

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program	Application ID: 11AC124276
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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: (-) While there is clearly a significant population of primary and secondary victims in New Hampshire, as indicated in the data presented, the applicant has not provided data to indicate whether the problem has a higher rate of occurrence in New Hampshire vs. other States. (-) Though the applicant presents information about the percentage of members who work at host sites or for related agencies after their AVAP experience, or who continue their education in a related field, the applicant presents limited information about the percentage of former members who continue to be engaged as community volunteers. (-) When presenting information about the difference that the AVAP program makes, the application highlights the number of victims/ survivors who would not be served if the funding were not available. This does not provide information as to whether using AmeriCorps members is the most effective usage of the funding. (-) Though the AVAP has been in operation for over fifteen years, the applicant presents very little historical data regarding past program successes, such as statewide reduction in occurrences of violence, other than anecdotal data regarding satisfaction surveys. (-) With over fifteen years of prior programmatic successes, the applicant failed to present historical data showing specific differences the program has made in the lives of so many residents. This includes both immediate differences, and longer-term differences with respect to lowering the rates of occurrence, etc., or to show how the program has lowered the rates of occurrence, or made a difference in the lives of secondary victims/survivors. (-) Anticipated outcomes are projected without being tied to prior success or based on historical data for the projections, or on any other research or methodology.

COMMENTS: The applicant presents a compelling case between women who are sexually assaulted or experience domestic violence developing chronic health conditions. Also, children exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk of developing behavioral problems, psychiatric disorders, experiencing school failure, and perpetuating violence against society. The plan for recruiting volunteers is strong. The training plan seems effective, conducive to appropriate member development, and provides well-designed activities that promote an ethic of service and civic responsibility as evidenced by the statement "25% of their Members after their first year of service go to work for their host sites or related agencies working with victims of crime." The applicant is vague when identifying specific communities in need, comparing New Hampshire

to other venues, and where and how members are encouraged to participate in community service opportunities outside of AmeriCorps.

COMMENTS: Overall, the applicant articulates very well the problems facing the targeted communities in New Hampshire. The proposed activities have had positive impact on domestic violence and sexual abuse. The applicant proposes a good plan to recruit AmeriCorps members using newspaper ads, radio and television PSAs. It also uses the National AmeriCorps web-based recruitment tool listing members' positions on-line and all college and university websites. Specific efforts have been increasing to recruit veterans of the armed forces and their families. It appears AmeriCorps members have had positive outcomes in solving the identified problems of domestic violence. The program has resulted in increasing numbers of volunteers to assist in outreach and education related to domestic and sexual violence. However, with over fifteen years of CNCS programmatic successes, the applicant did not present sufficient historical data showing specific differences the program has made in the lives of so many residents, both immediate differences, and longer-term differences with respect to lowering the rates of occurrence, etc.

COMMENTS: - Several of the statistics that the applicant offered as evidence of the problem are dated. The applicant provides an intense screening process for AmeriCorps members as well as numerous trainings including a full time 2-week orientation that will cover many areas of abuse, law and court proceedings. The application shows the applicant's commitment to encouraging civic participation as they promote volunteer opportunities and allow members time off to do this. The applicant provides statistics that more than 25% of the members go to work in the field and 20% go on to graduate school for related professions. For having done this program for 15 years, the applicant fails to provide quantifiable results that would have strengthened their case for a measurable impact. The applicant gave anticipated outcomes that provided that the members would have 85% proficiency on a legal and domestic and sexual violence issue test. Also, the application proposes that 90% of victims answering a survey will believe they were better able to cope with their situation with the assistance of the member yet they do not offer further explanation of the test or survey. The applicant did not describe ways that the AmeriCorps members were particularly well-suited to deliver the solution.