

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Greenbrier Learning Center

Application ID: 15AC170439

Program Name: Learning Links AmeriCorps

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 demonstrates the problem and the need for this program by utilizing current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data.

The application includes data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation from 2010 that portrays a dim future for these students should reading proficiency not improve.

The applicant effectively demonstrates what the activities will look like and the logical cause-and-effect created by connecting 39 weeks of academic and social-emotional support to the improvement of reading proficiency.

The applicant presents a comprehensive training program that includes CPR, First Aid, food safety, new teacher orientation on language arts and math, and learning how to utilize the Critical Friends model of peer observation and feedback.

The applicant provides current relevant data related to the low-income children and families it proposes to serve to demonstrate the program will address those children most in need of learning support services.

The applicant provides a clear and comprehensive, multi-faceted plan for member activities to provide reading and learning support to under-achieving low income children in specific schools serving low income children in the service area. Activities will include direct student tutoring in the schools, as well as activities in the home in conjunction with the child's parents.

The applicant provides comprehensive information and relevant data demonstrating that the curriculum and strategies to be implemented have been demonstrated to be effective and have a positive impact on the reading proficiency and academic progress of middle school children living in poverty.

The applicant provides a clear plan for member training and supervision that can be expected to enable Members to effectively implement the program and collaborate with other Members, parents and Members of the community to ensure positive outcomes for both the participating children, their families and the AmeriCorps members.

Applicant provides relevant and compelling data outlining the severity of the need for out of school time literacy

support within the community where AmeriCorps members will serve citing relevant state, county, district and school level data indicating increasing failure to meet adequate yearly progress toward minimum student achievement in standardized reading assessments.

Applicant provides a compelling description of the school/ afterschool/ home/ summer academic enrichment activities that AmeriCorps members will implement and how those activities contribute the overall program design of boosting reading achievement in upper elementary grades as a means to preventing high school dropout and increasing lifelong earning potential among high risk youth.

Applicant provides superior evidence that through utilizing a research based model for reflection developed through a reputable research institution, Members will gain meaningful experience and opportunities for reflection.

By providing a substantial description of program design work to be completed toward the completion of the service year, along with a brief list of past placements of this program's AmeriCorps alumni, applicant gives suitable evidence that Members will acquire skills and experience through their term of service which will be relevant and valuable to future employers.

Applicant provides a sufficient plan for connecting AmeriCorps members with their peers from other National Service programs by encouraging Members in developing joint community service projects and ongoing networking.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks sufficient plans to training Members about prohibited activities either initially or throughout the service year.

The application lacks information about specific skills and experience the Members will gain that may be relevant to future employment.

It is unclear that Members will have meaningful interactions with other national service programs.

The applicant does not describe how it will ensure Members are reminded of prohibited activities throughout the program year, only indicating they will receive this information during orientation.

The applicant does not describe specific plans/activities to demonstrate how Members will have specific opportunities to establish connections with the broader regional and/or national AmeriCorps Service network and/or other regional and national service efforts.

The applicant does provides information regarding how Member Supervisors will be trained in AmeriCorps requirements by participating in required AmeriCorps training sessions, however the detail provided is insufficient to assess whether the amount of time allocated to supervisor training is sufficient to cover all of the necessary topics.