

**APPLICANT FEEDBACK - Program Design**

2011 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

<b>Legal Applicant:</b> Santee Sioux Nation, Santee AmeriCorps Program	<b>Application ID:</b> 11TN125713
<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><b>COMMENTS:</b> The applicant provides evidence based on several studies and needs assessments that identify the existing problems within the targeted community. This evidence states that the unemployment rate for the target area is between 17% and 38.7%. Yet, the applicant does not provide any supporting information as to why AmeriCorps members are being used to solve the identified problem. It is not clear how using AmeriCorps members will have an impact on the community. The applicant states that the Santee AmeriCorps staff will work closely with the site supervisors to ensure adequate training and supervision. The staff will work with the site supervisors throughout the program to ensure members are receiving adequate training. The program coordinator will also make site visits a least one time per month. On the other hand, the proposal did not provide any information on the recruitment process or plan. It is unclear how AmeriCorps members will be recruited, if they will be from a diverse Corps, or if members will be from the local community. The applicant provides a detailed description of how volunteers will be used to help address the community needs. The applicant states that several groups and committees are already being administered by the Dakota Tiwahe Services Unit. These groups and committees serve on a voluntary basis and they include the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Advisory group and the Domestic Violence Community Response Team. Conversely, the proposal does not adequately explain how the impact will be measured. The applicant provides a list of expected outputs and outcomes in the narrative and in the appendix of the grant. However, they are inconsistent with each other.</p>	
<p><b>COMMENTS:</b> The proposal lacks detail on the member recruitment process to be used and a plan for member supervision. Training meetings scheduled to be held bi-weekly are well designed to cover the training needs and offer sharing opportunities, reflection time, encouragement and to voice concerns, brainstorm, plan, organize and receive feedback. Supporting data for involving members as an effective means of long term connection in the community are not present. A clear plan for supervision is not outlined in the application. The compelling need is defined, but data supporting the need are not current with most of the evidence from over five years ago.</p>	

**COMMENTS:** The applicant presents a compelling case that unemployment and the lack of motivation for educational attainment due to the location of the reservation and little economic development is the single best predictor of children's failure to achieve in school., However, the applicant fails to present current data to support its claims. The plan for recruiting volunteers is clear and strong; however the applicant fails to explain the specific terms of service needed for members. Program activities are extensions of current programs already in place that are utilizing AmeriCorps members. There will be overlaps in terms of service, but logistics are not identified.

**COMMENTS:** While some compelling statistics regarding the community needs were presented, the applicant used data from 1994 to most recent 2005. Therefore, it is unclear what the current community needs are four-five years later. The applicant states top 12 compelling needs in the community and top 8 perceived needs in the community but again this data is from 2005 and there is no indicator of what the problem is today. The recruitment plan does not clearly identify how the applicant will adequately recruit enough members from the local community nor does the applicant provide data that there are qualified individuals in the community who can serve as members. The applicant provides no detail or information that the service that the members are undertaking will lead to lifelong civic engagement. The applicant states that they have made an impact on the community problems but provided no further detail or data to support that the members helped to reduce any of the problems. Therefore, it is unclear what the impact of the program has been in the last three years. The applicant provided no detail of recruiting or using volunteers to work on community problems. It is unclear how the community has been involved in this project leading to sustainability being questionable. The applicant failed to clearly address key components and it is unclear if this program can produce a positive outcome for the community and the members. It is unclear if the members who actually are recruited are qualified and prepared for the tasks.

**COMMENTS:** Although the applicant describes compelling needs in high unemployment and Tribal social services, no dated statistics are provided after 2005. A detailed plan for on-going discussion and feedback for continuous improvement is presented, including an annual forum for community feedback. The applicant provides a very forthright report of prior year's problems, including adjustments and improvements made in prior years to overcome obstacles in placement and retention.. Very specific outcome measures are established for member job skills and agency activities in future years. However, none of these outcomes are quantitatively reported for prior years of service. Although the applicant reports that its program has been a positive experience for many members who feel they have gained much in terms of work experience and desires for further education, no quantitative evidence of prior program outcomes is provided.