

Climate Corps Grant Proposal Report to Commission from Task Force

Recommendation: Fund with corrections/modifications

Legal Applicant: Downeast Community Partners, Ellsworth and Milbridge

Focus Area: Energy Ed & Outreach AND Home Energy Conservation

Grant Period: 1/1/2023 to 12/31/2023

Requested Resources: Funds and Slots (*indicates sections with calculation errors)

	State Funds		Local Share
Member Support	\$104,800		0
Supervisor Support	\$81,000		0
Other Operating Costs			
Total Requested	\$185,800	Total Local Share (cash + in-kind)	\$19,400
Cost-per-member proposed	\$46,450		

Program Description (staff summary): Downeast Community Partners (DPC), a Community Action Program, proposes to host 4 Climate Corps members for 6 months. This crew will collaborate to weatherize homes, deliver energy efficiency demonstrations in the community, and analyze weatherization data. The members will receive extensive training and complete the program with specific credentials relevant to weatherization careers.

Service locations: DCP serves residents in Hancock and Washington Counties.

Other than the legal applicant, please list the agencies or organizations that appear to be the major collaborators or partners in this grant.

Applicant proposes to deliver services:

- Within a single municipality
 Within a single County but not covering the entire County
 County-wide in a single County
 Multiple Counties but not Statewide
 Statewide

Scoring Detail:

Peer Reviewer Consensus Score. Assessment of narrative using point distribution from RFA. Major categories (Program Design, Organizational Capability, Budget) are derived from RFA for scoring.

	Quality Rating	Score
Program Design		
Funding Priority	Adequate	.75
Need	Adequate	3
Service Activity and Model	Strong	15
Service Area	Adequate	7.5
Theory of Change and Evidence of Effectiveness	Incomplete	0
Member Training and Workforce Development Goals	Strong	10
Member Experience	Weak	2.5
Equity, Justice, and Accessibility	Weak	5

Organizational Capability		
Organizational Background & Staffing	Weak	7.5
Budget	Adequate	11.25
Total Peer Reviewer Score		67.5

Recommend for further review with hesitation.

Task Force Consensus Score. *The Task Force reviewers assess the additional technical criteria to ensure grant readiness and likelihood of success.*

	Quality Rating	Score
Proposal Alignment and Model		
• Alignment with Funding Priorities	Strong	10
• Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Strong	10
Past Performance		
• Past performance in other grant programs, including those funded by foundations or other government agencies.	Strong	20
Financial Plan	Adequate	11.25
Fiscal Systems		
• capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Strong	8.33
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial management practices	Adequate	6.25
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial status/stability	Strong	8.33
Grant Readiness	Strong	20
Total Task Force Score		94.16
Peer Review Score		67.5
Final Score for Applicant (200 possible)		161.66

Final Assessment of Application:

- Forward or fund with no corrections/modifications
- Forward or fund with corrections/modifications
- Do Not Forward or fund

Referenced Conditions/Corrections

The following proposal issues need to be clarified or, in the case of missing required elements, added.

- Corrections in budget
- Get certification that anonymous donor has committed funds
- Request federal grant portion of audit
- Negotiate longer service period (preferably 8 months rather than 6 months)
- Negotiate performance measures

Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:

Program Design.

Funding Priority

Not specific on how program will meet grant requirements.

Need

Need is both for weatherization services and workforce to tackle energy efficiency. Not overly specific beyond high poverty rate data.

Service Activity and Model

Specifics about member qualifications, number of members, total time served, breakdown on service activities, rigor, etc.

Service Area

Large reach in 2 counties with high-need. Vague about which communities would be willing to participate in outreach events, thus unclear about critical mass of beneficiaries.

Theory of Change and Evidence of Effectiveness

Discussion of data analysis, but unclear on how data collection and analysis is directly tied to service. No performance measures selected. Community volunteerism was only incorporated into demos, not addressed in a significant way in other activities.

Member Training and Workforce Development Goals

Clear and strong plan for both on the job training and formal training programs resulting in certification. Clear that members will leave with very specific knowledge and skills.

Member Experience

Not enough focus on member experience. Mentioned attractiveness of local area and how staff will welcome Climate Corps members, but not as intentional around how program will engage members with local area beyond being “adjacent to”.

Equity, Justice, and Accessibility

Lack of details on how members will be supported to overcome barriers to service. Partnerships are mentioned, but not described in detail in terms of what the collaboration will look like and function.

Organizational Background and Staffing

Not clear on plan for sustainability and growth for the long-term with Climate Corps. Enthusiasm is present, but not a specific plan.

Budget

Concerns about cost-share that is only proposed by an anonymous donor (is that risky?). No benefits described for supervisors. FICA is missing for members, as is liability insurance.

SUMMARY APPRAISAL

What elements of the proposal are unclear?

- Specific performance measures.
- Plan for member experience.
- Specific engagement plan with partners to ensure equity, justice, and accessibility.
- Specific plan for long-term growth and sustainability of climate corps.

Task Force Review Notes and Appraisal Summary:

Proposal Alignment and Model.

- While the proposal addresses both priorities, it almost appears more as a workforce training program than service delivery given the amount of time allocated toward training and gaining certifications plus the time working under close supervision. This is partially the result of the relatively short time frame of the six-

month program. A longer program would likely allow for greater productivity. The lack of performance/outcome measures doesn't help. While reference is made to quadrupling the weatherization effort, no numbers are provided. Is there any chance of lengthening the program?

- The program will serve Hancock and Washington Counties, areas that the Commission currently does not have programs. It also has the potential of expanding the demographics if it is able to serve the indigenous population in this area. This is mentioned in the proposal, but there is no clear guarantee it will happen.
- Organizational infrastructure is strong, and effectively targets a rural and underserved area, although vague performance measures.

Past Performance

- DCP is a state and federally recognized CAP agency. As a result the majority of funding comes through state and federal grants, all of which have significant accounting, reporting, and monitoring requirements. Applicant specifically mentioned Head Start as an on-going program and I know through personal experience how demanding the requirements are for this grant.
- This CAP agency consistently performed.

Financial Plan

- As noted in various review documents, there are some issues about the budget and the source of anonymous donor funds. These would need to be addressed.
- Concerns on anonymous donor status. Recommend that staff confirm how solid the donation is. Have certification of donation commitment and report to task force.
- Six-month service period seems short. On the other hand, having corps members end up with certifications is a strength.
- Wonder if it is a job training program rather than a service program. How much will they actually add in 6 months to meeting community need. Would want to ask them to extend service to 8 month period.
- Issues: review documents indicate there are issues with budget (missing required pieces).

Fiscal Systems

The agency has strong fiscal management systems that have been shown to meet management and reporting requirements. The agency is in an acceptable financial position when considering the ratio of assets to liabilities.

- The audit provided did not include the auditor's report on federal grants, which was provided with the GPCOG audit. Presume they are in compliance with all federal requirements.
- Year-to-date and year over year is changing dramatically for agencies so it is hard to compare.

Grant Readiness

The proposal fits well within the agency's current energy efficiency programs and they have the necessary staff to supervise the members and their work. They will need to firm up their potential partnerships with member communities and the tribes to determine where the educational forums will take place. It would also be nice to know if they have an adequate number of weatherization sites to allow for the anticipated increase in work to be performed.

What else do you have to say about this proposal?

- Supportive of proposal because of the benefit it provides to the community and the way it creates a tangible entry point into the green economy.
- Feel confident they are capable of managing this program.
- Really applaud the fact they are doing all their messaging and outreach bilingually (English and Spanish).