

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Jumpstart for Young Children, Inc., Jumpstart Washington, DC	Application ID: 11AC123631
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 does not provide enough detail on the severity of the problem in the target community. The applicant provides very general information on the lack of resources in the target community. The applicant does not provide enough detail on the problem being addressed. It is simply stated that the program will address the early achievement gap, which affects the target community negatively. The applicant provides quality opportunities for participants to reflect on and learn from their service. This reflection includes several workshops on active citizenships. The workshop themes include the meaning of AmeriCorps service, social justice, and civic engagement. The applicant describes team planning meetings that provide members an opportunity to reflect on their service, improve their efforts, and increase their sense of civic responsibility. The members will participate in a variety of events and service projects including the national service day on MLK day. The applicant provides a reasonable description of the annual measurable outputs and end outcomes. These output and outcomes include that 592 pre-school age children will start the program; 521 will complete participation in the high quality supplemental early language and literacy program; and 458 will demonstrate fall to spring gains in literacy skills.	
COMMENTS: The applicant presents a compelling case for the educational needs of children in poverty, but lacks specific data for the communities served by the proposed program. The proposed activities are feasible because they are based on a proven and previously used model. However, without evidence of the needs of the target community, the link between member activity and the proposed community is not strong. The plan for recruiting AmeriCorps member is strong as evidenced by direct efforts in the communities to be served, but lacks enough evidence about retention efforts. The applicant describes good use of the “Active Citizen: AmeriCorps In Service to America” model of training. The applicant has good evidence to justify use of the JumpStart model of pre-school activities.	
COMMENTS: (+) The applicant clearly defines the problem of the early achievement gap as evidenced by the citing several reports such as Lee & Burkham, 2002, that states lack of resources affects the very	

11AC123631

(Page 2 of 2)

beginning for children starting school, and Heckman 2008. The applicant uses statistics based on grades 3rd and 4th however this is tied in with the reports from 2009 by the Education Commission of the States and McKinsey and Company that states the lagging start for preschool-aged children has an impact on the reading level of a 3rd grader. (-) The applicant has not been successful with retention (62.3%) as evidenced by lack of control mechanisms to fill vacancies in key positions of Site Manager (+) The applicant makes a strong case that the AmeriCorps member will realize a powerful service experience by building life skills through their day to day involvement with children, families and community members from diverse backgrounds and their participation contributes to lasting change in the community served. Members learn from their service, improve their efforts and increase their sense of civic responsibility.(+) The applicant provides strong statistics stating that 58%+ of children served had gains of 25% or more on each of the subscales, indicating that many children advanced at least one developmental level. This is strong evidence of the impact on the community.(+/-)The applicant makes a very strong case that closing the early achievement gap experienced by children makes a significant difference in how they progress later in the educational process. Proposed activities states a plan is in place to correct the previous challenge of low retention experienced in the recent year, due to Site Manger vacancy. However it does not adequately address a loss during the course of the year. It only speaks to the beginning of the year procedures. Without proper supervision or management, the member is likely to not fully learn or grasp all they can from a rewarding experience.

COMMENTS: The applicant's explanation of the core activities and six sequential elements in the curriculum was well documented and understandable. The training structure outlined for the members appeared comprehensive and practical. The applicant's plan to place members in the classrooms as opposed to having the child come to another site for services promotes community inclusion for the member. The applicant successfully described the criteria used when selecting AmeriCorps members which allows for a stronger connection between the member and the position. The measurable identified, (i.e. 88% will demonstrate Fall to Spring gains in literacy skills), are definable and relevant to the program's goals and objectives.