

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



December 17, 2018

Asha Hunter, Board Chair
Southern Word
1704 Charlotte Avenue, Suite 200
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Ms. Hunter:

Please find attached the monitoring report of the Southern Word relating to the contract it had with the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018.

The Office of Financial Accountability is charged with the responsibility of monitoring grant funds, including Community Partnership Funds, from Metropolitan Nashville Government to any nonprofit organization. Staff from the Office of Financial Accountability conducted the review on October 16, 2018.

We appreciate the assistance provided by your agency during the course of the review. If you have any questions, please call me at 615-862-6712.

Sincerely,

Kevin Brown, CMFO, CICA, CFE
Finance Manager

cc: Benjamin Smith, Executive Director, Southern Word
Talia Lomax-O'dneal, Director of Finance, Department of Finance
Brian Kelsey, Chief Strategy Officer, Office of the Mayor
Kim McDoniel, Deputy Director of Finance, Department of Finance
Gene Nolan, Deputy Director of Finance, Department of Finance

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Phil Carr, Chief of Accounts, Department of Finance
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Essie Robertson, CPA, CMFO, CICA, Office of Financial Accountability
Dolly Cook, Office of Financial Accountability



Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County

SOUTHERN WORD

◆ **Monitoring Report** ◆

Conducted by



Office of Financial Accountability

December 17, 2018

MONITORING REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Office of Financial Accountability (hereinafter referred to as “OFA”) has completed a monitoring review of Southern Word. A monitoring review is substantially less in scope than an audit. The OFA did not audit the financial statements and, accordingly, does not express an opinion or any assurances regarding the financial statements of the Southern Word or any of its component units. The OFA is responsible for the internal monitoring of Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (hereinafter referred to as “Metro”) agencies that receive federal and state financial assistance, including cooperative agreements and non-profit organizations that receive appropriations and Community Partnership Funds from Metro government. In summary, any agreement(s) that imposes performance and/or financial requirements on Metro government is subject to review by the OFA.

The purpose of this review was to assess the agency’s compliance with contractual requirements set forth in the following contract with Metro Government:

Contract	Type	Amount	Contact Term	
L-3907	Community Partnership Funds	\$25,700	July 1, 2017	June 30, 2018

Agency Background

The Southern Word is a non-profit agency, founded in 2008, whose mission is “through the literary and performing arts, Southern Word offers creative solutions for youth to build literacy and presentation skills, reconnect to the education and to their lives, and act as leaders in the improvement of their communities.” The agency provides spoken word school residencies, after school workshops, open mics, and shows. Per the agency’s website Southern Word places professional poet mentors in community organizations and elementary, middle, high school, and college classrooms to teach the writing and performance skills involved in spoken word poetry. The Southern Word is committed to providing youth with as many opportunities as possible to develop and publicly present their voices both live and in print, video, audio, and digital media.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of our review were:

- 1) To determine whether the agency had the resources and capacity to administer the grant funds.
- 2) To determine if costs and services were allowable and eligible.
- 3) To verify that program objectives were met.
- 4) To test the reliability of the financial and programmatic reporting.
- 5) To verify contractual compliance.

The scope of our review was limited to the contract term July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

The monitoring review procedures included meeting with agency management and staff, reviewing board minutes and obtaining written representations from management. In addition, we examined certain financial records and supporting documentation necessary to ensure compliance with contractual requirements set forth in contract L-3907. Specific procedures included:

- Interviewing the employees responsible for grant management, financial reporting and accountability.
- Reviewing supporting documentation of expenditures for allowability, necessity and reasonableness.
- Reviewing the agency's general ledger and verifying the accuracy of all invoices submitted to Metro.
- Reviewing documentation to determine that funds were used for intended beneficiaries and expended in accordance with the spending plan of the contract.
- Reviewing documentation to support program activities for consistency with grant requirements.
- Assessing the financial stability of the agency and its ability to continue to administer the grant program funded by Metro.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Criteria	Yes	No
Sufficient Resources and Capacity to Administer Funds?	✓	
Costs and Services Allowable and Eligible?	✓	
Program Objectives Met?	✓	
Reporting Requirements Met?	✓	
Compliance with Civil Rights Requirements?	✓	

RESULTS OF REVIEW

The overall results of the monitoring review are provided in this section. Results are based on testwork performed and include conclusions regarding specific review objectives and, if applicable, recommendations for improvement and an action plan for implementation. Where applicable, the Findings and Recommendations section of this report provides more insight into any issues identified below.

1. Sufficient Resources and Capacity to Administer Grant Funds

Our review of the agency's accounting system and the qualifications of the individuals assigned to manage the accounting records indicate that the agency possesses the necessary resources and professional expertise to effectively administer the grant funds.

2. Allowable and Eligible Costs and Services

Our review covered all of the core compliance areas identified by 2 CFR Part 200: *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*.

Additionally, the Metro Grants Manual requires separate accounting of the Metropolitan Nashville Government grant funds to prevent co-mingling of Metro Funds with other sources of funding. The agency was in compliance with this requirement. Different revenue classes as well as expenditure classes have been established to separately track the sources and amounts of funding. Also, the agency can easily and accurately report their expenses supported by the Metro grant.

Based on our test work, costs and services during the period were allowable and eligible.

3. Program and Performance Objectives

The contract stipulates that the agency shall use the funds to provide the following outcomes:

- 1) Will serve at least 1,275 unduplicated MNPS students through this grant.
- 2) Will serve at least 16 MNPS schools through the school residency program.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

3) Will serve at least 2 schools through its MNPS writer workshops.

Based on our review of program documentation and discussions with staff, program performance objectives were met and the agency was in compliance with contractual program objectives.

4. Reliability of Financial and Programmatic Reporting

The contract requires submission of an annual audit report performed by a Certified Public Accountant. The contract also requires the agency to submit to Metro year end reports of the program outcome and a final expenditures report, no more than 45 days after the close of the contract.

We reviewed all applicable financial and programmatic reports required by the contract, including audited financial statements. Based on our review, the agency complied with all financial and programmatic reporting requirements.

5. Civil Rights Requirements

Our review did not reveal anything to indicate that the agency was noncompliant with civil rights requirements. The agency also has necessary written policies and procedures relating to civil rights. The agency has not received any complaints regarding any form of discrimination. Further, civil rights and ADA postings are publicly displayed.