

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: WestCare Foundation, Inc., United By Service	Application ID: 11ED125552
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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: (+) West Care will hold a conference call for members to express concerns and offer ideas for improving their service experience that will foster communication and problem solving among the members as well as the agency. (+) The concept of members journaling, blogging and using social marketing to 'tell their story' of their experience will foster the reflection the members need to grow in their experience.

COMMENTS: (+) The applicant expertly utilized study results to identify the need to help veterans and their families receive support through peer-to-peer recovery support services. (+) Using an existing organization infrastructure, the applicant appropriately identified 10 states and 2 territories where they will implement their program. (+) The applicant proficiently identified appropriate members and training to support the peer-to-peer recovery support services that were identified as necessary to ensure success of treatment and provide assistance in obtaining other services. (+) The applicant appropriately identifies veterans and families not only in the problem set, but also as part of the member solution and included in the outcome metrics.

COMMENTS: (+) The applicant provides substance abuse and mental health status data as evidence that there is a prevalence of substance abuse and mental health disorders among veterans. An annual average of 7.0 percent of veterans age 18 or older experienced serious psychological distress (SPD) in the past year and 7.1 percent of veterans experienced substance use disorders (SUD) in the past year. Co-occurring SPD and SUD occurred in 1.5 percent of veterans ages 18-25. (+) The applicant demonstrates that veterans 18-25 are more likely than their older counter parts to have higher rates of SPD, SUD, and co-occurring SPD and SUD. (+) The applicant demonstrates that issues faced by returning veterans and their families include: substance abuse, significant mental health issues, physical disabilities such as spinal cord and brain injuries, sexual trauma, and PTSD. (+) The applicant demonstrated that the Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Administration Vet Centers cannot meet all the needs of veterans and military families. (+) The applicant demonstrated that peer-to-peer recovery support bridges the gap between the federal system (Veterans Administration) and community based social services systems. (+) The applicant demonstrates a strong component for recruitment including qualifications, background and skills assessment. (+) The applicant

demonstrates successful experience in orientation, training a supervision of AmeriCorps members and site supervisors. Training and supervision includes but is not limited to member orientation, training, staff mentoring and job shadowing, 20 hours of trainings that meet WC licensure requirements in each state for Veteran Peer Support Specialist. Training topics include but are not limited to HIPPA, sexual harassment, drug free workplace, cultural competency, reporting abuse, Client Confidentiality, working with special populations, and veteran's issues. (+) The applicant demonstrates a component of innovated online training. (+) The applicant provides evidence of improvement in recruitment to ensure that all AmeriCorps positions will be filled with members who are able and willing to fulfill their commitment. (+) The applicant demonstrates a strong component for continued service ensuring professional development of AC members and the opportunity to achieve Veteran Peer Support Specialist certification. (+) The applicant explains how AmeriCorps members will benefit each community by creating a peer-to-peer program that creates a bridge between the federal VA system and community based social services system. For example, at least 9,000 veterans or military family members will receive services and assistance. (+) The applicant demonstrates that AmeriCorps members will reach a minimum of 9,000 veterans and/or military families, between 400-570 veterans will engage in service opportunities, At least 8,700 veterans of military family members receiving services will show improvement in health and wellness, and be provided with linkages to job, housing, education and recovery relapse prevention services and at least 500 veterans enrolled as AmeriCorps members will earn the Veteran Peer Support Specialist certification.

COMMENTS: (+) The applicant provides a good description of the problem, and states clearly how AmeriCorps members could help solve the community problem, and provides good detail of the anticipated outcomes for the program.