

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Reading Partners	Application ID: 11ND125513
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: This was an excellent proposal that demonstrated a clear statement of need, and a model for replication in addressing a common problem existing in most communities at the national level today. The delays in children’s abilities to perform within grade level from K-5 is addressed by leveraging 50 AmeriCorps members to train, monitor, supervise tutors and replicate effective practices in the field. A model that will also provide solutions to the inabilities of schools to properly train, manage and supervise volunteer tutors. The applicant clearly describes the identified problem in the target community with low literacy levels for children from low income families, and proposes to provide 50 members (42 will serve as Site Coordinators and 8 as Outreach Coordinators) that will leverage 1,850 volunteers to reach 1,700 students). Tutors/volunteers will provide 1:1 tutoring to struggling readers in elementary school grades K-5 from low income families. The manner in which the members will engage a large number of volunteers in order to reach as many children is an innovative way to address the community problems with highly effective solutions.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant establishes that their organization has a proven track record of addressing and meeting the needs of the target population, struggling readers and at-risk families. Indeed, the applicant also has a diverse revenue base and impact in the community and support beyond the presence of federal support. More importantly, the applicant has addressed each of the criteria and provided sound assessments, evaluations, and performance measures which are feasible in determining the program’s effectiveness. To this end, the program will provide successfully an innovative approach for direct consumer services; the program is sustainable, and can be replicated by other programs nationally.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: Community needs are addressed but lacks sufficient detail on how those needs link to the proposed program. There is a strong discussion of member recruitment and orientation, as well as efforts to provide members with training and professional development. The proposed program offers a compelling case that members will be involved in many levels in team building work which will lead to a year of meaningful service. Outcomes are clearly stated and the links to the needs are excellent. Innovation is present throughout the plan, and there is strong evidence that sustainability will be achieved. The number of</p>	

partners the applicant wishes to engage in is excellent and further strengthens the overall application.

COMMENTS: The proposal does a phenomenal job of outlining the impact engaging AmeriCorps members will have on the community problem. The scaffold approach and utilization of members as outreach and site coordinators to support and train a larger cadre of community volunteers demonstrates working within the identified communities to build capacity and garner support. This proposal is compelling not only in the approach to each major program design area but also how those areas overlap and are further defined. This seamless approach speaks to a highly functioning structure which can support replication and bring this project to scale while providing consistent training, data collection and services to address the identified problem.

COMMENTS: The application needs to provide more information, beyond the rates of free or reduced lunch, to illustrate the community issue they are tackling. In addition, the application lacked an explanation why the particular communities that are included in the application are included, and elaborate on what makes those particular schools/communities more in need of services than others.