

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Super Stars Literacy

Application ID: 15AC170790

Program Name: Super Stars Literacy 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 provides a strong plan for member supervision. The member supervisors are described as “credentialed, experienced teachers who have coaching and supervisory expertise.” The application states each member will receive 150 hours of on-going training during their service year, including individual and group support and planned trainings.

The applicant provides a strong plan for Members to be able to reflect on their service, including the description of a “multi-week civic reflection series” to challenge Members on civic responsibility and choices, “resonant readings” and discussions to explore beliefs about public service.

The applicant presents a compelling case that the problem/need is widespread and serious in the target community.

The activities of the Members are well described by the applicant and fit well with the overall design of program.

The worthy roles of the leveraged volunteers are effectively described in the application.

AmeriCorps Members will provide sound value-added services to the target community by enhancing existing services provided by teachers in the target schools and providing additional services to the target community with the after-school services described in the program design.

The multi-week civic reflection series employing best practices from the Center for Civic Reflection are an effective way to promote the personal reflective process and a solid method to encourage Members to explore the beliefs that underlie public and community service.

The applicant provided an intentional plan to recruit Members from the local communities; in addition, the early recruiting efforts, starting in February, should help to ensure more qualified applicants, especially those who are being recruited at job fairs and on college campuses where those graduating in May will be looking for jobs.

The applicant's definition of the problem was clear and concise with appropriate interventions. The applicant will be including the family and behavior intervention along with academic instruction for K-2 to strengthen reading phonics, comprehension and fluency. This approach was documented with established evidence and research from

the CORAL program in CA and KELT in Canada.

The applicant clearly describes how Members will receive a two-week orientation prior to the start of their service and will continue to receive training throughout the program year.

The applicant clearly describes a plan for member training that will cover such topics as literacy pedagogy, classroom management, social/emotional learning, volunteer support skills; skills which will enable the member to perform their duties in the classroom with confidence and competence, along with weekly coaching from the program manager to address any issues before they become significant.

Weaknesses:

The application repeatedly refers to “the program” and “curriculum” without ever naming it or detailing any current research that documents its success with this target population. It is unclear how the variety of activities mentioned will be chosen to be used with students, how their efficacy will be measured and adjustments made beyond the yearly testing.

The application states the Volunteer Coordinator “conducts an extensive orientation with each volunteer prior to placement” without any details as to topics, hours, means to gauge understanding of materials presented and plan to integrate volunteer activities in the overall plan for the project. There is also no information on screening and background checks of volunteers who will work directly with children.

The two studies presented in the application for “evidence base” give no information on the “literacy support” or “programming” to understand if they were similar enough to the proposed project to be a valid comparison for determining success.

The applicant provides insufficient information about the plan for member training prior to being placed in the field and specifically relating to services the Members will be giving to the students in the schools.

The applicant does not provide enough information to determine if the level or quality of supervision plan will be adequate. Specifically, it is not clear how the program managers to supervise Members in the after-school program when classroom teachers may not be available to help supervise the Members.

The applicant's logic model long term results do not seem to be reasonable based on the evidence presented. While Members could be accepted into CSU Bay View teacher credentialing program, there was little evidence to substantiate 35% becoming educators or that adults will continue to be involved once their children have left school.