

Anatomy of a Winning Make More Happen™ Award Application

This is an example of a successful 2019 Make More Happen application.
Thank you to Wayne Ellison of Ellison Insurance Agency for sharing his application!

The nonprofit mission should clearly state who they serve and how they serve them.

Your safest bet: check the nonprofit website for their mission statement and simply cut-and-paste.

If you are nominating a faith-based organization, make sure to state that they have a secular community mission (if applicable).

We want to know more than the number of times you volunteer so we can understand **the quality as well as quantity of your volunteer work.**

This answer does a good job providing a short description of the events to tell a fuller story of involvement.

Nonprofit Info: Rainbow Village

- Duluth, Georgia
- www.rainbowvillage.org
- **Nonprofit mission statement:** Rainbow Village's mission is to transform the lives of homeless families with children by providing a stable community and services that instill initiative, self-development and accountability for future generations.

History of Involvement

- **How did your involvement with the nonprofit begin and how long have you been involved?**

I was part of the 2005 Leadership Gwinnett class with a former executive at Rainbow Village and I am an active Rotarian along with a former Rainbow Village board member. Both individuals introduced me to this wonderful organization two years ago and suggested I direct my volunteer and philanthropic energies to this organization in my community whose mission is to help homeless families transition back into self-sustaining lives.

- **How are you involved with the nonprofit throughout the year? Please describe the events and their frequency.**

As a board member, we meet once every other month. Along with this, I am actively involved in attendance at all special events including annual galas, golf tournaments, and others. I also attend both the early childhood education graduations as the children prepare to enter kindergarten as well as graduation events for families who have finished up to two years at Rainbow Village and are preparing to move into independent housing.

- **How many people does your agency employ?**

3

- **How many employees from your agency are involved with the nonprofit?**

1

Agency-Nonprofit Relationship

- **Do you and/or others in your agency hold specific roles within the nonprofit? If so, what roles?**

I serve on the Rainbow Village Board of Directors.

- **Please describe a special, memorable experience you have had while serving at the nonprofit.**

At the 2018 annual gala, a Rainbow Village graduate named Bianca spoke very movingly about her experience and the fact that she didn't know her village was as big as it was. She was extremely humble and very appreciative of her experience at Rainbow Village and it hit me hard. It truly caused me to take a moment and reflect that this is why we're doing what we're doing.

- **What do you and your agency enjoy most about supporting this nonprofit's cause?**

For me personally, I enjoy helping people at a crucial point in time in their life. I believe, as does Rainbow Village, that no matter where you are in your life, you've gotten there with the help of other people.

Both the agency and I see the difference that Rainbow Village is making at a critical point in time for families, whether it's learning about financial literacy, or helping kids to succeed in the after-school program. The benefits of witnessing the life changes and skills the families are acquiring and knowing that your hard work and effort is helping them is rewarding and compels us to keep Rainbow Village as our primary nonprofit of support.

Both answers show a **personal connection** between the agent, agency and nonprofit.

What's more is that they tell us more about what the nonprofit does to help those in need: an annual gala, financial literacy classes and after-school programs.

Teach us about your community's needs!

Include details about who the nonprofit is serving, how they are serving those in need, and why the need is so great. This answer is a winner because it gives details about how the nonprofit qualifies its clients, and how its target population is connected to a larger issue.

Nonprofit's Impact

- **Describe the population served by the nonprofit.**

Rainbow Village serves homeless families in North Metro Atlanta. Residents come primarily from Gwinnett, Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Rainbow Village serves homeless adults having Georgia identification with legal custody of at least one minor child. The majority of homeless families who come to Rainbow Village are headed by African American single mothers, many of whom are fleeing domestic violence. Most are in their twenties and have two or more children. The average age of a Rainbow Village resident is nine years old, which correlates with the national average age of a homeless person in our country.

The key to a successful application is a personal story.

We like that this answer tells more than how the nonprofit impacts the community, but also how the agent helps grow awareness within his personal circle, both for those who need help and those who can help.

It is critical that you talk to your nonprofit partner for this answer.

Although this answer is non-binding, we do like to see that there is a plan to use the money with the program guidelines. This answer gets a thumbs up because it's specific, quantified and projects benefits well into the future.

- **Describe how this nonprofit positively impacts your community.**

One of the closest things to my heart is that I have had personal friends struggling with homelessness. I have referred them to Rainbow Village at a crucial point in their life and they have raved about their experience. When I think about the time these friends spent rebuilding their lives at Rainbow Village, and the fact that I was able to share the opportunity with them, it puts things on a much more personal level than simply serving as a board member. My friends were important to me before, and important to their families. Now they are self-sustaining members of the community, positively impacting the economy and the educational system. There is success! I also had the privilege and opportunity to work with my fellow board members to invite community members for a visit to Rainbow Village. I feel very fortunate that I can talk to other people, bring them to the Rainbow Village campus, tell them the stories of the families who live here, and everything else sells itself.

Impact of \$10,000

- **Tell us how \$10,000 would benefit this nonprofit and your community.**

Funding of \$10,000 would provide two years of financial education training for more than 100 individuals each year. The normal cost for these services is \$75,000 per year, however, through a partnership with Rainbow Village and Operation Hope, the costs will be significantly less (\$5,000 per year). This funding will truly 'make more happen' for families that will work to increase their savings, decrease their debt, and increase their credit score.

Photos

Photo #1



Wayne D. Ellison and Associates and other Rainbow Village community volunteers proudly accept the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit of the Month Award.

Photos make your story come alive!

Each of the following photos show the agent participating in a variety of activities described throughout the application.

They are in focus and the photo files were all at least 300KB in size.

Bonus points for the captions that tell us even more about the nonprofit and Wayne's participation.

Photos cont...

Photo #2



Wayne Ellison and other Rainbow Village board members and volunteers raised \$88,100 at the '2019 Second Chance Golf Tournament' to support service to 30 homeless families each year as they transition back into self-sufficiency.

Photo #3



Rainbow Village CEO and Wayne Ellison accept an Image Award from 100 Black Men of Atlanta on behalf of Rainbow Village families, 90% of whom are African American.