

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Boys Hope Girls Hope

Application ID: 15ND168691

Program Name: Go Team

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:

Components of the College Road program are clearly defined at the middle- and high-school levels. The role of AmeriCorps members in implementing the program also is described in depth.

The College Road program has received external validation as a high-quality college preparation support program for disadvantaged youth.

The applicant appropriately requires AmeriCorps members to have earned a Bachelor's degree. Members can draw upon their college experiences to enhance their effectiveness in implementing the College Road curriculum. Members also can serve as positive role models for youth preparing for college.

The applicant provides a comprehensive plan for member training which occurs before, during, and at the conclusion of the Members' service experiences. Training will be provided by senior Boys Hope Girls Hope staff, as well as relevant subject matter experts and field-based professionals. The timing and content of training are directly aligned with tasks to be carried out by Members.

High quality succession planning and training will assist Members in making a successful transition from their AmeriCorps service year.

A unique partnership with Webster University is designed to aid Members in documenting competencies and skills gained through the Members' service years. The member portfolio provides another sound method of reflection and career exploration.

The applicant presents a detailed plan to facilitate interactions among AmeriCorps members.

The applicant also describes a creative, electronic "staff lounge" in which Members will form connections, exchange ideas, share successes and challenges, and explore resources.

The applicant describes in sufficient detail the Go! Team project design which addresses students age 10-18 with a component of service that will address family involvement in student success. Separate and clear service components address the division of two age groups with specific curriculum, activities, and support needs for their

individual academic success.

Applicant has clearly described the specific role, responsibilities, and expectations of AmeriCorps members as found in the plan for training. Member training will be provided by subject matter experts and by agency senior staff. Clear training plans are noted for Members beginning with initial orientation to ongoing and transition experiences.

The applicant provides well-detailed management and supervision responsibilities to support and guide the work of AmeriCorps members. Program directors (supervisors) receive pre-placement training, web-based training, and written materials specific to rules and regulations that make them keenly aware of what is required of Members.

The applicant clearly demonstrates opportunities for Members to connect and communicate with other agency and national programs to support the team concept and develop leadership skills. Further, electronic resources have been developed for resource libraries and other connections to the larger community of Members and programs as further enhancements for leadership and program content.

The applicant effectively and clearly describes several approaches for recruiting Members to the program. These activities include word-of-mouth and recruiting through local resources to web-based recruiting.

The applicant describes a thorough training beginning with a pre-service orientation to program mission and culture and the allowable versus prohibited AmeriCorps activities that prepare Members to comply with AmeriCorps regulations throughout the program.

The requirement for Members to lead National Day of Service activities--potentially in conjunction with AmeriCorps team Members at other sites--promotes interpersonal connection and supports AmeriCorps objectives to establish esprit de corps.

The program's encouragement for Members to document skill development in the member portfolio and use social media as a tool develops valuable assets that the member could leverage into employment after the service project concludes.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not link directly the activities of the College Road program to Social Capital theory and Asset theory. Thus, it is difficult to substantiate the applicant's claim that the program's strategies and activities represent best practices related to these evidence-based theories.

The logic model does not provide sufficient detail about several of the core activities (for example, service-learning and civic engagement), which makes it difficult to assess the cause-and-effect relationship between activities, outputs, and outcomes related to the program's theory of change.

It is not clear that volunteers will receive training about prohibited activities.

The applicant's logic model and theory of change are lacking connections to one other. The theory of change (a more comprehensive construct) is difficult to correlate or connect to the cause and effect relationships in the logic model as it applies to this specific target group, 10-18 years of age.

The inadequate distinction between Members' and volunteers' roles makes it difficult to assess if Members' contributions are unique in their respective communities.

The applicant did not describe the criteria for high-level skills and competencies described in the Member Job

Description that are employed during personnel screening and member selection thus it is difficult to determine what desired attributes beyond a Bachelor's degree that Members will bring to the program.

The applicant did not provide information or cite adequate data that students who do well in early years and participate in the College Road program ultimately will go onto college.