Since 2002, the Office of Community Services (OCS) has funded capacity building programs that provide training, technical assistance, and financial assistance to faith-based and community organizations. These organizations report a wide range of data to OCS, making it a challenge to assess performance in a uniform way. The program needed a solution that would increase access to information and increase speed in collecting data and reporting outcomes to Congress.

In response to this need, Dare Mighty Things designed and implemented a custom electronic data collection system that gathers information on each organization’s activities, outputs, and outcomes. The information is stored in a database where the program staff can access it anytime to monitor and analyze results for individual organizations or across the entire program.

Key Issues
- Grantees report a wide range of data, making it a challenge to aggregate information across grantees and create uniform methods for assessing performance.
- The program experiences significant lag time of up to a year between completion of activities and realization of outcomes and when the data is available to analyze and report to Congress.

The Solution
- Grantees provide data on activities, outputs, and outcomes in a web-based reporting system.
- Program office staff, in consultation with Dare Mighty Things, review individual reports for accuracy and completeness, and then, using an automated tool, import the information into a database.
- As successive reports are submitted, relevant data from previous reports is automatically pre-populated in the web-based reporting system.

Innovations
- Consolidating data entry tasks reduce a six to nine month process to weeks, or even days, making data available for analysis in less time.
- Data entry efficiencies, such as automatic report population, reduce errors and improve accuracy.
- Web-based reporting and automated data importing result in more timely analysis and performance assessment.
- Changes in reported activities, outputs, and outcomes are automatically highlighted, providing greater transparency on progress toward targets and goals.