

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Presbytery of South Louisiana	Application ID: 11AC123394
Below are the comments from each External Peer Reviewer that read and evaluated the application. While Reviewers did engage in discussion about their evaluations, consensus was not required as part of their review. Therefore, there may be differing views in their feedback on the quality of the proposal.	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant makes a compelling case and adequately documents the need for housing in a community devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Proposed activities clearly address the need for developing and rehabilitating 75 housing units for low-income households based on the blighted or empty residences within that community. The plan for recruitment and selection is strong with preference given to applicants with an undergraduate degree or high and professional work experiences so that will serve as project managers. The applicant’s training plan seems effective and appropriate to overall program objectives. However, it is unclear who will provide the supervisor orientation and training. The applicant has provided a detailed plan as to what members will do and the type of on the job training that will be received. The shadowing process provided for an effective way to become acclimated to a new responsibility. The applicant’s plan for providing structured opportunities for participants to reflect and learn from their service experience is adequately addressed although it is not clear if the activities will include journal experiences or opportunities for members to share with others on what they have learned. The applicant’s plan for insuring that the program impact in the community is sustainable beyond the presence of federal support is not clearly defined. Although the applicant will construct over the next two year 12 new homes in distressed neighborhoods, it is unclear what external monetary or volunteer support will be sought to make that happen.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: (+) The applicant's training plan is effective and appropriately develops members. Training is extensive and includes a 3 day orientation that includes a first-hand tour of devastated neighborhoods and visits with homeowner clients. Ongoing training from 40-80 hours of on-the-job operations, where core project components are learned is required of each member. Training is also job and site specific to ensure quality member capability. (+) The applicant provides well-designed activities that promote an ethic of service and civic responsibility including a full curriculum of monthly training components. (+) The applicant makes an excellent case that engaging AmeriCorps members is a highly effective means of solving the housing crisis in the target community. Many members will be from the area and will receive a valuable life experience by helping to restore this community to pre-storm status, which is expected to take at least 5 more years.</p>	

COMMENTS: (+) The applicant presents a compelling case that there is unprecedented damage resulting from the destruction and flooding caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Orleans Parish, LA. Staggering statistics are cited that detail pre-flood status in 2005 versus unprecedented post-flood damage currently. (+) The training plan is highly effective and appropriately develops members. Training is extensive and includes a 3-day orientation inclusive a first-hand tour of devastated neighborhoods and visits with homeowner clients Training is also job and site specific to ensure member capability. (+) The applicant provides well-designed activities that promote an ethic of service and civic responsibility as evidenced by a full curriculum of monthly training components. (+) The applicant makes an excellent and well supported case that engaging AmeriCorps members is a highly effective means of solving the housing crisis in the target community. (+) Proposed activities clearly address the compelling needs of the target area. A link between the aligned outcomes and the identified problem is fully supported to determine the measurable impact of the program.

COMMENTS: The applicant provides compelling information on the housing shortage in New Orleans as a result of the devastation by Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The applicant demonstrates the need for more housing with information from the census of the amount of homes damaged and the number of homes that are still damaged five years after this occurred. The applicant provides an adequate training and orientation plan. Members will receive specific training for the roles they will serve. The members will receive ongoing training throughout the service term. The applicant sufficiently demonstrates the program will provide some structured opportunities for members to reflect and learn from their service to promote a lifelong ethic of service and civic responsibility. The members will tour the area they will be assisting in rebuilding. The applicant will use monthly staff meetings and evaluations to promote civic responsibility. The specific job responsibilities encourage members to take pride in their work and promote what they are doing in the community. The applicant adequately described some the overall change to be seen in the community at the end of the three-year grant. There will be 48 affordable homes added to the community. Homes that were deemed as blithe will be rehabilitated in the community increasing the values of homes in the area. The increase of suitable housing in the area may also attract former citizens of the area to return.