

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: FoodCorps, Inc	Application ID: 11ED125322
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 presents a compelling case that childhood obesity within the target communities is a major public health issue. The training plan is effective and appropriately develops members. The applicant describes a program that engaged more than 4000 stakeholders utilizing a bottom-up grass roots approach which will encourage leaders and innovators at the community level to remain engaged in active civic participation. The applicant proposes to assign members the task of recruiting a diverse group of parent and community volunteers at the local level and to track the hours and accomplishment that they contribute. This system of monitoring will enable members to recognize changes over the course of the program and to associate continued service with beneficial outcomes of civic engagement. The applicant strengthens the potential for accuracy and consistency of data collection by requiring members to report on outcome measures in impact logs that accompany their time sheets. The applicant proposes to utilize pre and post assessment tools to measure increase in students' knowledge of garden-enhanced nutrition, but it is not clear how they will determine the percentage of schools promoting the local, healthy food concept.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant clearly identifies the problem of childhood obesity in their targeted community. The applicant clearly identifies activities to solve the problem such as food and nutrition education, school gardens and the provision of information on healthy foods in the school cafeterias. The applicant cites an expectancy of 3,834 participating students to increase their knowledge of fruits and vegetables as an anticipated outcome of their project.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant does a good job at using a variety of data sources to define their target community. They paint a picture of how the childhood obesity epidemic looks in the US as well as their target communities. In addition they identify the role that school lunch plays in contributing to childhood obesity. The applicant uses a JAMA article to show how the obesity epidemic changes for communities of color. This article was from 2003 and the applicant should try to utilize more recent data to make their case. The applicant describes clear recruitment strategies by outlining the recruitment strategy and detailed the selection strategy</p>	

and the use of technology to assist them in the process. The training was clearly identified and each of the AC members will receive a career mentor as they progress throughout their placement. I thought this was an excellent addition. Not only was their training for the AC members but also for the site supervisors. There were no clear qualifications detailed in terms of the AC members' background. The applicant does not explicitly state how the opportunity will lead to continued civic engagement. Although this could be inferred through the designed placement it should have been explicitly outlined to show how the connection would be made. The proposed intervention was based off of AmeriCorps Vista programs completed in three other states. This was great to show that the program was designed off of models that have been proven to work. In order to develop the program the applicant conducted an 18 month program development phase. This demonstrated that the applicant did their due diligence to ensure that the propose intervention was the best and most appropriate to meet the community need. The outcomes were developed by and evaluation director and seemed feasible and measurable. In addition there is an evaluation team in place to ensure accurate data processing.

COMMENTS: The applicant illustrates a compelling case about food security issues in the target communities the program is serving. The applicant provides a thorough description of the training program. This will contribute to the success of the AmeriCorps members during their placement. The applicant has outlines a solid support program that will contribute to the member's engagement in their activities, the program, and the community. The applicant also provides a detailed description of the monitoring and evaluation program that will help track the progress of the program and help members recognize the impact that the program is achieving in the community.

COMMENTS: The applicant provides a well-documented need for childhood obesity prevention services in the areas they will serve. They connects the risks for childhood obesity to host site demographics, including limited resource communities, unemployment rates, rural communities, low-income populations, and race. The applicant describes that members will be placed in 10 sites across the nation. These sites were selected as part of a competitive application process in which they had to address their capacity, need, recruitment and service plan, partnerships and other areas. Applications were reviewed by six internal and external evaluators. The applicant provides an extensive description of how members will be recruited for the program.

The applicant provides a thorough plan for the training that will be provided to each member. The applicant provides a vague plan for members to reflect on their service that will lead to continue engagement and active civic participation. For example, they will provide periodic training potlucks that will allow for reflection and members will be supported by a career mentor to who will help them reflect on their service. However, it is unclear how often the potlucks or mentor interactions will take place. The applicant clearly describes the member roles for the program.

The applicant clearly describes the number of AmeriCorps members being requested and the specific terms of service needed. These environmental and policy changes will help make physical activity and nutrition the obvious choice for young people after the program ends. The applicant provides a vague description of community changes to be seen as a result of this program. While they provide specific measureable outcomes for nutrition education and volunteer recruitment and training, it is unclear the number of schools that will incorporate Farm to School into their procurement process or the shift in cafeteria food to healthy ingredients

and recipes. The applicant provides a sound sustainability plan for the program. It is unclear how some of the performance measure targets were determined. For example, they state that 9,585 children will receive 10 hours of nutrition education and that 3,834 will have an increase in knowledge of fruits and vegetables, but do not provide a rationale to determine if this is a sufficient increase. They also state that 25% of the 410 volunteers will serve in accordance with their commitment. This seems low without justification. The applicant provides a detailed need for the program at the state level and will address this need by creating sustainable infrastructure to carry out projects in 163 schools in ten states. Members will be sufficiently trained in food and garden safety, fresh-food procurement, classroom management, community engagement and volunteer coordination to implement these school-based programs. They will have the supervision and support to carry out these activities in the communities they will serve.