

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: FoodCorps, Inc

Application ID: 15ES169084

Program Name: FoodCorps, Inc. New Jersey

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 application presents compelling data both nationally and in New Jersey on childhood obesity and cites many credible and reliable data sources such as Kids Count and the CDC to document the need for healthier food environments in schools.

The applicant proposes a clear and comprehensive intervention of AmeriCorps members through a unique three pillar approach that involves education, engagement and access. The three pillar approach of knowledge, engagement and access is well supported by evidenced-based research and should effectuate the change expected in students' healthy attitudes and to make progress towards the long term goal of lower childhood obesity.

The applicant provides a clear plan on multiple levels and specific time planned for training of AmeriCorps members through national, state and site specific meetings. The plan includes training on AmeriCorps policy and procedures, prohibited activities, and developing a sense of esprit de corps through interaction between Members and training by FoodCorps staff and site supervisors.

The supervision of Members is well defined through multiple levels of national, state and site supervisor roles and includes weekly reporting and reflection by the Members to help lead to a positive experience.

The application clearly connects the relationship between dietary habits and the education that a child receives in school regarding making healthy choices, having access to healthy choices and having the opportunity to eat healthfully at school and utilizes evidenced-based interventions in the areas of knowledge, engagement and access.

To implement the strategies identified in their theory of change, the applicant presents a thoughtful plan of utilizing highly qualified established partnerships to work alongside the community-based organizations and the AmeriCorps members to achieve maximum impact where the need is greatest.

The application presents a compelling list of four goals and how they are interrelated to provide and support a healthy food system locally, regionally and nationally.

The application describes a well-designed vision of how meeting these goals will bring about multi-level policy change and ultimately affect 100,000 public schools including more than 2,400 in New Jersey, and thus create a

future of healthy adults.

The application describes in detail how the AmeriCorps members will receive three levels of support from the community service site partners, the statewide host site partners, and the national organization to guide and direct the Members in achieving the goals.

The applicant clearly demonstrates that their strategies of ongoing training, completing of reporting and reflection logs, and connecting service workers to network and to share resources are effective by having a 100% enrollment and retention rate.

The application clearly addresses their training program and contains details regarding a tiered training program to be utilized for Members and volunteers which provides specific content needed for each service assignment such as sessions on nutrition education, school gardening and school food all directly related to the outcomes.

The application provided strong, compelling and comprehensive research data relevant to the alarming effects of obesity on children's health and human potential and clearly demonstrated an understanding of the complexity of the need.

Up-to-date research and data provided regarding dietary habits in school environments were well-aligned with the three evidence based program pillars.

The proposed use of the Landscape Assessment at the beginning and end of the school year provides an effective tool to measure the AmeriCorps member's impact on promoting healthy school food environments.

The three levels of orientation and training plans were detailed, comprehensive and well designed to provide adequate professional development for AmeriCorps members and supervisors to meet the AmeriCorps requirements and FoodCorps program outcomes.

The three collaborative levels of supervision and support are well described and allow the AmeriCorps members to have frequent and meaningful interaction with their supervisors.

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide sufficient details documenting the actual training that AmeriCorps members will receive regarding nutrition education and does not provide adequate details regarding how nutrition education will be provided during the 10 hours taught to students by AmeriCorps members.

The absence of the details in this specific program element of nutrition education makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goal of healthy food consumption and improving students' attitudes toward nutrition.

The applicant does not sufficiently describe the role that the 360 leveraged volunteers will play or what the volunteers' activities will be.

The application lacks detailed information about the prevalence and severity of the problem and needs in the targeted communities where Members will serve which makes it difficult to determine the rationale for placing AmeriCorps members in the proposed targeted schools.

The application did not sufficiently describe how the skills and experiences a member gained during service would be of value to a future employer.

The applicant did not provide adequate information regarding the roles and responsibilities of the volunteers to be recruited by the AmeriCorps members.

The local research and data demonstrating the prevalence, severity and effects of childhood obesity in the New Jersey targeted counties was limited in comparison to the documented national and New Jersey state-wide research and data.

The applicant did not provide a clear and demonstrable description of the role and assignment of the community volunteers within the program design.