

CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY SERVICE
Record of Meeting – June 23, 2015
Conference Call 10:00 am
Hartford, CT

Members Present: E. Adams, I. Black, D. Briggs, J. Ciarleglio, W. Dyson, T. Higgins, C. Poindexter, A. Ruwet, L. Sandiaes, S. Santy, K. Singh, N. Snow

Members Absent: S. Becker, L. Egan, M. Farley, M. Gagnon, K. Halkyard, G. Wintjen,

Others: J. Johnson, L. Negro

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. Roll Call

L. Negro read the roll call and a quorum was confirmed.

3. Approval of the AmeriCorps Formula Package

J. Johnson thanked the Peer Reviews for their flexibility and time to read and score the Formula AmeriCorps applications. In this process there were a total of 5 applications to be reviewed – 3 new applications and 2 re-compete applications.

Legal Applicant: Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut

Program Name: Experience Corps

New/Re-compete

CNCS: \$107,775

GRANTEE: \$114,964

COST/MSY: \$13,224

2 450-hr slots

32 300-hr slots

4 300-hr slots (without living allowance)

8.15 MSY

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

In the 2015-2016 program year, AARP Experience Corps will recruit, screen, and train 38 AmeriCorps members aged 55 and older to deliver literacy tutoring to children in grades K-3 in two Connecticut school systems: New Haven and Hamden.

Strengths of this program include longevity (The Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut has been serving seniors since 1974, and AARP Experience Corps is going into its tenth year with that organization), and its intergenerational design engaging seniors and elementary school children. AARP Experience Corps has successfully met its match requirements and has a strong record of meeting reporting and process deadlines. Additionally, they have submitted a complete evaluation measuring program impact per their third funding round requirement.

The main challenge for this program has been meeting recruitment and retention goals with consistency; recruiting a full corps of older adults has proved difficult, as they have found many older adults have health and caretaking issues that greatly impact their ability to serve a minimum 300 hours. They've also found that there is an abundance of individuals who would be willing to commitment to about 200 hours of service, but the 300 minimum often proves to be too much. As a result, the program has struggled to recruit all slots. The Experience Corps program, 38 AmeriCorps members, age 55 or older, who will provide literacy tutoring with students in Kindergarten through grade 3 in elementary schools in Hamden and New Haven. To extend their reach beyond schools, ED and its AmeriCorps members will participate at community events with literacy-promoting activities, children's books to give away, and/or children's book drives. At the end of the program year, students who were tutored are expected to improve their literacy assessment members will have promoted literacy outside of the school setting and will have improved their personal development as a result of their participation in Experience Corps. In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 50 volunteers who will be engaged in promoting literacy in the community. The program will focus on CNCS Focus Area of Education and will run from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

PEER REVIEW

AVG. SCORE: **73**

COMMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Clear description of program
- 50+ aged adults serving as members
- Member supervision seems too informal
- Outcomes are not specific
- No true growth over the years of funding
- Unsuccessful recruitment of 300-hr slots

RECOMMENDATION: Yes. This program needs very specific guidance and support in its 10th year of funding; will carefully monitor its progress. A. Ruwet motioned to accept the recommendation to approve the application for funding; I. Black seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention (D. Briggs)

Legal Applicant: Governor's Partnership to Protect Connecticut's Workforce

Program Name: Governor's Partnership to Protect Connecticut's Workforce

New/Re-compete

CNCS: \$268,833

GRANTEE: \$183,111

COST/MSY: \$16,802

16 1,700-hr slots

16 MSY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governor's Prevention Partnership, in collaboration with the Hartford Public Schools and several community and corporate partners, proposes to reduce chronic absenteeism at four academies – Bulkeley High School, Lower School, Academies of Engineering/Green Technology, Law and Government, and Nursing. Sixteen AmeriCorps members will serve as trained mentors, using the science-based Check and Connect program, to engage 9th grade students. At the end of the project period, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for (1) increasing school

engagement and school completion for approximately 240 students, and (2) increasing the school's capacity to address school attendance. This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Economic Opportunity helping economically disadvantaged people, including youth identified in My Brother's Keeper, and Education, specifically improving the educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving high schools.

PEER REVIEW

AVG. SCORE: **67.33**

COMMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Clear statement of need
- Goal is narrowed to a focused population of students using a prevention model that has had successful outcomes
- Hard to tell how they will focus on specific outcomes
- Need more time to define the specific role of AmeriCorps

RECOMMENDATION: No. Very strong start but needs another year to completely flesh out AmeriCorps program design. D. Briggs motioned to accept the recommendation not to approve the application for funding; K. Singh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Legal Applicant: Great Oaks Foundation, Inc.

Program Name: Great Oaks – Bridgeport Tutor Corps

New/Re-compete

CNCS: \$617,850

GRANTEE: \$444,409

COST/MSY: \$13,730

45 1,700-hr slots

45 MSY

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

In the 2015-2016 program year, Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport, run by Great Oaks Foundation, will recruit 45 AmeriCorps members who will provide high-dosage tutoring to 220 students in grades 6 and 7. Student academic performance in literacy and math will improve, and additional support will be provided to foster increased rates in student high school completion and engagement in post-secondary education.

A major strength of Great Oaks Charter School - Bridgeport is that it is following a tested and successful model of national service-delivered tutoring run by Great Oaks Foundation in New Jersey. Further, the program has worked diligently to build community connections and presence in the greater Bridgeport community throughout the development process that resulted in the opening the Great Oaks Charter School in 2014.

A potential challenge for Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport is recruitment of a large member corps as a new program; however, the provision of housing as a benefit over and above the living allowance and benefits associated with AmeriCorps membership should incentivize recruitment sufficiently to overcome this hurdle.

PEER REVIEW

AVG. SCORE: **81**

COMMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Logic model is clearly stated with the targeted population
- Successful in other states with this model

RECOMMENDATION: Yes. T. Higgins motioned to accept the recommendation to approve the application for funding; A. Ruwet seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention (N. Snow).

Legal Applicant: Jumpstart for Young Children, Inc.

Program Name: Jumpstart Connecticut

New/Re-compete

CNCS: \$370,000

GRANTEE: \$443,258

COST/MSY: \$9,502

184 300-hr slots (without living allowance)

38.94 MSY

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

In the 2015-2016 program year, Jumpstart Connecticut will recruit 184 AmeriCorps members supervised by 28 team leaders to provide in-classroom literacy tutoring to 440 low-income children in community-based early education programs, including Headstart, in six communities throughout the state of Connecticut. Anticipated outcomes include measurable gains in language and literacy skills among students served. A major strength of Jumpstart Connecticut is its status as a national direct with a solid presence throughout the state of Connecticut, which will aid recruitment through name recognition, aid its ability to meet all program compliance requirements, and finally, in terms of support and resources from its national offices.

Jumpstart Connecticut identifies in their grant application challenges to member retention in past program years, citing factors that disrupted members' ability to complete their service commitments, including academic or employment scheduling conflicts, financial and personal hardships, and having to leave school. Jumpstart Connecticut has developed strong strategies to mitigate these challenges, from clearly articulating the extent of the commitment required during recruitment to providing wraparound support to members during service to address common challenges.

PEER REVIEW

AVG. SCORE: 83

COMMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Uses Early Childhood Intervention curriculum
- Very strong logic model
- Member recruitment and training very strong, very comprehensive

RECOMMENDATION: Yes. K. Singh motioned to accept the recommendation to approve the application for funding; S. Santy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Legal Applicant: Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership

Program Name: Jumpstart Connecticut

New/Re-compete

CNCS: \$331,082

GRANTEE: \$709,853

COST/MSY: \$13,732

10 1,700-hr slots

15 900-hr slots
25 450-hr slots
24.11 MSY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) will have 50 AmeriCorps members who will implement LEAPS's Academic Year Component and Summer Component academic/social enrichment programs. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improving academic achievement for the roughly 1,200 children enrolled in LEAP. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 250 volunteers that will be engaged in contributing to various LEAP events. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education, consistent with the goals of "My Brother's Keep" initiative, an AmeriCorps priority.

PEER REVIEW

AVG. SCORE: 69.83

COMMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Co-teaching enhances the experience for the members
- There are 29 individual CNCS Performance Measures identified in the application. Of all 29, only one Performance Measure appears in all three places – Theory of Change, Logic Model and CNCS priorities.
- Listed a variety of problems faced by population but did not provide adequate information
- Narrative for logic model was jumbled and unclear. Disconnect between the activities, output and outcomes. Too many activities, not described in enough detail to track as outputs. Performance measures are also not spelled out in enough detail or focus on the correct elements.
- The application is unclear in the unique role of AmeriCorps members.

RECOMMENDATION: No. S. Santy motioned to accept the recommendation not to approve the application for funding; A. Ruwet seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention (W. Dyson).

New Science and Sailing Foundation, Inc. and Regional Youth/Adult Social Action Project's AmeriCorps programs were recommended for continued funding. S. motioned to accept the recommendation not to approve the application for funding; A. Ruwet seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention (W. Dyson).

4. Adjournment

N. Snow motioned adjournment; seconded by L. Sandiaes. The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on 10/27 in Hartford at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director