

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Mescalero Apache Tribe, Sovereign Nations Service Corps	Application ID: 11TN125424
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.	
<p>COMMENTS: The design for this program is well crafted to answer the stated needs of the targeted community.. The application lacks up-to-date statistical information. Applicant shows a real correlation between the existing problem within the community and the solution of an AmeriCorps program by the creation of the Sovereign Nations Youth Conservation Corps. The proposed project demonstrates a well-thought out pre-recruitment and training plan for prospective AmeriCorps members as evidenced by the utilization of a summer camp designed to offer training for working in the natural resource field. Proposed activities are very detailed in what the AmeriCorps members will be expected to accomplish throughout their term. Activities are well designed to address identified environmental issues facing the tribe.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant provides compelling information about the severe deterioration of the environment in the geographic area to be served. Data is also provided regarding the educational and economic challenges in the area, although most of the citations are based on data from over 10 years ago. There is limited information provided regarding the screening of applicants. While broad guidelines are suggested for members, details of specific skills are not outlined. The applicant does include a plan for a comprehensive training program focused on resource management and environmental awareness. There is not a clear plan for ensuring members develop an ethic of community service beyond the scope of the project. Outlines for environmental improvements are comprehensive, directly related to project activities, and likely to have a long-term impact in the area to be served. There is a clear linkage between the significant community need for environmental improvements and the activities of members. There is limited detail provided that links outcomes related to academic achievement and poverty to the identified needs and there isn't a plan to address educational challenges that may arise for members.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant has provided a well-designed program with all sections clearly linked. The recruitment plan is well conceived and unique and should provide for enrolling highly motivated AmeriCorps members. The program activities will be tailored to meet each elders needs through an assessment survey that will be completed at program intake. The applicant presents a well-planned training and supervision</p>	

plan. The applicant presents a plan to continue the program on the reservation by employing the members once they have graduated and continuing the work through service learning projects within the region. The program is likely to be successful because it is based within a current program structure and staffing, and will benefit from professionals dedicated to seeing member success. The applicant is well networked within the community and state and has program partners in state colleges, state departments and has engaged the cooperation of Tribal employees working in the departments to assist with the AmeriCorps program. The strategies for recruiting regional volunteers through service learning projects will sustain the program at that level. The public will be able to utilize the Tribal lands that have been improved through this project for public fishing and recreation.

COMMENTS: The applicant provides persuasive evidence of the need for improving and restoring the ecology of the reservation. The projects to be carried by the AmeriCorps members focus upon helping create a livable environment for native wild life by improving the ecology of the reservation and by creating recreational usage of the land. The members will be well suited for delivering solutions because they are tribal members and can relate to the cultures and because the AmeriCorps training is intensive and focused on the skills needed to conduct the projects. The selection process is appropriate and should result in a membership of persons who are willing to learn and willing to work. The anticipated outcomes which include the improvement of the ecology and the attainment certificates and degrees by the members are ambitious, however attainable and will be measured as intermediate and long term outcomes over the lifetime of the project. Overall, the applicant presents a compelling case for the need and an appropriate method for finding solutions. There is however a lack of information on the coordination with other Tribes for the selection of participants and in monitoring the improvements to the reservation upon their return.

COMMENTS: The applicant has provided a program design that presents a detailed description of the purpose, objectives, strategies, design, and management of the proposed program. The statement of need is comprehensive and includes all of the critical elements such as impact/outcomes and evaluative/performance measure etc. The connections between these sections are clearly delineated. The applicant utilized some local data in concert with national statistics to provide evidence that the problem exists, demonstrate the size and scope of the problem, and document the effects of the problem on the target population and the larger community.