

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Montana Conservation Corps, Inc

Application ID: 15ES168116

Program Name: Montana Conservation Corps, Inc.

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 clearly and extensively cites relevant, recent, reputable data to substantiate the impact its proposed intervention will have on the environmental problems outlined.

The information provided makes a compelling case that the threats to public and private lands in Montana are significant.

Member activities are precisely and logically connected to conservation and education. The logical cause-and-effect relationship between AmeriCorps member activities and the applicant's conservation goals is clearly presented.

Members will have the opportunity to engage with multiple local, state, and federal partner organizations and to provide conservation services that might not otherwise be funded.

The problem of poorly maintained trails and the need for environmental restoration in Montana's public lands is well-documented.

The applicant clearly describes the interventions the Members will take to mitigate the problems of environmental degradation within Montana public lands and poorly weatherized homes.

The applicant clearly describes the training topics, length of time for training, and how the topics relate to Montana Conservation Corps' program objectives.

The interactions between Members and supervisors and the system of communication and feedback (Individual Action Plans, daily logs, project debriefs, and mid-term and end of project evaluations) demonstrate high quality supervision methods.

The applicant clearly describes how an ethic of community service is built into the member experience through the training curriculum, participation in service events, and additional requirements like attending a public meeting and additional volunteer hours.

The applicant presents a comprehensive description of environmental degradation and energy assistance in Montana

and the Northern Rockies, supported by sound data, making a solid case for the severe need for remediation of invasive species, trail maintenance and healthy forest practices.

The theory of change that resides in the comprehensive program design demonstrates the highly valued roles of Members and volunteers in well-designed interventions that utilize effective environmental mitigation strategies and techniques.

Each element/service member segment of the Logic Model is supported by and clearly aligned with the program narrative.

The applicant supplies reasonable and complete training opportunities coupled with an acceptable adherence to AmeriCorps rules and policies.

The team culture, Individual Action Plans, experience of supervisors and strong oversight present a solid foundation of supervision for Members.

A reasonable balance of ample service work, community volunteerism, and connection with each other provides Members with a high quality experience, resulting in a high level of likelihood of achieving the proposed outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a cursory description of the specific skills gained by the Members as they relate to future employment in the Member Experience section of the narrative.

The application is lacking important information about how training and interventions that utilize extensive chemical treatment might affect critically sensitive areas of the region, affecting the proposed long term outcomes of advancing Members' ability to be responsible conservationists and stewards of the land.

The Montana Conservation Corps program recruited only 29% Montana residents.