

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Building Healthy Communities AmeriCorps	Application ID: 11AC125258
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: Appropriate links were established for the major Program Design elements. (+) The problem of violent behavior in youth was established by documentation from the FBI and school surveys. (+) Appropriate solutions were discovered from the planning sessions. (+) KSCOS is an experienced AmeriCorps intermediary with a 14-year track record of successfully managing multi-city programs and will provide a proven structure that will be adapted to serve all communities in this statewide initiative, i. e. mentoring programs, youth development theory and practice, civic engagement and national service, volunteer recruitment and support, and life after AmeriCorps. (+) Through the AmeriCorps planning grant process, KCSOS has built positive and productive relationships with the 14 partners. (+) Further support will come from TCE’s BHC plan, which will include robust community leadership throughout the 10 year initiative.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: (+) The identified problem in the community was determined at a community level. The applicant states AmeriCorps members will be part of a larger effort entitled the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative, a community-led effort where over 20,000 residents identified the most pressing health issues in their respective communities. As a result, members will specifically address youth violence by providing high-quality mentorships. (+) The proposal outlines a thorough training program that will include developmental trainings. These trainings will include Life After AmeriCorps, with topics such as lifelong civic engagement and volunteering, education and career options, and using the education award. In addition, journal reflections will be interwoven into a members experience to encourage a critical analysis on the community being served. For example, reflections on questions such as, ‘How has your awareness of community issues changed since you began your term of service?’ (+) AmeriCorps members are well-suited for this program because it offers an expansion of efforts for existing organizations such as the Brothers and Sisters Program that currently has a waitlist for mentors. Concrete solutions are outlined and a research based curriculum will be used that focuses on the intended outcome of decreasing youth violence. (+) This proposal addresses all the application requirements while shaping the program to meet the needs of the community. Specific data is given which aligns with the AmeriCorps activities and intended outcomes. :</p>	

COMMENTS: The applicant provides a particularly compelling needs-assessment in that the alarming focus on the need to prevent violence emerged unexpectedly in the assessment. The use of strong success-based training programs seems to ensure the success of achievement of the expected reduction of negative behaviors and increase in positive behaviors in the students targeted. The targeted community will realize a powerful impact and the members recruited will experience a powerful service experience.

COMMENTS: (+) The applicant provides extensive data on its target population. (+) The applicant provides services to multiple sites. (+)The applicant provides supportive research on the program that will be used for mentoring. (-)Links were unclear as to the issues presented. (-)The applicant does not provide exact rates of violence, including suspension and expulsion rates for middle grades in the target area.