

## **Application to Serve on the Oversight Committee**

**Springfield College**  
**5348 University Avenue**  
**(619) 582-4002**

### **1. What is your organization's history in City Heights?**

Springfield College, School of Human Services opened its San Diego Campus in January of 1997. The School's mission is "to provide broadly accessible higher education in human services for adult learners that embodies the principles of Humanics, community partnership, and academic excellence to achieve social and economic justice." Our focus is on providing access to postsecondary education to adults working in their communities, particularly people for whom access to a college education has been blocked. Because of this mission we moved our campus to City Heights in 2000. We have worked to make Springfield an integral part of the community. In the nine years we have worked to make the campus an educational and cultural resource by opening our facility to the community. We have provided free office space, free meeting space, opened a community art gallery and even housed (rent free) an after-school program for two years.

Springfield College housed the Sudanese English Project, a local after-school program for two years; provided free office space and phone to the Caring Council for three years; provided free office space to the Bi-lateral Safety Corridor Coalition until it received enough funding to open its own offices. Our classrooms have been used for meetings by SAY, SDYCS, YMCA, Neighborhood House Association, New Alternatives, the Caring Council, Affordable Housing Coalition, Supportive Parents Information Network, Latinos y Latinas en Acción, City of San Diego Human Relations Commission, etc.

Our community art gallery was created to show the strength in City Heights, particularly as highly diverse community. More than a dozen art exhibitions have been created based on the variety of cultures that live within City Heights – each one showing the work of local artists and hosting a cultural celebration. More than a thousand people have attended these openings, all of which are free and open to the public.

### **2. Does your organization have an established base of residents with whom it works? Please explain.**

Our main connection to the community is through our students, all of whom are adults working in the field of social services and/or community development. The enrollment ranges up to 125 students who, while are drawn from throughout the county, mostly reside in communities south of 8, east of the 5 and west of 67. City Heights is one of the most likely communities a student of ours would live in.

Our curriculum, as our mission implies, focuses on strengthening community development skills, particularly among professionals working in social services. From our perspective, social service workers should be facilitators, i.e., ones who facilitate a community defining issues for itself, facilitating the community developing a plan action based on the identified issues, and support the carrying out that plan. This perspective differs from the traditional

view of social services as an institution provides services to people living within a community.

**3. What role does your organization envision fulfilling during the 9 month planning process? What expertise and resources will your organization offer and on which outcome area will you focus?**

As in the past, we can offer the use of our facility (located at the corner of 54<sup>th</sup> & University). We have eight classrooms, including one that can hold up to 80 people. Because our classes are only held on weekends, our space is often available throughout the week.

Because our curriculum is focused on community development and the provision of social services, there is no one specific outcome that we would focus on. Rather, our skills and contributions would be on supporting the process of bringing the community together. As an education institution, Springfield brings a unique perspective. Because we do not provide services beyond our academic degrees, we come to the table without expecting to apply for any grant money that may result from this process. Not competing for any future money allows the College to be a particularly objective member of the committee.

**4. How is your organization representative of the diverse communities of people who live in City Heights?**

The staff at the College is small, but diverse (30% African American, 30% European American, 30% Asian/Pacific Islander, 10% Latino). Our faculty are local practitioners hired specifically to teach in their area of experience and expertise. There is a core of twenty individuals who teach with us on a regular basis. The demographics of this group is: 60% female, 20% Latino, 40% African American, 35% European-American, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander. Our student body is made of adults whose average age is in the low 40s, 95% of whom are the first in their family to attend college and are 75% female. Ethnically, the students are: 40% Latino, 30% African-American, 20% European-American, and 10% a mix of African and Asian/Pacific Islander.