

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Hoopa Valley Tribe and Hoopa Forestry Division, Hoopa AmeriCorps on Native Lands Program	Application ID: 11TN124734
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 fails to address the Program Design Elements in several areas. The evidence of identified problems is not documented by any cited data, nor is there any type of baseline data on which to base the need for the intended project. While a wide-ranging description and listing of various trainings was reported, there was not a concise or organized training plan offered by the applicant in addressing the intended duties of the AmeriCorps members. The applicant fails to demonstrate how AmeriCorps members are recruited, selected or what the skills and qualifications prospective members should possess. The existing process of retention for AmeriCorps members consists of journaling and training which allows the members to record and reflect on their life as a member. This is a positive way to further civic participation. The applicant ensures the positive experience for the members by offering monthly "Success Day" with the TCCC program. This ongoing training provides for intensive trainings in a variety of sessions and topics. This type of training promotes positive civic participation. While applicant details the strategy members would undertake to achieve results, they fail to correlate how this will lead to a major impact on the community problem.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The proposal cites compelling data regarding high unemployment and poor educational outcomes among the youth in the community. Another need that is identified is that of supportive services to the elderly; however, data is not provided regarding the extent of this problem. The proposal includes details of a training process that occurs weekly and allows for regular debriefing and reflection on the service experience, which will provide for the supports necessary to ensure a positive experience. Acknowledgment of contributions through 'success days' will further support AmeriCorps members and encourage future civic participation activities. The proposal provides opportunities to support and promote the cultural practices of respect of elders which will likely build a stronger community. The project does not adequately address the needs of the youth in the areas of unemployment and education, nor is there a plan to deal with challenges that may be faced by members. There is not a clear linkage between the identified problems facing the youth and the outcomes of the project. Although the applicant mentions previous AmeriCorps programs, this application lacks details about the impact this has had on the community and how the proposed new program will incorporate learning from the previous projects.</p>	

COMMENTS: The applicant has not clearly identified the specific need of the Hoopa Valley Tribe to be addressed through this program. The applicant discusses the high rates of unemployment (24%) of the Tribal youth but does not compare the rate to populations outside of the Tribe. Other data is presented but not related to the proposed activities. The applicant has not provided information regarding how the program will recruit volunteers to expand the impact of the program into the community nor does there appear to be a waiver request. The applicant has not provided a program design which flows between the sections of the proposal and details have been omitted. The applicant has not provided a separate and distinct proposal, rather it appears to be an add-on to current programs.

COMMENTS: The applicant provides convincing evidence that the senior adults are in need of day to day living services and improvement of their diet to help prevent diabetes. The reservation is also characterized by low youth education attainment and by high unemployment rates. The educational needs of the youths as well as the unemployment rates are not supported by official data. The applicant does not identify a method for recruitment and ensuring the membership will be qualified and have appropriate backgrounds and skills. In addition, the supervisory plan is vague as the program director and the recruiting officer are listed as supervisory roles, but duties are not described. Although an impact will be felt by the seniors receiving the immediate services, the applicant does not present benchmark standards for evidence of the larger impact on the adults and youths.

COMMENTS: The applicant has provided a proposal which has omitted some critical information essential to the program design section of the grant requirements. The applicant is to be commended for its work with AmeriCorps projects in the past, however, for this submission the applicant in many cases did not provide a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested. This lack of specificity is very evident in the applicants' attempt to define the problem and the target population. With respect to providing a clear, and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results this needed more detail especially as it relates to outcomes measures. The applicant has presented no measurable outcomes which makes it difficult to assess project performance for the target community, target population and AmeriCorps members.