

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: United Teen Equality Center

Application ID: 15AC170687

Program Name: Youth Empowerment Corps

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 clearly defines the magnitude of the need in Lowell, Massachusetts. Applicant provides data to support that 19 percent of households live below the poverty level compared to 11% at the state level. Lowell police estimate that 1500-2000 youth are involved in gang activities.

Applicant supplies data that Lowell has a population of 106,000 with a significant number of minority youth affected by poverty and gang activity.

The applicant provides information of success with prior program interventions and remodeling of the program when goals were not achieved.

Significant emphasis has been placed on the curriculum that will be employed in the interventions. The curriculum includes socialization, direct job skills, and tutoring or education programs.

The applicant submitted data to show that their interventions have produced positive results and that goals have been met.

Compelling data is provided to substantiate the mentorship and workforce development initiatives incorporated into the Youth Employment Corps (YEC) intervention model.

The applicant presents a comprehensive plan to accomplish the workforce development intervention with a practical focus on knowledge, on the job training, and dedicated, significant mentoring and coaching resources.

The training program is likely to be successful since it incorporates extensive background about AmeriCorps, local community dynamics, information on gang awareness, relationship development and mentoring practices for youth workers.

Compelling evidence is provided to support a robust Member experience, with YEC staff winning awards recognizing their excellence in youth development and outstanding social service.

The applicant provides extensive opportunities for AmeriCorps members to develop relationships within the YEC program, and provides numerous networking opportunities across other national service programs in the surrounding area in Massachusetts.

The applicant provides detailed data documenting the problem and need for its proposed mentorship and workforce development interventions. Data includes poverty rates that are significantly higher for the target area than statewide levels.

The applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of its past programs by citing its employment of a prior Member who will now oversee and manage the YEC program; indicating their practice to hire former Members when staff positions open.

The applicant clearly describes its recruitment process for hiring from the target community also citing that 50 percent of Members identify as people of color (the intended target population).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide enough detail to support that supervisory staff received sufficient training to ensure all AmeriCorps rules are followed and supervisory staff are well versed in the program interventions.