

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: The Corps Network

Application ID: 15ED169299

Program Name: The Corps Network - EAP

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 Corps Network (TCN) is proposing to focus on projects related to environmental stewardship and housing in 31 states. Although needs were identified in the narrative for some of these communities, more detail was provided in the logic model to connect the individual needs being addressed in each state with the overall program. This connection will help to ensure the program is targeted.

TCN includes time for member reflection at the end of the workday and some programs require Members to keep a journal. All activities draw a meaningful connection between work activities and community service.

The applicant did an excellent job in the Logic Model corresponding the activities of the Members and volunteers with measurable outputs.

TCN outlined a detailed plan for supervisor training related to the entire program and also stated training will also include specialized training related to each individual program.

The application produced reliable and comprehensive evidence to support the needs found within their communities.

The application describes a sound and relevant plan that includes valuable sets of activities to improve the designated AT-RISK ECOSYSTEMS.

The applicant presented worthy evidence to substantiate the need to improve substandard housing found within the multiple communities.

The application correlated the improvement of housing with improved health of the population living within these conditions. The evidence presenting the link between poor health and substandard living conditions is detailed and well documented.

The applicant's Member Training, to include additional and specialized training, is effective and will provide favorable outcomes and positive trends.

The applicant recognizes and addresses the specific needs of each community with their diverse training modules.

(i.e., wilderness first responder, back country survival and firefighting.)

The applicant provides persuasive detail for its plan to acquire Members. The applicant provides sound and worthy organizations within its community to recruit Members. (i.e., foster care group homes, faith-based and municipal organizations.)

The applicant's comprehensive intervention plan is highly likely to produce favorable outcomes described in their theory of change.

The applicant provides strong references to support the correlation of its conservation related service projects and its positive impact on the community's economy.

The applicant persuasive references supports the positive results by improving the AT-RISK ECOSYSTEMS within their communities.

The application clearly lays out several needs their program will deal with throughout the country. By first laying out general issues then using specific examples in some of the areas they will service, the applicant makes a compelling argument for each need.

The application includes specific, relevant and up-to-date data from reputable sources that make a compelling case for each of the needs they plan to address.

The data makes a compelling case for the problems being national in nature and severe throughout the country. The application also uses data for example communities they will be targeting to make a compelling case to target these and other communities.

It is clear from the logic model and narrative what activities are included in the interventions for each of the problems/needs identified in the application.

The application uses specific examples of what associated programs have accomplished in the past to show the high likelihood the activities will be effective in achieving the desired outcomes.

The application clearly shows the Members will provide clear value added to the target communities by replacing jobs lost through budget cuts of agencies responsible for the activities. It clearly shows these activities would not occur if left to the public agencies responsible for the upkeep of parks, forests, etc.

A comprehensive list of training available is included in the application which shows a variety of subject matter needed to complete the activities Members will be involved in and AmeriCorps specific requirements. The training opportunities occur throughout the program.

The Members will have daily guidance and support from 1-2 supervisors per crew of 6-12 Members. These supervisors are often former Members who can share their knowledge and experience with the Members giving more meaningful interactions between supervisors and Members.

There is a comprehensive training plan for supervisors lasting several weeks which includes rules and regulations and preparation to teach Members the skills they need for the work planned.

Several studies are cited clearly establishing that the skills and experiences that Members gain positively affects their

future, increasing educational enrollment and employment among Members.

The program clearly plans for service activities to be meaningful, including time for Members to learn the purpose and significance of projects, and time for assessment and reflection is included at the end of each day.

The program builds in activities urging Members to think about the importance of what they are doing, and the importance of national service. It is clear this program does instill these values as shown by the statistic that 66% of alumni go into public service careers.

Weaknesses:

TCN did provide a summary of the proposed training related to the rules associated with the AmeriCorps program, but did not provide enough detail as to the length of this training and how often it will be provided - it appears to be a one-time exercise.

TCN indicates it will encourage active citizenship and civic engagement, but does not fully explain how this will be achieved after the member's service is concluded.

The narrative briefly mentions using volunteers, with more details in the logic model of possible activities for them, but it is unclear how large a role they will play in the program's objectives.

It is not clear who will provide all of the training, as no mention is made of trainer qualifications except for a few instances of very specific specialty training.

The application makes no mention of whether volunteers will receive training on rules and regulations of the AmeriCorps program.

There is continued training offered throughout the program for supervisors, but it is unclear whether this training is required or optional making the reinforcement of the training unclear.