

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

## 2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Conservation Legacy

**Application ID:** 15ED170818

**Program Name:** Conservation Legacy AmeriCorps Program

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 presents a detailed description for the need to restore and maintain environmental resources after natural disasters, i.e. wildfires, droughts and floods.

The applicant substantiates this need with compelling data from recent reports, such as the 2014 Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience and the National Climate Data Center, which reported that losses from 9 weather events in 2013 exceeded \$1 billion per event.

The applicant describes a comprehensive training plan for AmeriCorps members that addresses skills required to implement the 6 intervention activities.

The plan emphasizes Member training in relevant skills, such as tool use, safety, hygiene, camp set-up, as well as ongoing training, (e. g. training sessions around the evening campfire).

The applicant provided extensive, current data to describe the need for each of the areas that will be served in four states. Data relating to fire and drought and the economy was presented from authoritative resources (US Drought Monitor, National Climatic Data Center, US Dept. of Labor).

The applicant clearly describes the multiple types of hands-on environmental and job training activities which Members will be involved with during their terms of service.

The applicant has developed a comprehensive approach with regional stakeholder for interventions to ameliorate the effects of storms, fire, economic dislocation caused by changing climate conditions in the regions to be served. Supervision of Members is at a ratio of 1 supervisor to 4 Members which exceeds the national average for AmeriCorps members.

The crew leaders have extensive experience performing the tasks that they supervise which is especially important when dealing with dangerous activities such as use of a chain saw or spraying with herbicides. Careful training for these activities is provided for Members. Bi-weekly check-ins measure and evaluate Member experience and development.

Solid, well documented supervisor training is described by the applicant. A multi-week residential training for Member Supervisors is provided covering issues relating to safety, skills to be taught, youth development and requirements of AmeriCorps. In addition, the supervisors have documented technical conservation skills and leadership skills.

The application provided a strong need statement however, the critical needs areas were unidentified.

The theory of change followed the guidelines and would produce moderate outcomes. The Membership recruitment was competitive process and the Members would have a valuable Membership experience.

The applicant presented a logical plan on a competitive recruitment process for supervisors by recruiting AmeriCorps alumni and an effort to have supervisors with strong levels of experience and skill.

The applicant presents a logical plan to engage the AmeriCorps members after their service term by challenging them in a project after their service term.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant delineates in detail the six intervention activities, AmeriCorps member assignments implementing these activities are not described or connected. For example, the applicant states that spiking camping crews operate for 300 or 450 hour terms, but the crews' intervention activities are not described.

The applicant states that AmeriCorps crews will work along with professional crews; however, the applicant does not clearly distinguish between the AmeriCorps member assignments and the duties of the professional crews or staff Members.

Other than participation in service projects, such as Earth Day and MLK Day, the applicant describes few opportunities for AmeriCorps members to reflect on their service experiences and to network with other service programs.

The applicant fully describes all of the interventions to be taught and used, however the applicant's theory of change is inferred but never clearly stated.

The total number of Members being requested and numbers of hours of service expected are not broken down by location or by how many will be quarter, half, of full time MSY's. This makes it difficult to determine if the outcomes will be as the applicant expects.

The training provided for Members relating to civic engagement is referenced but other than possible participation in two national days of service it is not clear what activities will be done to effectively create an element of ongoing service to society unless there is a national disaster to which the Members are called.

The applicant does not describe how recruitment of Members will take place other than to say it is committed to recruiting Members from the regions where the programs will take place to ensure crews will represent the demographics and diversity of the 4 program locations.

The applicant presents conflicting information on the need to improve 400 miles and 1500 acres of public lands.

The applicant is proposing activities to contribute to the applicant's research questions instead of addressing the critical need areas for the target areas.

It was unclear if the applicant met their target on miles of trails of waterways and improvement on public land for the previous year because the goals were not stated.