

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: FoodCorps, Inc

Application ID: 15ES168930

Program Name: FoodCorps, Inc. New York, NY

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 provides a compelling portfolio of evidence related to poverty, food insecurity, hunger, dietary habits and diabetes to demonstrate why the problem exists.

The applicant will implement a nationally aligned, locally adapted service plan that has been shown to be contextually effective in the past; and describes specific, evidence-backed activities associated with each pillar of the plan.

AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique results by fulfilling a role that school administrators do not have the time or expertise to complete. Members will combine classroom service with events that reach the full school and community, and reinforce larger goals like parental civic engagement and volunteer generation.

The applicant seeks to develop Members' civic engagement and the "Knowledge, Engagement, Action" service plan provides ample opportunity for Members to develop and celebrate civic leadership skills.

The applicant clearly and concisely describes how they will expand a nationwide model and implement it in New York, specifically New York City. The proposal clearly explores the need for nutrition study and training in the local schools and offers current statistics and documentation to support this stated need.

The proposal is highly leveraged using several outside funding sources to largely support the expansion of the FoodCorps model to New York. The program uses a three legged support for their efforts; focused on knowledge, engagement and access.

The applicant provides supporting literature review to support their proposed evidence based model. They also have listed how their program has been successful at other sites.

The logic model presented has an extensive set of measurable outputs listed, including tracking children taught, gardens built, food taste tests conducted and volunteers recruited.

The applicant lists a retention rate (95.5%) and has programs in place to help improve that rate, including an EAP and a HR staff member dedicated to supporting the Members.

The applicant uses not only the initial orientation for new Members to review prohibited activities, but reinforces it in state and local orientations as well as weekly logs and reflections. Their staff also have been trained in these issues and they work to ensure that the host sites and the state sponsor also are aware of prohibited activities.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not indicate how program sites are distributed across counties or what special services or resources may be allocated to the boroughs (Bronx, Brooklyn, and Staten Island) that exhibit higher rates of overweight and obese populations, according to source cited (Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2011).

The applicant does not elaborate upon how the proposed 300 community volunteers will promote healthy foods and healthy school food environments.

The applicant does not specify the amount of time allocated for training of supervisors. The absence of this information makes it difficult to assess whether enough time is provided to cover all the necessary training topics for supervisors.

The applicant does not describe how skills and experience acquired by Members will be relevant and valuable for future employment. The applicant does not make it clear how Members will emerge from their training and service activities.

The applicant does not elaborate upon how Members' service experience will be meaningful.

It is not clear to what extent ongoing opportunities for Members to establish connections are intentional.

It is not clear if a state "host-site" partner has been actually selected and which sites this potential partner proposes to use. This becomes more significant if the program relies on "service site program fees" to help totally cover the cost of the proposed program.

The proposal evaluates their effectiveness using a Neophobia instrument and has seen a drop in multi-year sites. It proposes to change the measurement tool to a preference survey, which potentially might document longer term attitude shifts.

The specific training in nutrition and skill sets taught to the Members are vague and lacks specificity.

The goals of the applicant are not clearly identified. It appears their goal might be that 40% of the classrooms show some level of improvement in the nutrition attitudes/approach. No specific discussion of the measureable goals for the applicant was provided.