

APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Wyoming Advocate Corps	Application ID: 11AC122894
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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: The applicant provides current and compelling statistics on the need. The applicant cites partner data and reports to support the need. The need for domestic violence assistance and the exacerbating challenges of the rural region were described. There was a strong description of local recruitment, linkage with local sites to identify members that are a good fit, and recruitment of individuals who have been victims of domestic violence. The comprehensive training and orientation plan was presented that documented a schedule to ensure the success of members. The applicant provides a comprehensive plan for the selection and training of site supervisors to support members and ensure program success. The applicant describes a powerful service experience for members. The recruitment of local members that can continue to have involvement beyond their service is strengthens this application. There are no opportunities for members to come together to share their experiences and their thoughts on service. The applicant provides a comprehensive analysis on why the program outcomes selected are appropriate to track the service completed. The applicant references work with evaluation experts in the design of program outcomes to effectively assess the impact of the project. The outcomes are appropriate, achievable and able to be monitored over time.

COMMENTS: The applicant has identified domestic violence as the problem with women of the area stating that it is one of the three top problems they face. The severity of this problem has been described by statistics provided by such sources as The Wyoming University, Wyoming Attorney General's Division of Victim Services, The State of Wyoming Department of Criminal Investigation, etc. The program will recruit through local and national means, focusing on local recruitment. The site managers will be the primary individuals responsible for recruitment. There will be methods to recruit members with disabilities, as well as baby boomers, seniors, faith groups and other diverse groups. Recruitment measures were vaguely detailed. The community members and stakeholders have not been clearly identified. Training will include such areas as training on site policies and procedures, job shadowing, and skill-building training. The state requires a 40-hour advocate training which focuses on the following topics: domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking issues and response, advocate care and boundaries, local services

and community resources, legal options, safety planning, financial literacy, and working with diverse and vulnerable people. The members will receive an orientation by the WyAC Manager at their site, which will provide an overview of national service, the WyAC Project, member requirements and a review of the member contract, AmeriCorps policies, the Segal Education Award, allowable and prohibited activities, advocate safety, reporting requirements and forms. The AmeriCorps members are being proposed for this program because they “are ideally suited to continue in the tradition of those volunteers through addressing the individual needs of victims and increasing the capacity of local efforts by recruiting and supporting this generation of community volunteers to help survivors.” The program has described what the AmeriCorps members will do as service as crisis advocates, financial educators, and volunteer recruiters. The overall changes that will be seen through this program are service participants will increase their knowledge of community resources and will access at least one resource, will increase safety knowledge and will implement at least one safety option, and participants will increase their financial knowledge. PMs have been revised to more accurately track the unduplicated number of victims and to the impact of the services. Surveys will also be used. The members have identified the solution to the problem this program is addressing as coordinating efforts with school systems to organize anti-violence awareness, to assist service participants in identifying abuse and how to safely respond in dangerous situations, etc. The program’s outcomes have been identified as Adult and child victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking will receive advocacy services, victims will increase their knowledge of community resources and will access at least one of these resources, etc. Evidence of promoting lifelong civic responsibility and service was mentioned but lacked details.

COMMENTS: The applicant proposes three measures that will track effectiveness in improving victims' understanding and response to domestic violence issues, their ability to access community resources, and their financial literacy. The applicant proposes to review and analyze project data periodically to allow for program adjustments leading to continuous improvement. The applicant's plan for member supervision reflects the importance of the supervisor's role in ensuring the success of members working as victim advocates. However, the applicant does not identify or describe any of the specific communities served by the 24 members of the Wyoming Coalition, nor do they propose any structured approach for reflection or learning from the service experience, or any specific strategy to promote a lifelong ethic of service and civic responsibility. There is no discussion of how the proposed program will provide AmeriCorps members with a powerful service experience.

COMMENTS: The applicant has chosen a socio-economic issue in the state of Wyoming that would be addressed by a network of providers focusing on domestic violence and sexual assault. Data to support the choice of this focus was presented from a state and national level, with a holistic approach of leveraging community volunteers at each site that would be served. A connection, between the grass roots movements of anti-violence and the design of this proposed project, was effectively presented and well-outlined. The members’ roles and responsibilities are generally outlined. The design also presents a clearly outlined community connection of working with local DVSA programs. There is no information provided as to previous data from an existing program. The information provided states that a partnership with Project Star, a technical assistance provider, will occur in an advisory role. No other information is provided

regarding their relationship to a successful program (baselines). There is also no information provided in the program design regarding a structured opportunity for reflection for the members during their tenure.

COMMENTS: The general information in the application looks like this is a good program. However, there is a minimal amount of specific information about recruitment and training. There is also little information about how members interact with other agencies and help find services for the participants.