

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Playworks Education Energized

Application ID: 15AC168838

Program Name: Playworks Washington DC

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 presents a comprehensive evidence based program to be utilized in the schools to counter bullying issues in the district.

The training plan includes a detailed list of topics and training techniques to provide extensive material to the AmeriCorps members. This intensive training plan seems to cover all aspects the Members will need to accomplish this program.

Member supervision addressed through bi-weekly meetings with two experienced AmeriCorps members including site visits, performance evaluations, and ongoing mentorships seems highly effective.

The Members reflect on their performance and assess the program implementation effectively through developing and identifying goals and objectives monthly.

The applicant demonstrates a clear method to utilize the AmeriCorps members to create an inclusive environment where all the students feel safe and engaged.

The AmeriCorps members will spend time with individual classes at their assigned school to teach the games offered at recess and to introduce the tenets of respect and inclusion. These activities will help the students become more comfortable in actively participating in games with their peers. The volunteers will be leveraged mainly from the grantee organization.

The applicant provides well-documented evidence that a bullying problem exists in the target area. The planned intervention addresses the bullying concern through a six pronged model that has been utilized in the past with documented success.

The applicant demonstrates an effective plan that will support the local elementary schools through additional AmeriCorps members on the playground and through reinforcing pro-social skills in the classroom.

The applicant provides a well-aligned training for the AmeriCorps members. For example, they will provide a two week pre-service training which will be followed by additional monthly trainings.

The applicant organization cites national and local data sources to clearly state the need for the proposed program and evidence-based interventions.

The applicant organization describes several evidence-based interventions that fit the Theory of Change Logic model, intended outcomes and performance measures.

The logic model provides full details on specific activities, performance measures and outcomes.

The applicant organization describes specific opportunities for Members to engage and collaborate with other local AmeriCorps programs.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides data regarding the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey compiled in 2013, showing 30% of the youth in the school district are being bullied and 20% of the youth do not feel safe at school. It is unclear how this data is determined to show widespread bullying in all the schools in the district and the severity in the community.

Though the supervisors have two years' experience in AmeriCorps and have a three day training session, the applicant does not explain any further training or supervision throughout the program year.

It is unclear what significant and unique contributions the AmeriCorps members will contribute to the schools and community.

The applicant does not explain what opportunities the AmeriCorps members will have to establish connections with each other.

The applicant unconvincingly addresses the training that the AmeriCorps members will receive on civic responsibility, diversity and inclusion.

The applicant does not fully develop how their events will establish connections with each other and other programs. For example, the applicant does not fully address how the AmeriCorps member's participation in their program will improve their chance to securing employment after their service period ends.

The applicant does not address future employment opportunities for the AmeriCorps members.

The applicant does not demonstrate that the supervisors will receive additional training throughout the service year. The time allocated for the supervisor training is not sufficient in the area of reinforcement of the priorities, expectations and regulations.

The applicant does not fully detail the need for the schools to have an anti-bullying program. For example, they do not provide specific data detailing the bullying at the schools that they propose to service.

The application did not fully describe Member roles, responsibilities and interaction with target population, teachers and school administrators.

The application did not sufficiently describe the observation assessment process/methodology used to prioritize and target schools for the proposed intervention.

The application did not fully describe how Members and volunteers will engage and lead students in activities during recess and in the classroom.

The application does not sufficiently describe education, expertise and training requirements for supervisory staff.

The application does not sufficiently discuss how Members' experience will enhance future employment opportunities, e.g., prior or current Member job opportunities are not described.

The application does not adequately describe sources for recruitment of Members from the 'core' service areas, neighborhood or socio-economic population group from which the target student population will be receiving services.