

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Public Allies, Inc

**Application ID:** 15ED167782

**Program Name:** Public Allies National Direct Fixed Amount

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:**

Local program staff carefully vet host sites to ensure that sites have both the need to build capacity and the ability to provide excellent supervision for Members. This can help to create buy-in from partner agencies and enhance opportunities for Members to be effective.

The applicant shows evidence that local program staff will support site supervisors through regular check-ins, and that staff will work with host site supervisors to remediate any issues that arise in relation to Members' performance or prohibited activities.

The program's Continuous Learning process and tested training curriculum are value-adds for partner organizations that would otherwise not have capacity to deliver quality professional development.

By noting that host sites reported that Members exceeded traditional entry-level employees in skills such as collaboration, working in teams, and innovation, the applicant makes a strong case that the program will be effective for Opportunity Youth Members, and aligns activities to desired outcomes.

Public Allies contracts with local universities or nonprofits that are responsible for identifying local impact and leveraging local assets. The thorough description of local stakeholders (such as site directors, program managers, external partnerships, and volunteer advisory committees) helps to substantiate the applicant's ability to manage the program across multiple sites.

The applicant provides comprehensive and relevant data including employment, educational, and poverty data to highlight the social and environmental factors in the proposed target region and population. The applicant also uses reputable sources of data including Kids Count, GAO, and recent national research studies.

The applicant provides clear training opportunities for the Members including the use of training and learn curriculum that is regularly delivered to the member cohort while allowing Members to reflect on the impact of their social issues impact their identity.

The applicant provides substantial description on the proposed activities to lead to the educational and social outcomes of the member including providing leadership opportunities to the population while assisting in building

capacity of non-profit organizations serving the community.

Reflection opportunities will be providing to the Members that allow for personal development and on-going coaching meeting the goals of the project and the member's goals.

The applicant provided thoughtful processes to the development of the proposed program including using evidence-based research and previous assessments completed.

The mandatory pre-service orientation for the supervisor provides an emphasis on understanding prohibited activities to ensure they do not occur.

The intervention to combat the effects of poverty is sound and aligned to the goals. Seven hundred and thirty Members in group based service projects will create the capacity of poverty alleviating organizations to offer services to 150,000 new beneficiaries in 10 months.

The need for the intervention is well documented. The effects of poverty; rising commodity costs against stagnant incomes, and 5.8 million youths (Opportunity Youths) who are disconnected from education and employment are poised to retard the state's ability for a strong economic recovery and curtail the work of organizations that provide poverty alleviating services who are unable to increase their services due to the lack of manpower.

The elements in the Logic Model are logically aligned with the correct amount of dosage interactions that will produce clearly defined outputs in 10 months. The 730 Members will recruit 50,000 volunteers and establish relationships with 4,400 organizations with 85% of hosting organizations increasing services to 150,000 for new beneficiaries. Also 90% of the Members will meet their service objectives.

Members receive high-quality training, which begins on the first day of service with a detailed overview of operations and expectations during orientation alongside team and skill buildings sessions.

The awareness of prohibited activities is strongly supported and reinforced through monthly reviews of member's activities to ensure compliance.

Members receive high quality guidance through monthly interactions with their supervisors, which gives them an opportunity to assess their progress and determine mid-course corrections.

Supervisors' training is well-described. In addition to orientation trainings they are prepared to provide coaching on actualizing personal goals and career aspirations, confirm that Members have the resources they need to achieve their service goals and hold host sites responsible for relevant, meaningful experiences for Members.

This solid goal-oriented training plan is designed to develop Members' leadership qualities and motivate them to enter the workforce or higher education. These experiences are gained by the activities Members engage in with host sites. Also, Members develop a level of self-efficacy that leads them to seek education or employment.

The applicant provides Members opportunities to reflect, using a reflective process through dialogues and critical reflection to better connect their service with the larger community.

Members' training is well –designed to offer experiential experiences in entry-level professional positions in nonprofit or public sectors.

The program aims to recruit volunteers from surrounding communities who reflect the communities the host works in.

**Weaknesses:**

The application contains limited local data to support need in the specific communities in which the programs will be implemented; national data is cited to support need across the large geographic scope of this program. Therefore, it is difficult to discern whether the need is prevalent and severe in each of the communities that will be served.

Although Members meet weekly and connect with each other, evidence of connecting to the National Service is not evident.