

# SUMMARY REVIEWER COMMENTS

## 2013 RSVP Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Newton Community Service Centers

**Applicant ID:** 13SR143182

**Project Name:** SOAR 55

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from only the external reviewer on the blended panel. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

### External Reviewer's Summary Comments:

#### Strengths:

The program demonstrates a strong commitment to training and support as a way to improve volunteer satisfaction and performance. They provide a New Member Orientation where members learn about not-for-profits and the responsibilities of volunteering and other trainings related to tutoring, capacity-building, and additional topics relevant to their volunteer position.

49% of the unduplicated volunteers are included in outcomes work plans. This is well above the required 10%.

A plan has been developed to ensure volunteer stations meet the changing community needs and minimize disruption of current volunteers. The Program Director and the SOAR 55 Leadership Volunteers will conduct periodic station audits to address concerns and challenges; therefore reviewing stations that are no longer relevant to the strategic direction of the program, notify them personally, and offer to help them with projects that would align with the Capacity Building Focus. The program is determined to make every effort to minimize disruption and assure these seniors they are valued and a viable part of the organization.

The applicant is successful in fundraising, business partnerships, and receiving major gifts; specifically in the past year \$10,000 was donated to the agency. This shows a high probability and confidence of the adequacy and sustainability of the program's proposed required non-federal share.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant demonstrates how the budget will support RSVP volunteer recruitment and recognition; however the budgeted amount seems low in regard to travel reimbursement when the narrative is proposing serving 7 communities.

The applicant mentions a partnership with the Military Support and Family Center, an agency of the National Guard. It is unclear how the program will support veterans and/or military families who are not part of this sector.

The community need is demonstrated in the narrative; however it is not clear how the RSVP volunteers will meet the

needs of the community. Although it mentions School volunteers, it does not specify if they are RSVP volunteers or citizens in the community.