

**APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design**

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

<p><b>Legal Applicant:</b> Okeene Public School, Serve for Success</p>	<p><b>Application ID:</b> 11AC123785</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><b>COMMENTS:</b> (+) The applicant has clearly linked the program components. The need has been identified and solutions have been developed to address those needs. The solutions involve the relevant use of AmeriCorps members in an effective manner. Anticipated outcomes are clearly relevant to the activities and services being provided. (+) Each of the targeted districts have state report cards that demonstrate 1st through 3rd graders need reading remediation. For example, districts noted an average of 26.58% of students need reading remediation with the highest district listed at 62%. (+) State reports also clearly demonstrated that districts were below the state average on achievement test scores in reading and math for various grade levels. (+) Another problem is that targeted schools are suffering severe budget cuts. For example, one school lost almost \$800 per student in 2010. Class sizes are increasing and students with diverse learning needs are not getting the one-on-one attention needed. (+) The program strategy is to provide forty-one AmeriCorps members, in collaboration with classroom teachers in 20 schools in 13 partnering districts who will identify pre-K through grade 12 students underperforming in core academic subjects such as reading and math. Identified students will receive one-one and small group tutoring from members under teacher supervision three or more days per week before, during and after school hours for approximately two hours a week with a goal of at least 35 sessions attended.</p>	
<p><b>COMMENTS:</b> In support of the need for the project, the applicant cites a number of factors which include rural isolation, population size, dropout rates, access to community-based services and programs, budget cuts, class sizes, educational attainment of the target communities and academic deficiencies. The applicant has established a training plan for members that is in direct alignment with the needs and intended purposes of the project as evidenced by pre-service training topics, utilization of research-based instructional materials and time devoted to training. The training that members receive is in direct alignment with addressing the needs of students. Members provide additional academic support through civic engagement and service-learning projects which establishes a commitment to the community. In response to continued civic engagement after the project ends, the applicant has designed a session which is offered in May entitled (Life after AmeriCorps). Members are required to attend at least one governmental meeting and participate in one service-learning project during each service year.</p>	

**COMMENTS:** (+) Applicant provided persuasive evidence that identified reading and math performance of students in first through third grade from using state testing data on the SAT- and Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests to show the problem. (+) Criteria for selection includes a high school diploma or higher, clearance on the National Sex Offender Public Registry, and proof of legal citizenship. (+) Members will participate in training that includes six days of pre-service sessions covering AmeriCorps rules and regulations, tutoring strategies, leadership and basic life skills. Past AmeriCorps members will assist with the training. (+) The applicant identifies risks to students' academic success due to poor reading and math skills in communities to be served. This situation is magnified by the lack of resources within the communities to provide interventions or enrichment programs that augment the school districts efforts. (+) The recruitment and training of several Members from within the service area strengthens the connections and provides continuity of civic engagement that will directly impact the area.

**COMMENTS:** (+) The applicant states that they will continue beyond the grant period through the ongoing recruitment of volunteers and their focus on youth education has established positive relationships with schools. They elaborate on the fact that they have not solicited cash funds from a variety of sources since the districts agreed to provide the necessary cash match. However, they will continue to engage other community stakeholders in other ways, such as volunteering with afterschool and summer enrichment activities as volunteers or in-kind supporters, as part of our sustainability for the longer term. For example they will engage churches, community organizations, and private citizens in support of summer programs. They provide financial and in-kind contributions such as snacks and materials, and/or community volunteers that enhance each summer program. They also continually search for additional sources of support from each local community as well as from a broader spectrum such as grants, foundations and large corporations to supply funds after federal support ceases. (+) The applicant provides significant evidence that the schools will support the service project. They also include that they are opting to participate in the National Performance Measurement pilot for CNCS. Over the course of the next three years, members will track and record tutor sessions they provide daily for each individual student, record pre- and post-test data to note improvement in academic performance for tutored students. They will track and report accurately on national performance measure ED1 the total number of students that receive AmeriCorps tutoring assistance, as well as the number of tutoring sessions received per student. Each school district already utilizes at least one of the recommended pre- and post-instruments.