

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: City Year, Inc

Application ID: 15AC169967

Program Name: City Year Boston

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 application has convincingly established the need for program services similar to those of AmeriCorps Program by highlighting several academic gaps in the target area. The application has also provided extraordinary details and statistics that create an urgent need for AmeriCorps Services. The data sources are pertinent.

The applicant provides for an effective intrusive training for AmeriCorps members. The training plan is multi-dimensional and well integrated into the overall program activities. The training is provided through the year and provides for constant professional support to the Members.

The Members are clearly informed about allowable and prohibited activities and their activities are observed and reviewed regularly providing effective oversight.

The application has a strong supervisory structure. The supervision is clearly planned at a daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly periods for the AmeriCorps members. The supervision has an inbuilt mechanism to address pertinent issues. The training for the supervisors is well-planned and spaced through the project year.

Compelling data is provided to substantiate that target high schools did not achieve district standards in attendance (87%) or on-time graduation (66%) during the 2012-2013 school year and below grade-level test scores (4th and 6th grades) as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System in 2013.

The applicant clearly describes the role of the AmeriCorps member; detailing all daily activities with the general student population as well as their assigned cohort of 8-10 students before, during and after school.

Strong evidence is presented to substantiate the effectiveness of the applicant's "Whole School Whole Child" approach, documented by the Policy Study Associates, Inc. 'Year 4 Evaluation' (2014) and 'Analysis of the After School Program' (2014).

The applicant provides a detailed, on-going training plan that includes a 15-day pre-service, 36-week learning calendar, real-time observation and coaching and professional development provided by Boston Public Schools for a total of 340 hours.

AmeriCorps members conduct activities with the target community that would not otherwise be available. For

example; in school tutoring and afterschool homework help is provided to support students that are below grade level or have earned D's and F's on their report card.

In addition, AmeriCorps members conduct attendance coaching and phone calls home for students that have attendance rates less than 90%. These interventions directly address the stated problems of lower than average graduation rates and below-grade level proficiency.

The applicant cites specific, relevant, and current (within the last two years) data to substantiate the need for academic services that support students staying in school and on track for graduation within the densest cluster of childhood poverty schools in the state.

The applicant also provides data from recent studies (2014) indicating that although proficiency rates have doubled in the past several years in the targeted schools, students are still falling behind the state standards.

The applicant has clearly described the member training will be provided with the appropriate subject matter topics following the organization's mission and vision and that of the school district.

The Members roles and activities include quarterly professional development training bundles related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities requirements for the quarter, literacy tutor training, teacher professional development training). The training also includes AmeriCorps-specific and member development topics.

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide a clear indication of how the existing academic gaps and weaknesses actually create a need for specific AmeriCorps services.

The application has not stipulated how an AmeriCorps program is the ideal one in the given context.

The applicant logic model has not clearly specified the roles of leveraged Members and how will they significantly help with program implementation.

The career scope for the Members beyond the program is limited into the education field. Moreover, the opportunities for reflection are not clearly specified through the use of "team circles."

The program has not clearly specified how the activities will impact the Members in active productive citizenship beyond the program.

The program seeks to recruit Members mainly at the national levels. There is no strong plan, except a statement that there will be an attempt to recruit Members from target communities.

The applicant presents insufficient information to rate their efforts to encourage Members' continued service beyond their AmeriCorps term.

The applicant briefly mentions "Leadership After City Year" but does not describe what it is, who participates or for how long. The applicant does not clearly describe the significant and unique value contribution that the Members can make to existing efforts.

The applicant does not clearly describe a plan for member supervisor training. There is no discussion of specific topics to be covered, whether pre-service member supervisor training will take place, and whether sufficient time has

been allocated to provide the training.

The applicant does not clearly discuss the specific skills and experience the Members will gain, which are directly connected to their service experience and training.

The applicant does not sufficiently describe how the program will encourage Members to continue to engage in public and community service beyond their current service terms.

The applicant does not clearly describe the opportunities for member reflection. It is not discernable from the application which activities and/or experiences lend themselves to providing Members the opportunity for reflection.