

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: University of Maryland Center on Aging

Application ID: 15ND168112

Program Name: Legacy Corps for Veterans and Military Families

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 describes the proposed Legacy Corps intervention and the roles that AmeriCorps members would have in the multi-state program.

The proposal highlights a high level of AmeriCorps member involvement and leadership across multiple-sites, it is likely that the intervention(s) will lead to the intended outcomes.

The applicant correctly uses the graphical logic model to describe the program's Theory of Change and its outputs.

The short term outcomes are correctly listed as changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and the mid-term outcomes listed are behavior changes and actions.

The logic model is easy to follow and demonstrates logical alignment and sequence.

The national supervision and training system described in the proposal lend themselves to high quality training, meaningful experiences, valuable reflections and the development of skills and ethics among Members associated with the project. The national staff are well-qualified to conduct these trainings. The application details current and compelling data from the National Alliance for Caregiving (2010) which effectively describes how caregiver support services and respite will likely lead to a decrease in caregiver burden and stress for those providing care to a veteran.

AmeriCorps members will be provided with comprehensive training covering caregiver support, member development, and AmeriCorps policies with specific training on prohibited activities; the training is well-described and details extensive pre-service (20 hours) and in-service (60-70 hours monthly) training offered in both onsite and online formats.

The program addresses its plan for targeting local AmeriCorps members including veterans and military families through local print media and local affiliates (American Auxiliary, Daughters of the American Revolution, Dry Hootch peer support chapters, veteran Fisher House facilities, and others including disability organizations).

The applicant describes reasonable data to demonstrate the severity of the problem; the provided information points out that several veterans and their caregivers need additional support services.

The Members experience encompassing networking, reintegration, reflection sessions, and the AmeriCorps gatherings with a priority to engage multi-lingual applicants and Native American Veterans is compelling and demonstrates a commitment to their Members. The assessment of the applicants Members is well supported by the priority of the outcome measurement to assess their level of engagement and changes in perception of burden and stress.

The applicants presents an effective plan to train veterans. The veterans cultural background and demonstrated quality of selfless service and commitment will deliver a positive and worthy community civic engagement.

The monthly self-reflection sessions and problem solving is well documented in the program plan by the applicants plan to develop meaningful volunteer roles, purposeful social networking and lifelong learning.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe the severity of the problem within the ten targeted states included in the project. There is no data (information, demographics) demonstrating how those states are selected based on need.

The applicant does not include information about the capacity of the personnel in the local communities to supervise AmeriCorps members.

The recruitment of AmeriCorps members from the local targeted communities is not described by the applicant. The application does not provide relevant data to demonstrate why the need is prevalent in the ten identified sub-award states; as a result, the overall veteran caregiver community need is too broad. Supervisor's frequency and interactions with AmeriCorps members lacks clear timelines and program details.

The applicant provides opportunities for AmeriCorps members to attend state-based AmeriCorps gatherings however it is unclear if the program provides networking with volunteers from other national service programs.

The applicant is unclear explaining how the program will encourage a continued engagement and service in the near future.