

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Ingham County Health Department

Application ID: 15AC169597

Program Name: Power of We Consortium AmeriCorps Project

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 very clearly describes how the problems of obesity and food insecurity are prevalent in the target community of Lansing with relevant recent data from statewide and county surveys.

The applicant very clearly describes the activities that will be performed by the Members as part of the proposed intervention.

The applicant very clearly describes how the proposed intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the theory of change through showing how the intervention is based on a best practices model (Michigan Good Food Charter), providing the research evidence base for each of the project activities, and embedding the Members' activities within a long-standing community-wide collaborative (Power of We Consortium).

The data presented to substantiate the problems of obesity and its corresponding health issues and food insecurity in the targeted community is relevant and includes statistics and details.

Collaborations with The Power of We and strong outreach through social media and a wide array of community connections and communications demonstrate how recruitment of local Members will be achieved.

The proposed activities of the AmeriCorps members are focused on evidenced-based and informed strategies to reduce obesity and chronic diseases. The Members' activities will increase access to healthy foods through gardening, food distributions, referrals, and adult nutrition education in order to increase food security, all of which are linked to needs identified in the targeted area.

The applicant clearly describes the Member training, which complies with requirements by including AmeriCorps-specific content, national and state programming topics, and ongoing member development opportunities throughout the term of service.

Well-trained Supervisors will utilize frequent interactions with Members to further emphasize and support program requirements and provide strong guidance for effective service practices.

Meaningful experiences during the term of service will include opportunities for team-building, networking, skill and career development, such as through the Food System Workgroup, and encouragement for participation in post-term

community service.

The applicant clearly describes how the proposed program will address the need for healthy food in their community.

The applicant presents detailed information to document the prevalence and severity of food insecurity and poor eating in their target area

The applicant describes in detail the role of Members and volunteers who will assist them.

The applicant describes how their intervention is likely to lead to their identified outcomes by incorporating feedback from community Members into their intervention design.

The applicant increases the likelihood that they will achieve program outcomes by basing their program on the recommendations of the Michigan Good Food Charter, which specifically lists the projects involved in this collaboration as effective ways to improve consumption of healthy foods to underserved areas.

The applicant will require consortium Members to join the local community coalition that has been formed to increase access to healthy food. This will increase the likelihood that the applicant will achieve their stated outcomes.

Site supervisors will be required to attend four meetings a year with the program director and consortium staff to help ensure that Members will achieve adequate support for their activities.

Members will be required to engage in monthly service projects, which will allow them to develop an ethic for community engagement beyond their service term.

Members will be required to submit three written reflections a year to ensure that they will have access to meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection.

The applicant states many Members of their consortium do not have the capacity or funding for sustaining staff and therefore Members will help facilitate programming that would not otherwise be available.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's description of the proposed intervention does not provide sufficient detail as to the specific activities to be performed by the volunteers.

The applicant's description of the proposed intervention does not describe the sites where the Members will be placed. The applicant states that an estimated 15 sites would be selected, but does not describe how the sites will be selected or the types of organizations that would be used as service sites.

The applicant's description of preparing the Members for future employment is only stated in general terms (professional development opportunities) and generic skills such as resume and cover letter writing, and does not explicitly describe the particular skills and experiences to be acquired by the Members that would be valued by future employers.

The applicant encourages host sites to provide professional development and training opportunities for Members but does not require this.