

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: WINGS for kids, Wings for Kids	Application ID: 11AC124149
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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 provides persuasive evidence that the target schools have a much higher than average number of students living at the lowest of income levels and lower graduation rates 20-25% below the district and national averages. There should be additional supporting evidence that low levels of SEL are a predictor of dropout/graduation rates. The applicant thoroughly identifies short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes. Increased SEL will be evident through 90% of participants being able to recite the WINGS creed, 80% citing examples of SEL, 85% receiving positive social development grades on report cards, 95% receiving fewer than two office referrals or disciplinary problems, 90% receiving average or higher school attendance grades, and an increase in the number of participants graduating from high school, staying out of jail and avoiding teenage parenthood. The applicant effectively describes that their program design is rooted in the Theory of Change. They provide evidence through multiple research studies to show that their program has a positive impact on the target population and yields the desired outcomes.

COMMENTS: There is a strong partnership base which includes a wide variety of sources for funding, including public and private donations and in-kind support. Information relative to measurable outcomes is well-defined and is correlated to the goals and objectives of the overall program structure. Relevant data and statistics describing the need of the overall project is clearly demonstrated and indicates a strong need for the targeted population and area.

COMMENTS: Community needs to be addressed are compelling and well documented as evidenced by the high levels of poverty and academic underachievement. The plan supports the program objectives because it targets children at-risk for low education attainment and provides high yield learning experiences, based on social and emotional learning in a fun environment to improve overall academic and well being. The plan for recruiting and managing and training volunteers is clear and strong. The applicant plans to recruit AmeriCorps members who are college students from the area. A staffing plan with supervision responsibilities has been thought-out and is ready to implement. The training is robust and has many different topics and skills areas to respond to the needs of the AmeriCorps members. The applicant goes

above and beyond with their orientation activities, training plan and exit interviews. The activities proposed reflect a comprehensive evidenced based program model that will respond the needs of the at-risk population and produce positive outcomes. Very well written and easy to follow, any question I had was quickly answered in the narrative.

COMMENTS: (+) Within the current WINGS' individual schools, they target the highest need students, as identified by behavior problems, teacher recommendations, test scores and report card grades. They select those children since they are those most in danger of not graduating high school and in becoming teenage parents.(+) The applicant provides a well documented recruitment, pre-service and in-service training component as an integral part of the overall Member services plan. Potential Members receive 40 hours of dedicated pre-service training and an additional 25 hours of in-service training to complete their commitment.(+) The applicant includes very specific qualifications for WINGS Leaders, who must be current college students, which provides strong academic role models for the kids. The members must also demonstrate a commitment to working with elementary school kids and an interest in social and emotional education. Peace Managers may either be currently enrolled in college or have recently graduated.(+) A well documented and organized training plan includes topics such as the developmental stages of childhood, behavior management, working with special needs children, academic skills building, curriculum design, implementing South Carolina standards into everyday activities and social and emotional learning theories and practices. This training serves as the building blocks to their experience within the program.(+) Continuous and ongoing additional training is led by the WINGS staff and outside partners throughout the service year. At least twice a week, members have meetings with their site supervisors to discuss individual strengths and weaknesses in order to improve the overall program and specific member performance.(+)The applicant's project proposes activities where members are able to make an immediate impact to further WINGS and CNCS goals, such as improving school attendance, behavior and academics. The members also leave the WINGS program with a plethora of experiences, many of which influence their future career choices and lead to additional service roles. (+) The day-to-day organization is well defined and include WINGS Leaders implement the day to day activities of the program. These members are located directly at the service sites where the interact with the kids and implement the WINGS program. (+) The project contains a very strong volunteer recruitment plan that targets senior citizens, high school students and other members of the community such as employees of banks and law firms who perform service regularly. We advertise our volunteer opportunities online, with the United Way, at local high schools and senior citizen centers. All volunteers receive training and background checks.(+)The roles of the members and volunteers are distinct, and members will not be replacing current volunteer service slots. Volunteers are used to assist with daily student tutoring and academic help, supplementing the work the members perform during dedicated academic time with the kids. Members will not be active volunteer recruiters, staff members will be in charge of volunteer recruitment and retention.(+) The WINGS program is rooted in a rigorous, research-based curriculum; and regimented member training. All activities have specific and meaningful outcomes. The program is 3 hours a day, 5 five days per week for the entire school year. It is broken up into 9-week blocks of well-prepared art, music, sports and innovative activities that the students participate in. In the classrooms there are Academic Centers -- 40 minutes per day where students receive academic support. (+)The applicant's Community service activities are focused on helping others and strengthening attachment to the school. This includes weekly 90 minute activities including innovative games, discussions and role-playing which culminates the weekly learning objective.(+) The applicant discusses an online performance management system, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), to track precisely the number of youth served

and the progress our students make towards our outcomes in relation to their Theory of Change. As students are enrolled into WINGS, demographic and baseline data is entered into ETO. ETO compiles a profile for each student that is updated as information changes.(+) The applicant provides information regarding multiple rigorous academic studies that have been performed on WINGS over the past 8 years, to document the successful outcomes. Studies from Yale University and the University of Virginia provide evidence that students enrolled in two or more years of WINGS had significantly higher math and reading scores, better grades and school attendance compared to non-WINGS students.(+) The applicant begins by building a demographic picture of poverty and other risk factors located in Charleston.(+) The applicant has a history of implementing k-12 academic programming for a diverse population and helping them to improve in their overall academic standings.(+)The current WINGS AmeriCorps program is fully integrated into the applicant's existing organization and management structure. The management and strategic planning of WINGS is vested with the Board, and the Board holds the staff accountable for the goals and objectives of WINGS.(+)The applicant has extensive experience designing and implementing social and emotional activities for school aged programming. Included in the proposal are the results of a number of robust evaluation studies are provided by the applicant to demonstrate the historical development and success of their component program.(+) This proposal is the results of combining all of the Wings successful activities and further expanding the programming within the schools that most need this type of academic assistance. The identification, screening of members is well organized and the implementation of additional voluntary service learning activities has as the ultimate goal improving the students' academic performance.

COMMENTS: (+) Applicant fully identifies problem in the targeted community. (+) Applicant effectively describes the curriculum, the learning objectives and some of the key components of the program. (+)Applicant presents a description of the recruitment/ training process, which appears sufficient, including a description of the experience of the site supervisor. (+) Applicant makes a case that the use of AmeriCorps will be beneficial for the AmeriCorps members and their participation will result in positive outcomes. (-) Applicant explains the involvement of the partners in an insufficient fashion, and requires more specific information.(-)The applicant presents limited information about feedback from the youth being served, and their importance and role in evaluating the benefits of the program.