

SUMMARY REVIEWER COMMENTS

2013 RSVP Competition

Legal Applicant: Porter Leath Children Center

Applicant ID: 13SR144246

Project Name: RSVP

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 application demonstrates community need for the proposed activities. For example, data showing poverty, graduation rates, and the number of children in the targeted area requiring Individualized Education Plans as they relate to school performance enhancement services to be provided including: individual tutoring, assisting/role modeling during class activities, and providing educational support in classrooms.

There is a good infrastructure in place to create well-developed, quality volunteer assignments. For example, the applicant describes a thorough intake process to best match individuals with interests, combined with routine visits to stations by the Program Coordinator to discuss placements with volunteers and obtain feedback. Adjustments to volunteer placements are made when requested and volunteers are given opportunities to use and share their experience by assisting with the recruitment of new volunteers.

There is a high probability that the applicant will be successful in maintaining their non-federal share as regards this project. They are the longest serving social service agency in Memphis, having been in existence for 160 years. This clearly demonstrates their ability to secure funding to sustain programs.

The applicant gives a comprehensive and thorough description of their plans by which their infrastructure supports outputs and outcomes will be assessed against the National Performance Measures. For example, the applicant has a Program Quality Improvement Department – not just one staff member responsible for this area. Data collection activities and measurement tools are clearly defined.

The applicant's budget allows for costs associated with both recruitment and recognition, with a significant portion of this line item being provided by the applicant for recruitment. Recognition costs are to support a volunteer luncheon which includes the meal, a certificate of appreciation for service, and a personal gift for volunteers.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's plan for training is vague in that it only includes: volunteer orientation, as-needed training from program staff and stations, and a Handbook. There is no information as to the content/curriculum of any of these

activities/objects, or how often “as-needed” is defined as being.

The application does not address the issue of graduating volunteer stations to meet changing community needs, and doing so with minimal/no disruption to volunteers, will be accomplished.