using evidenced-based HIPPY program in designated counties in Colorado.

The role of supervisors within the applicant structure of Member supervision is logically and clearly presented with a commendable component face-to-face interactions and supervisory observation during home service visits to ensure quality program delivery.

The applicant provided sufficient detail connecting the value of training and skills developed through this experience to post-employment opportunities for Members (i.e. numbers of Members who have obtained related employment with community-based agencies).

Reflection is an integral component of the proposed plan as evidenced by its intentional use at several levels, including during team meetings, Member evaluations, journaling activities, and planning to help guide Members in their assessment of success and for life after this AmeriCorps experience.

The applicant presents compelling data, such as poverty rates, reading scores, graduation rates, and findings of a 2010 statewide needs assessment conducted by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, to

support the need for high-quality, early childhood services in 9 Colorado counties.

The effectiveness of the HIPPY model is well-supported through national research findings and by pre-/posttest survey results of parents participating in the Colorado HIPPY program. The HIPPY model has been identified as a high-quality, evidence-based program by the Rand Corporation's report on early childhood interventions and by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

AmeriCorps members are likely to be successful because they will be recruited from the target population of parents in the 9-county area. AmeriCorps members who have been previous participants in the Colorado HIPPY program are likely to increase the program's effectiveness due to their unique understanding of the program and the program's participants.

The applicant presents a convincing case that Members will gain employment skills and training in early childhood education likely to improve economic conditions for Members and their communities.

Well-designed, meaningful service experiences are likely to provide Members with an enhanced sense of community needs and efficacy in addressing these needs. Opportunities for reflection are appropriate in frequency and variety.

The applicant describes an extensive plan for training which includes time spent practicing delivery of the HIPPY curriculum.

The applicant provides a comprehensive plan for supervisors to provide on-going guidance and support through weekly 4-hour meetings, observations of home visits, and twice yearly evaluations.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides insufficient data to support that building parents' professional vocabulary will increase parent confidence or effectiveness with teachers.

The applicant did not support if increased parent-child education activities--over time--will sustain parental engagement and involvement in the child's education after the program concludes.

The applicant cites one data source or report in the narrative from an undefined organization/group which suggests cause and effect relationships between early childhood education and major social problems. With no source of the document cited, the credibility of this data source is questioned.

The application does not sufficiently address the role of volunteers and how volunteers will support or align with the role of AmeriCorps members in the home-visiting parent and child program.

Applicant discussion or description about the HIPPY early childhood leaning program curriculum, who will provide this training as content expert, and how it will be provided, are not adequately presented to fully assess the overall comprehensive training plan for Members.

It is not sufficiently clear how the program will facilitate or encourage Members in meaningful or structured ways to engage continued involvement either at the community or school level beyond this experience. It is assumed that Members will be actively involved in their communities, but there is no agency data to indicate increased volunteerism, school involvement, or other engagement.

The applicant does not define the roles and activities of the 80 volunteers leveraged by AmeriCorps members. This

makes it difficult to assess the extent to which volunteers will support the goals of the Colorado HIPPY program.

It is not clear that volunteers will receive training concerning AmeriCorps prohibited activities.

The applicant's description of supervisor training lacks specific evidence that supervisors will be trained in AmeriCorps requirements, including requirements about prohibited activities.

The applicant does not provide a sufficiently detailed plan to encourage AmeriCorps members to engage in public and community service beyond the Members' terms of service.

The applicant does not adequately describe the method of recruiting AmeriCorps members from the target population of parents in the 9-county area.