Applicant Feedback Summary: External Evidence Review
2017 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Waynesville RVI School District

Application ID: 17AC191842

Program Name: AmeriCorps Waynesville

The purpose of this summary feedback is to enhance our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). These comments originate from the External Review and are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment. Rather, the analysis pertains to the evidence base portion of the application and the elements that had the greatest impact on Reviewer determinations for the Evidence Tier and Quality Rating. This feedback consists of summary comments from more than one Reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem inconsistent or reflect multiple views. External Review comments do not represent of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

External Review Summary Comments

EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS
Evaluation Required: No
Evaluation Submitted: N/A
Type of Grantee: Small

SMALL/EAP GRANTEE EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS
Internal or External Evaluator: N/A
Process, Outcome, or Impact Evaluation: N/A
At Least One Year of AmeriCorps Program Activity: N/A
Comments:

EVIDENCE REVIEW
Evidence Tier Claimed: Pre-preliminary
Number of Studies Submitted: 1
Number of Studies Assessed: 0
Evidence Tier Assessed: Preliminary
Quality Rating: Medium

Evidence Tier Justification:
The applicant's Evidence Tier is "Preliminary" based on their description of an evaluation that measures recently collected outcomes that are aligned with the program's theory of change. The Waynesville R-VI School District proposes to leverage 36 AmeriCorps members and an additional 1,000 volunteers who will provide academic support, mentoring, service learning, and fitness and wellness support to students in the Waynesville, Saint Robert, and Fort Leonard Wood communities. The program will primarily serve military-affiliated students, half of whom are also economically disadvantaged. The applicant notes that for the 2015-16 year, 93% of program participants demonstrated academic gains in reading and math, which was higher than the expected rate of 75%. In addition to these required performance measures, an external evaluator was utilized to collect and examine two additional measurements, Grade Level Equivalency (GE) and Grade Level Equivalency growth. The study involved analysis of 872 STAR Math and 863 STAR Reading students' school district data (the school years studied was not provided). Two subgroups were identified for each assessment: students receiving less than 5 ACM tutoring sessions (baseline group; Math N=176, Reading N=175) and

students receiving 40 or more ACM tutoring sessions (treatment group; Math N=249, Reading N=272). The study was unable to include students receiving no ACM services in the baseline group because the number was too few (less than 15 students), so a minimum of 5 sessions was used to form the comparison group instead. The evaluator found that students who had participated in at least 40 sessions were significantly more likely to reach GE in both math and reading than students who had participated in less than 5 sessions (49.4% for the treatment group vs. 44.3% for the comparison group in math; 39.3% for the treatment group vs. 36% for the comparison group in reading). In addition, the average GE growth in math and reading was higher for the treatment group (1.7 and 1.5, respectively) than for the comparison group (1.4 and 1.3, respectively). The p values used in the analyses, which set a limit for the probability of incorrectly calculating a positive finding in statistical testing, were not provided. The applicant also cited a number of research studies that support their program practices, but none of them were evaluations or studies of their program. Note that for applicants rated at a "Preliminary" Evidence Tier, attached studies or reports are not considered as part of the evidence review.

Quality Rating Justification:
The Quality Rating is Medium. The applicant examined recently collected (i.e., 2015-16) data on outcomes that were well-aligned with its logic model and provided a detailed explanation of the methodology for creating the treatment and comparison groups. However, the treatment and comparison groups may lack distinction because they both receive some dosage of the intervention (i.e., both groups receive the intervention being measured to some degree). The performance measure data also provide useful and reliable information on one or more components of the program's logic model. Also the p values for the statistical testing were not provided and, therefore, the validity of the study findings are unclear.