

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: University of Notre Dame

Application ID: 15ED169239

Program Name: ACE

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 focus on the AmeriCorps members is refreshing and speaks to the need for quality teachers across the country especially giving the difficulty in recruiting and retraining well trained teachers for low income minority areas.

The applicant's corrective action plan to help reach 100% of the performance standards is sound; creating a memorable experience and meeting the needs of the intended population would encourage loyalty to a program. Applicant describes very clearly how AmeriCorps members (teachers) will be trained.

The applicant clearly described and detailed how the four core activities; recruitment, formation, addressing critical need and retention will lead to successful outputs and outcomes.

The training plan, using the evidence-based Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching, demonstrates a high quality program of supporting, observing, advising and evaluating Members.

There are many opportunities offered by the applicant for its Members to have meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection through living in the same dorm, eating together, attending class and student teaching with one another.

As evident by the ACE teacher's high rate of program completion and high retention to service through education rates, Members are most likely to continue to engage in public and community service after their AmeriCorps term.

The application clearly describes how the problem of a lack of well-trained teachers in disadvantaged communities will be addressed by the program. It explains that the problem exists because of the difficulty of attracting and retaining teachers by schools most in need and will address the need by placing trained teachers in these schools as part of its M.Ed. program.

The application provides strong evidence of the need for qualified and well-trained teachers in order to assure student success, citing two studies that show that classroom teachers are the single most important factor in determining student academic achievement. It further shows achievement gaps for minority students and data indicating that Latinos who attend Catholic schools are significantly more likely to graduate from high school and college.

The application clearly describes the proposed intervention and provides details of its 4 stages: Recruitment for the program, development of teachers, addressing critical need, and retention. It shows the important role of Members in becoming effective teachers and increasing student success in high-need schools.

The applicant provides a clear description and convincing evidence that the intervention will lead to the intended outcomes by including evidence of significant improvement in teacher instruction and classroom behavior management.

Members will receive training on AmeriCorps administrative issues initially and will participate in a two-year academic teacher training program that will lead to a M.Ed. degree and teacher certification in Indiana.

Members will receive high-quality supervision, including regular observation and feedback, from both university staff and the principals of schools in which they serve.

The Masters degree and teaching experience that Members will receive as part of this program are very valuable and will make the Members especially attractive to future employers both in the field of academics or in their specific subject area.

Opportunities for reflection and sharing experiences are built into the program and are a large part of the two summer programs in which the Members will participate.

Weaknesses:

Much of the reference data was more than 10 years old.

The applicant failed to mention any training regarding the supervisors.

The applicant failed to mention the geographical location(s) where the AmeriCorps members will come from in relation to the cities and states they will be placed.

The applicant provided limited information as to how they would be training supervisors and preparing them to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities and expectations.

It is unclear how the applicant will recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which the program operates.

The application does not include a comprehensive plan for recruiting Members who are from the communities in which the programs will operate.