

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Michigan College Access Network

**Application ID:** 15AC169663

**Program Name:** Michigan College Access Network - AdviseMI

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 need for a collaboration to sustain a college-going culture that leads to higher educational attainment among students in Michigan is supported by strong data on Michigan's high school graduation rates versus college selection rates, stratified by various factors.

Detailed evidence shows how the steps that comprise the program strategy are effective in solving the need/problem and achieving the targeted outcomes.

The applicant presents detailed information as to the roles of the AmeriCorps members. Strong data is provided as to how AdviseMI's Members will contribute to existing efforts through their provision of the support students need under this program.

The proposed activities to be undertaken align well with meeting the identified need for improvement in college attainment rates in Michigan, and the outcomes of college application, acceptance, attendance, and persistence rates,

Robust data is presented demonstrating that Members will receive quality guidance to carry out the services offered under AdviseMI, that supervisors will be sufficiently trained to follow AmeriCorps regulations and meet program expectations, and that Members will gain knowledge valued by future employers.

The applicant provides compelling evidence from recent studies to justify the need for AmeriCorps members to assist college advisers in fostering a "college-going" culture in high-need high schools in Michigan. Members will work directly with high school students on completing specific tasks involved in applying for college.

The day-to-day tasks and responsibilities for each AmeriCorps member are sufficiently detailed and targeted at specific steps required for students to apply to college (for example, submitting college applications and taking entrance exams).

Outcome measures are specific, concrete, and appropriate, and can be readily quantified (for example, number of students submitting college applications).

Member training is comprehensive and includes year-round, on-going supervision which includes an initial

mandatory four-week residential orientation, a one week site transition orientation at the on-site high school, and continuous training, professional development opportunities, and counseling.

A three-tiered supervisory structure will be in place, with full-time oversight by supervisors from AdviseMI, an on-site supervisor, and support from a Local College Access Network in each of the communities.

Volunteers will be recruited by AmeriCorps members to assist in initiatives led by the member (such as College Application Week and peer mentoring). Volunteers will receive sufficient training via webinars and by Members themselves. Additionally, those serving as peer mentors will receive extra training at an all-day session.

The applicant provides evidence from a variety of studies that supports the proposed intervention.

**Weaknesses:**

Insufficient data is given as to expected and desired actual graduation rates as a result of students having taken part in AdviseMI.

It is difficult to determine if Michigan's college-going rate is more severe than the national average, or lower in comparison to peer or benchmark states, since comparison data are not provided. Other statistics also focus solely on Michigan trends with no national comparisons provided (high school and college graduation rates, college retention rates).

Information on how Members will be recruited is lacking, as is information on the qualifications and experiences for these positions and whether special measures will be taken to recruit from the communities they will serve in.

Training and supporting information for the AdviseMI supervisors, who will be directly responsible for training and general oversight of AmeriCorps members, are not adequately described. Information on the number of supervisors and where they will conduct the supervision from is not provided.

The applicant presents assumptions such as high counselor–student ratios are responsible for high school students not attending or completing college and that school principals and counselors will “buy–in” to the proposed program and thus provide quality supervision of Members at their sites.

Site supervisors will only receive a one-day training.

The applicant does not address member recruitment.