

**APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design**

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

<b>Legal Applicant:</b> <b>Rogers Public School, AmeriCorps Family Outreach</b>	<b>Application ID:</b> <b>11AC123689</b>
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**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.**

**COMMENTS:** The applicant documents the identified problem as the lack of parental involvement in their children’s education (specifically at school). However, the data provided to substantiate the problem’s existence is somewhat limited. The data is more applicable to the national level and not specific to the service area. The projected number of student to be served is provided. The applicant does not discuss this program’s prior success rate, therefore, it’s difficult to determine if the projected number to be served is feasible, based on the member to client caregiver ratio.

**COMMENTS:** Applicant states that they have an increase in Hispanic and Marshallese students coming into their communities, specifically in Rogers and Springdale. With this influx of students, also comes a language barrier that has grown with the number of students. The Parents Advancing Readiness for Educational Success (PADRES) has helped to bring people into the community that speak the aforementioned languages. Current problems include translation services and parent engagement. With the lack of parent engagement, is also a lack of trust, language barriers and lack of understanding of parental role. These will all be addressed with the current proposal. Applicant has been working for 7 years to bridge the communication gap in the community. They have found that having AmeriCorps members speaking native language has been beneficial. They are proposing to have more translation and interpretation services available by having 44 members present in 42 school sites at least 3 days per week.

**COMMENTS:** This application to create AmeriCorps Family Outreach program at the Rogers Public School proposes to address the need of the influx of Hispanic and Marshallese children with limited English skills by providing translation services and parental engagement strategies for families in their community. The application includes a strong focus on translation and parent involvement (lack of trust, language barriers, lack of understanding of American education system). AmeriCorps members, drawn in part from the local community, will provide a bridge between school, employers and families by providing translation services and providing additional support for parent involvement through existing school services. AmeriCorps members will also provide home visits and recruit community volunteers. Using existing proven methods,

such as PADRES, they have designed a sustainable model where parents are engaged in recruiting and supporting other parents. This program provides an excellent opportunity to engage community members as mentors and role models for the Hispanic and Marshallese communities. The application highlighted using member recruitment as a means of raising aspirations of local community members by demonstrating the ability of community members to improve their circumstances and gain professional level skills. The program provides sound training and orientation with opportunities to gain Para Professional status by passing a test. Their focus on Citizenship education is an added bonus to a well-designed program. Because so many of the AmeriCorps members come from the local community, the program provides tangible, visible benefit in the local community. A commitment to engaging in service projects also advances their visibility and sustainability within the community. Their collaboration with employers, particularly the WalMart Foundation provides excellent collaborative opportunities in career planning and employment expectations.