

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Ohio College Access Network, Ohio College Guides	Application ID: 11AC123922
<p>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>	
<p>COMMENTS: (+) The applicant renders adequate evidence of the problem through a discussion of the economic status and supporting statistical data. Specifically, the attainment of post-secondary education rates is low; support to encourage post-secondary education is limited; and the unemployment rates are high in the state of Ohio. If funding is granted, Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) will provide financial support to local organizations for the organization to deliver, or expand the delivery, of access to college services. Seven college access organizations have been designated to host AmeriCorps Members. (+) The proposed project will significantly increase college awareness; community collaboration; and the development of members who will succeed in civic domain after their AmeriCorps term. Bases on previous results, the rate of graduates entering post-secondary education increased by 3.8% for high schools with an OCAN program, and the graduation rate increased by 4.5%. The rates will further increase as a result of college guides targeting and providing services to at-risk students for whom college is not a consideration. (+) Candidates must have a Bachelor’s degree with preference given to recent graduates who can clearly convey the academic and college preparation needs of high school students.*** No weaknesses noted.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: Very well written application, that was clear to understand. Looks to have enough detail to hopefully be able to see success through their proposed solutions. Applicant states that problems in their area include high unemployment rates and less likely to achieve post-secondary education. Those of minority population are even less likely to graduate and gain further education. Solutions include communicating what is required to enroll and success in college; expanding availability of new lower cost models for attaining a degree; preparing students better academically, financially and culturally; improving graduation rates and new target populations. AmeriCorps members are already respected in the community and connected to many different agencies. Applicant also has good standing throughout the state and will be able to expand services with AmeriCorps members as requested. Outcomes that they are looking to achieve will be an increase in college awareness and enrollment; increase in collaboration and service with in the local community and pipe-line of leaders. High schools that already work with OCAN have better graduation rates.</p>	

COMMENTS: The OCAN program provides targeted assistance to schools and individuals with low graduation rates, and low aspirations with one-on-one assistance in understanding the college admissions process and provides supports to students in low performing schools about their options. AmeriCorps members are recruited and selected as ‘near-peers’ to closely reflect the background of the students they are assigned to help. The students can identify with the AmeriCorps members, and see a path to their own expanding view of their own future. The training received by AmeriCorps members provides a solid foundation for students to chart a path to high school graduation and higher education. Observations: This program builds on a proven model to inspire and assist disadvantaged students to aspire and succeed in higher education.