

**APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design**

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

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| <b>Legal Applicant:</b><br><b>Teach For America, Teach For America - Atlanta</b>   | <b>Application ID:</b><br><b>11ES122917</b> |
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| <p><b>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.</b></p>   |   |
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| <p><b>COMMENTS:</b> (+) Applicant uses local academic information of low-income and minority students to provide adequate evidence of a compelling need to address the disparity between academic achievement of low- and high-income students in Atlanta and surrounding counties. (+) Applicant provides an effective plan to create a diverse Corps by working with 350 colleges and universities to recruit from an established pool of over 180,000 college seniors, including those from low-income backgrounds. (+) Orientation, training and support ensure community impact by providing members with pre-service opportunity to teach summer school, giving them real-life experience with low-income students. (-) Applicant does not provide enough information to support the claim that teacher qualifications affect student achievement. (-) Applicant does not provide specific numerical data on past accomplishments.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>COMMENTS:</b> (+) Compelling information indicates that children of color are disproportionately likely to live in low-income communities and recent data from respected sources confirms that low-income fourth and eighth grades students in the target area score significantly lower on competency tests than their more affluent peers. (+) An intensive and extensive recruiting effort will be launched for 400 college graduates of color who meet high standards and have proven high GPAs (3.6) and SAT scores. Selection for the two year program will be based on college records and an in-person interview. (+) Fully developed orientation experiences and high level training will include a five week summertime supervised teaching experience to hone skills and prepare the AmeriCorps members for their classroom placements. (+) Along with recruiting classroom volunteers and volunteering themselves within the school, members will take part in AmeriCorps events and service days which will enrich their service experience. (+) This highly developed and carefully orchestrated program has a proven record of teacher effectiveness in the classroom and a high percentage of teachers remain in education following the program. (+) The innovative program design places clusters of highly trained and motivated teachers in schools and directly addresses the issue of providing teachers, reflective of the students, as role models. (+) Outcome measures for members and students are pertinent and expectations are reasonable.</p> |   |
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**COMMENTS:** (+) The applicant provides compelling evidence that students in the target communities live in a cycle of poverty, which both contributes to, and endures as a result of poor academic performance. (+) The applicant makes a strong case for teacher performance playing a significant role in overall academic and graduation rates and demonstrates a linkage between the quality of elementary grade level teachers and students' overall success in school. (+) The applicant provided evidence that their previous program which engaged AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-poverty elementary schools was successful. (+) The applicant expects to see 70% of its AmeriCorps members make "solid gains" with their students.

**COMMENTS:** (+) The program proposal connects several elements of success together in a coordinated approach to addressing the issues of poor secondary school performance among under-served populations. The project includes a comprehensive training program, an intensive community building strategy that builds esprit de corps and emphasizes a life-long commitment to service, ongoing challenges and support, and provides evidence of past success. The program also demonstrates a strong sustainability model, which, when combined with a growing national network of alumni, assures long-term success. (+) There are multiple levels of orientation and training that will support member development and success, including a pre-service orientation, ongoing training opportunities, and supervision from experienced supervisors. (+) The applicant emphasizes both an esprit de corps and a commitment to ongoing community service that adequately reflects the AmeriCorps ethic.