

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: National Indian Youth Leadership Project Inc., National Indian Youth Leadership Project	Application ID: 11AC123450
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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.

COMMENTS: The applicant provides compelling documentation of academic disparities within the target community, McKinley County, New Mexico. The recruitment strategy proposed by the applicant will target members from the community that have strong academic skills and cultural sensitivity to the target population. The applicant provides a well-designed plan to recruit and train AmeriCorps members. The applicant has successfully inspired former AmeriCorps members to continue community service. The proposed supervision plan for the members will continue to encourage member reflection of their service activities and civic responsibility. The applicant provides a link between the proposed program activities, adventure based-experiential learning and service learning opportunities and the reduction of educational disparities in the target area. The applicant outlines a clear evaluation plan that includes both process and outcome measures of the proposed project.

COMMENTS: (+) The applicant provides compelling state and local evidence of the need for using members to support positive youth development programming that uses experiential and community-service learning to foster leadership and self-esteem for American Indian youth. (-) The Project Venture program is evidenced-based and proven to be successful in reducing teen-aged substance abuse, but the program activities are not well described. (-) The applicant does not provide any baseline data for the Project Venture program to effectively evaluate objective number three: "25% of youth who participate in the Project Venture program will demonstrate statistically significant changes from pre to post on measures of substance abuse prevention attitudes and behaviors". (-) The applicant presents a compelling case of the needs of disadvantaged American Indians in the Western NM area but does not provide supporting information on substance abuse issues and/or if the high rate of teenage suicide is linked to substance abuse.

COMMENTS: The program design is reasonable and realistic based on current and potential resources to address a problem spread over a wide impoverished territory with limited resources. The solutions seem reasonable and there is the possibility of success when volunteers are carefully identified, works closely with

existing staff, and have on-going supervision and professional development.

COMMENTS: Applicant establishes a compelling and persuasive case for the overwhelming socioeconomic, health and education deficiencies in the targeted community. The severity of the problem is illustrated through the evidence provided including the acknowledgment of the issue in congressional testimony. The statistical information provided demonstrates at a county and local level that the targeted community has an unequal burden when compared to other peers and like geographic areas. AmeriCorps members will learn valuable skills participating in this program and have the possibility to become employed in the youth development field. The applicant also notes other employment opportunities with partner organizations and specifically names a former AmeriCorps member who now works for an organization in the field. A major strength of this program is the cultivation of civic engagement and workforce development as AmeriCorps member and local volunteers receive the skills and sense of duty to continue servicing their community. The major strength of utilizing AmeriCorps members is in volunteer generation as creating a qualified workforce is a key element in addressing an identified problem in the targeted community. To what extent, the three AmeriCorps members can address the socioeconomic, health and educational challenges are unclear but the challenge of a cultivating a qualified workforce is addressed in the application. The applicant's program does provide measurable impacts of the program on the above challenges but the solution is not directly correlated to the use of AmeriCorps volunteers. The applicant is rooted in the targeted community and has included the targeted community in addressing the problem which fosters a participatory approach from relevant stakeholders.

COMMENTS: The applicant was very descriptive and informative in identifying the problems in this community. Data on the impact of these problems to the community may have been especially useful in understanding the totality of the problem. Because use of the PV program has been replicated by other organizations successfully recruitment and training should be a positive experience for members. While the PV program has been successful, use of the program in this application does not appear too indicated. The applicant is requesting funding under the Focus Area of Education, however, the activities selected to solve the problems are not designed to make an impact in those areas. Utilizing members from the community and of the same culture will undoubtedly be a positive experience for both service members and participants.