

MEETING: 12/03/2015

Ref: 12204

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector

Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)

Adv: David Farnsworth

Amount requested: £29,500
Amount recommended: £29,500

Base: Islington
Benefit: London-wide

The Charity

ACEVO is a charity that operates as a membership organisation for over 1,500 chief executives in the UK charitable sector. It promotes the voluntary and community sector for the benefit of the public. Its work includes using the reach and depth of experience of its membership to identify issues and problems being encountered by this sector, and working to develop projects and policies to address them.

The Application

The organisation seeks funding to support the 'Loneliness Project': a piece of research to explore approaches to provide people with the skills to build resilience to periods of loneliness, particularly in later life; and to establish model ways of working in this area for charities, social entrepreneurs, and the state.

The Recommendation

Research has highlighted that loneliness is bad for health and is on the increase. The 'Campaign to End Loneliness' has raised the awareness of loneliness, especially amongst the elderly. This project is an opportunity to build on this work, with a particular focus on London and older people, to examine and develop practical ways to address this problem. With ACEVO's reach, through its membership, to the experience of many different charities where loneliness impacts, and its experience of influencing public policy, the organisation is well-placed to lead this research. A grant is advised accordingly:

£29,500 for research to support and inform the Loneliness Project. The grant is to be released as £15,000 as a first payment, then £15,000 on satisfactory completion of the research.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
31/10/2012	£5,000 towards the EngagedX pilot on the condition that the balance of funding is raised from other sources.
19/11/1998	£60,000 over 3 years (3 x £20,000) to support places on a management leadership programme for 15 senior officers of London charities.

Background and detail of proposal

Research has concluded that in the context of an individual's wellbeing, lacking social connections is as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Further, that social networks and friendships not only have an impact on reducing the risk of mortality or developing certain diseases, but they also help individuals recover – in many practical and intangible ways – when they do fall ill.

ACEVO's membership and its contacts mean it will be able to consult widely in conducting this research: in particular, with ACEVO's Health Special Interest Group of 400 health and social care charities; its strong relationships with health and social care commissioners, local authorities, Public Health England, and the Department of Health. The research will be led by the experienced in-house team and will deliver:

- A report laying out a stratagem for driving change at the local level by voluntary and social enterprise organisations;
- Publicity and workshops designed to raise awareness of loneliness amongst ACEVO members;
- Provision of practical guidance on how charities can reduce loneliness by altering the way they deliver their services and through influencing public policy;
- Partnership work between the ACEVO Business Development Team and charities, to develop loneliness prevention services and to attract funding from commissioners.

Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year 2014/15 is £1,638,016, of which £1,226,000 (75%) had been confirmed by December 2014. The majority of the remaining income is expected to be earned through the charity's trading consultancy and sponsorship work.

The organisation has confirmed that the decrease in income of £287k (15%) from 2013/14 to 2014/15 was mainly due to the ending of a strategic partner grant from the Office for Civil Society of £208,000.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14	2014/15
	Audited Accounts	Current Year Forecast
Income and Expenditure	£	£
Income	1,925,270	1,638,016
Expenditure	2,015,725	1,695,148
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(90,455)	(57,132)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	0	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(90,455)	(57,132)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(4.7%)	(3.5%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	460,895 (23.9%)	333,814 (20.4%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	434,807	377,675
How many months' worth of expenditure	2.6	2.7
Reserves Policy target	269,000 – 656,000	269,000 – 656,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.6 – 3.9	1.9 – 4.6
Free reserves over/(under) target	165,807 – (221,193)	108,675 – (278,325)