

Letter to OCS Grantee from OCS

Date

Dear OCS Grantee,

I am writing to request your participation in an evaluation of two Office of Community Services (OCS) programs, recently named the OCS Evaluation Initiative. The evaluation is being conducted by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) under the direction of Rose Ann M. Renteria, Ph.D. Your perspectives as an OCS grantee are very valuable to us as we investigate how OCS can better support the Community Economic Development (CED) and Job Opportunities for Low Income (JOLI) projects in the United States as well as the dissemination, translation and use of research findings for program impact, management and practice.

The evaluation questionnaire's primary purpose is to document and systematically evaluate the program performance of the OCS discretionary grant programs—CED and JOLI—in qualitative and quantitative terms to capture key information about program and grantee-level performance in four general areas: (1) program purpose and design; (2) strategic planning; (3) program management; and (4) program results. While this questionnaire expands on the required performance measures as defined by the OCS in the program announcement, at this time, grantees are not required to track or retain any of the new performance measures.

The data collected with this questionnaire will provide guidance for OCS in creating future program announcements with new evaluation definitions and expectations so that future CED and JOLI grantees continue to have effective plans. Only current information is needed for this data collection. Thus, grantee staff are not required to collect new data for the performance measures or retain information beyond the performance measures as defined by OCS in the program announcement. Finally, with the results OCS hopes to be able to target evaluation training at specific levels of grantees and to make adjustments to the requirements based on the grantees capabilities.

The OCS questionnaire is web-based and can be accessed at the OCS Evaluation Initiative web site at: www.ocsevalinitiative.com.. To begin the questionnaire, please use the following user name and password:

Username:
Password:

A member of Dr. Renteria's team can also contact you as needed, in one week, to schedule a telephone interview should you encounter difficulties using the web-based technology employed. The interview should last approximately one hour. Please let me know if you need this service at this time, and please feel free to contact Dr. Renteria as needed at (202) 884-8608.

Your participation is voluntary and will not affect how you are evaluated on the OCS project you have funded through OCS, nor your future eligibility for funding from OCS. You may refuse to answer any specific questions. While, all reports based on these data will combine your comments with those of other respondents so that they cannot be traced back to you, your grantee location name by region and by OCS program type may be used to present a general overview of the major findings. If during the course of the questionnaire, however, you share ideas for which you wish to receive credit, your contributions will be acknowledged. Thank you for considering your participation in this important evaluation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

James Gray, Ph.D.
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