

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** GRID Alternatives

**Application ID:** 15ED168926

**Program Name:** GRID Alternatives SolarCorps

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 did a very thorough job of describing the activities of the AmeriCorps members and how they fit into the overall program.

GRID's program uses a combination of general training and specific site training - the site training is supplemented with certification and professional training to ensure all duties and responsibilities will be covered. This will be beneficial to the AmeriCorps members.

The applicant presented in a very clear manner the significant contributions to be provided by AmeriCorps members in each of the following roles: construction fellow, training fellow, and outreach fellow.

The applicant provides compelling evidence of the dire conditions seen within its city parks and storm water systems.

The applicant has presented well documented data relating to the negative economic impact of illegal dumping, storm water and sewer systems seen within its locale and targeted population.

The applicant provides detailed sources of the positive outcomes through training, on the job experiences, and collaborations with external organizations seeking to employ the certified Members. The applicant's plan to create positive employment trends among the targeted population is persuasive and highly likely to produce a favorable outcomes.

It is clear what the exact problems are that will be addressed. The application makes a logical connection between the needs and explains how and why they chose the solar industry to improve employment in the target communities.

The application includes specific, relevant, up-to-date data from reputable sources that document the needs the program will address. The data makes a compelling case that the problems are severe in the target communities and that both needs complement each other.

It is clear what the activities of the AmeriCorps members will be and how they fit into the overall program. The application divides the Members into four different groups, including one that will run the volunteer program, and describes clearly what the activities are in each category.

A study was commissioned and done by outside sources on the application's program. This study showed definite financial benefits to the low-income families who received solar power.

The application uses the demands for trained workers in the solar energy field to make a logical and compelling case for the likelihood of its success for the workforce development interventions.

As the only program in the country providing solar power to low-income households, while training Members from low-income communities for careers in solar power, the Members will provide clear value-add to their communities. These services are not available anywhere else.

An extensive training program is detailed in the application. This training includes AmeriCorps regulations, on the job training and reinforcement throughout the program. The amount of time is sufficient for the training and the trainers have the appropriate expertise.

Members will be aware of prohibited activities and a sufficient plan is in place to reinforce and monitor the program to ensure compliance and to deal with noncompliance.

The application describes the specific skills and experiences Members will gain that are clearly relevant and valuable to getting further employment in the solar industry. The program includes opportunities to receive professional certifications valuable to getting employment after the program.

The application contains training on the importance of community service and the impact the Members will have on their communities. The program intentionally builds in time for sharing of Members' stories on the impacts they have made through their service. The Members develop citizenship skills and leadership skills working with volunteers and are encouraged to continue to use these skills after completing the program.

**Weaknesses:**

GRIDS Alternatives did not provide enough information about the specific communities in which it intends to work to clearly show the local problems it will be addressing are prevalent and severe - the problems presented were evaluated using national data and not data from the communities it plans to serve.

The applicant does not clearly explain how the participants will gain the additional certifications cited. (i.e., OSHA, Grid Alternatives Team Leader)

While Members and supervisors will receive training in prohibited activities, there is no mention of whether the volunteers will.

Members will have opportunities to interact with others in their program. However, it is not clear if they will connect with other national service programs or volunteers.