

SUMMARY REVIEWER COMMENTS

2013 RSVP Competition

Legal Applicant: New Orleans Council on Aging

Applicant ID: 13SR144184

Project Name: RSVP of New Orleans

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:

Demonstration of organizational infrastructure: The applicant sufficiently addressed operational infrastructure in regard to tangible assets, the role of an RSVP Advisory Council, and sound fiscal management systems.

Weaknesses:

While references are made to national studies of veterans and their need for supportive services, and some local economic data is cited the applicant does not provide sufficient objective data to document the unmet needs of veterans in the targeted geographic area.

The applicant does not reference or describe in the narrative or work plans the prevalence of military families in the targeted geographic area or the particular unmet needs they might have.

In its narrative, the applicant primarily describes recruiting volunteers who might share their experience, not specific abilities and skills. Additionally, many of the volunteer activities are not fully described, so it is not clear to the reviewer the particular skills and/or abilities required for each activity.

The applicant does not provide volunteer activity descriptions for many of the stations included in its work plan, nor are volunteer activities described more fully elsewhere in the narrative. For instance, the applicant states in Performance Measure 1.2 that volunteers at this station will help veterans and military families' access state and federal benefits; however a description of the service activities is not provided. Therefore, the reviewer is not able to ascertain if the proposed volunteer services extend beyond only offering referrals, as required by National Performance Measure V1.

The applicant proposes volunteer stations and activities that are outside of its Primary Focus Area. However, neither the narrative nor the Work Plan fully describe the particular community need each station and its volunteer activities will address. Local data to document these needs is either not provided or is insufficient. For instance, the applicant proposes volunteer activities to provide reading tutoring to second graders in public and private schools. National Academic Performance data for fourth graders is presented as a demonstration of need, but no local, grade-level achievement data is presented, including any for the specific schools where volunteers will be placed.

However, it did not describe its internal governing systems such as personnel management and purchasing procedures. While references were made to having received previous federal grants the applicant did not describe its experience in managing those funds.

The applicant does not provide details regarding recruitment costs in the program narrative, budget or budget narrative.