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

Legal Applicant: WINGS for kids

Application ID: 17ND188807

Program Name: WINGS for kids AmeriCorps Program

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 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: Strong

Number of Studies Submitted: 1

Number of Studies Assessed: 0

Evidence Tier Assessed: Preliminary

Quality Rating: High

Evidence Tier Justification:

The program's level of evidence is Preliminary based on the applicant's description of two studies of the program showing promising gains in student social-emotional skills and school engagement. WINGS for kids proposes to leverage 93 AmeriCorps members and 100 volunteers to implement the WINGS Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program in high-poverty, at-risk Title I elementary schools in Charleston County, SC; Mecklenburg County, NC; and Fulton County, GA. The goal of the program is to improve academic engagement and attendance among low-income students by increasing their executive function and self-regulation. The applicant describes an external block randomized controlled trial (RCT) study of the program that includes three cohorts and four schools in Charleston, NC that is currently underway. Multiple data sources were used, including direct assessments of students, teacher surveys, parent interviews, direct classroom observations of students, and administrative records. The data collection period spanned fall 2012 – spring 2015. Results for the first of the three cohorts found large program effects using teacher reports of student improvement in five key SEL competencies (self-management, self-awareness, decision-making, relationship

skills, and social awareness). These positive findings, however, were not significant, possibly due to the small sample sizes involved in this preliminary study. Reductions in negative engagement and bullying were also observed, but again, were not significant. In order to qualify for the Moderate or Strong Evidence Tier, the study of the applicant's program must demonstrate positive findings for one or more key program outcomes at the traditional range of significance ($p < .05$). While the RCT is well-designed and well-implemented and the relationships reported are positive, the levels of significance used in the study are lower ($p < .10$ and $p < .20$) than what is required to meet this Evidence Tier. In the narrative, the applicant also describes internal data collected during the last program year that indicate that WINGS students averaged 48% fewer disciplinary referrals than non-WINGS students in the same school. The chronic absenteeism rate for WINGS students was 32% lower than non-WINGS students. On the basis of the promising, but non-significant findings of the RCT study which included data beyond performance measures and results from the program's internal data collection, the Evidence Tier is assessed as Preliminary.

Quality Rating Justification:

The Quality Rating is High. Data collected are recent (2012-2015) and clearly align with the program's logic model. The design, data collection methods and analyses are reliable and appropriate for the outcomes of interest.