



STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018



volunteerflorida



OUTLINE

I. Mission, Vision and Values (p. 1)

II. Executive Summary (p. 2)

III. Background (p. 5)

IV. SWOT Analysis (p. 6)

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

V. Goals and Objectives (p. 8)

- Strengthening Florida's Communities
- Recognizing and Celebrating Volunteerism and National Service
- Connecting Floridians to Opportunities for Service
- Increasing Florida's Disaster Resiliency
- Sustaining Diversified Funding
- Furthering National Recognition
- Maintaining Excellent Stewardship

VI. Next Steps (p. 13)

VII. Conclusion (p. 13)



MISSION

Volunteer Florida strengthens Florida's communities through national service, fostering volunteerism and leveraging resources.

VISION

Floridians are engaged, communities are transformed and Florida is a better place to live.

VALUES

Volunteer Florida's organizational culture is defined by the following values:

- Service – Cultivate national service and volunteerism
- Leadership – Lead the vanguard of state service commissions
- Collaboration – Engage partners to multiply impacts
- Excellence – Perform at the highest level
- Innovation – Be inventive and creative in all aspects
- Inspiration – Catalyze all Floridians to serve



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All citizens have a talent to contribute toward making Florida a better place to live. Building upon this belief, the Governor's Commission on Community Service – Volunteer Florida – strives to strengthen Florida's communities by promoting and fostering opportunities for Floridians to serve.

Established in 1993 to administer AmeriCorps State programs, Volunteer Florida continues to support schools, nonprofits and faith-based organizations through its administration of AmeriCorps and other national service grants. Reflecting priorities of both the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Executive Office of the Governor, these programs have a large focus on education, which has been made prevalent by increases in funding for nationally renowned subgrantees including Teach for America and City Year. Other programs address critical issues including the environment and human needs; many of these longstanding AmeriCorps programs, like Florida State Parks and another at Clearwater Police Department, have established a pipeline to public service careers while meeting specific, measurable outcomes.

Volunteer Florida is also a state and national leader in the coordination of volunteers and donations in disasters. Building upon lessons learned following Hurricane Andrew and the active 2004-2005 hurricane seasons, Volunteer Florida regularly trains governmental and nongovernmental organizations across Florida to utilize volunteers and manage donations for disaster relief. Volunteer Florida's emergency managers are routinely deployed for FEMA activations across the U.S., and also help communities across the country to be better prepared through national conferences, trainings and publications.

Volunteer Florida has supported counties' efforts to establish volunteer centers across the state and facilitated the establishment of the Florida Association of Volunteer Resource Management, to further equip nonprofits and organizations who utilize volunteers with the management skills and resources necessary to retain a strong and successful volunteer program. The 3-year BEST Neighborhoods program has exceeded its goal in generating volunteers; and recognition events including the Florida Champion of Service Awards and Florida Volunteer Month celebration have raised awareness about volunteers' impact, with the goal of inspiring others to engage in service.

A recent re-branding and website redesign effort has also successfully generated new interest and excitement in the organization. Volunteer Florida's new branding is modern, fresh and unique, which has helped to clarify and set apart the organization from other statewide volunteer organizations. The new website has had a significant increase in first-time/new visitors to the site, and has also utilized technological tools including an interactive map and search engine widget that allows citizens to better access national service and volunteer opportunities.

Strong programs, statewide partnerships and tactical communications by Volunteer Florida have elevated national service and created new pathways to volunteerism in Florida. There is great opportunity and value in building upon the successes of the organization over the past two decades, which is outlined in this strategic plan through the following goals:

GOAL 1: STRENGTHENING FLORIDA'S COMMUNITIES

Volunteer Florida will improve Florida communities through volunteerism and national service. Volunteer Florida will utilize resources and work with our partners and communities to focus volunteerism and national service where the need is greatest.

GOAL 2: RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERISM AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Volunteer Florida will be a leader in recognizing and celebrating volunteerism and national service. Volunteer Florida will inspire more Floridians to serve and commend current volunteers and national service members.

GOAL 3: CONNECTING FLORIDIANS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Volunteer Florida will facilitate connections to opportunities for all Floridians to serve. Volunteer Florida will continue to work to ensure that all Floridians desiring to serve will have that opportunity.

GOAL 4: INCREASING FLORIDA'S DISASTER RESILIENCY

Volunteer Florida seeks to ensure that all of Florida's counties are better equipped to utilize volunteers and donations in a disaster.

GOAL 5: SUSTAINING DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

Volunteer Florida will be sustained and robust with diversified funding. The organization will continue to seek diversified avenues for funding.

GOAL 6: FURTHERING NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Volunteer Florida has long been sought after for program ideas from other states. The organization will continue this effort and seek new opportunities to lead the vanguard of state service commissions.

GOAL 7: MAINTAINING EXCELLENT STEWARDSHIP

Volunteer Florida will be an excellent steward of its resources. Volunteer Florida will continue to have audit results that bring recognition to its stewardship of public and private funds. This continued accountability and transparency will assist in raising funds and embarking on new programs.

These goals are consistent with Volunteer Florida's mission, vision and values. These goals capitalize on prior achievements while optimizing outcomes and progressing toward a sustainable, successful future for the organization.



BACKGROUND

National service has a longstanding history of support from American leaders. Its earliest roots trace back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (now known as NCCC) in the 1930's, and remained a priority of many American presidents throughout the 20th century. President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in the 1960s; President Lyndon B. Johnson worked with Congress to pass the Volunteers in Service to America Act (VISTA) in 1964; and President George H. W. Bush signed into law the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which established a Commission on National and Community Service.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton amended President George H. W. Bush's legislation to create the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency. This legislation brought together many different streams of service like NCCC and VISTA and also gave Americans the opportunity to serve their country through AmeriCorps. The law required each state to create a state commission in conjunction with its Governor's office to receive and administer federal funds for national service programs.

In accordance with this federal legislation, the Florida Commission on Community Service was created by Executive Order of Governor Lawton Chiles in 1993. Subsequently, the Commission was established in statute during the Legislative Session of 1994 (F.S. 14.29) to administer national service grants. Volunteer Florida is administratively housed in the Office of the Governor and guided by a bipartisan board of Commissioners who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Volunteer Florida has taken on additional responsibilities and new roles since its inception. In 1997, following lessons learned from Hurricane Andrew, Volunteer Florida became the lead agency for coordinating volunteers and donations for the Florida Division of Emergency Management. Volunteer Florida also increases volunteerism through grants, trainings and recognitions.



SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization. It involves identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving an organization's mission and goals.

STRENGTHS

Three predominant strengths were identified among many others at Volunteer Florida. One is the organization's unique structure: being administratively housed within the Governor's office and guided by bipartisan Governor-appointed Commissioners, while maintaining independent authority, provides for flexibility and adaptability that is unique and can be tremendously beneficial for operations.

Another strength that was strongly emphasized through SWOT analysis is that of staff and Commissioners. Volunteer Florida's Governor-appointed Commissioners represent various sectors in Florida, have exceptional professional acumen, and bring a great wealth of connections, partnerships, and experience to the Commission from different regions across Florida. Also, the highly experienced staff view themselves as a part of a team and recognize the value in having a positive, fun work environment. They are passionate about their work and have great respect for each other.

The third most prevalent strength identified is that of quality programming. Volunteer Florida takes pride in its work to bring exceptional AmeriCorps and volunteer programs to Florida, and works diligently to provide proper trainings, programmatic support, and financial oversight of the programs the organization administers. The Commission is viewed as a national leader among other state commissions and is also nationally recognized for its work to coordinate volunteers and donations in disasters.

WEAKNESSES

The division of Volunteer Florida and Florida's Foundation in 2010 created an identity crisis for Volunteer Florida. Because both organizations were at one time housed together, and both organizations continued to use similar logos even after becoming separate entities, Volunteer Florida struggled to have its own strong brand identity and public awareness. While new leadership, branding, communications and organizational structures are now clearing up this confusion, it is still perceived as a weakness because it adds to what has historically been one of the organization's overarching challenges: defining itself in a way that is easy for the public and stakeholders to understand.

There have also been a number of recent staff transitions and new Commissioners to Volunteer Florida. While all newcomers bring new strengths to their roles, historical depth and a consistent, thorough transition process could benefit the organization.

OPPORTUNITIES

There are great opportunities to strengthen Volunteer Florida's mission. Recent re-branding and new communications efforts have helped to give a new identity to the organization. Also, streamlined messaging and more frequent interactions with stakeholders and the media have helped to elevate the understanding of what Volunteer Florida is and how the organization operates.

Staff and Commissioners are also currently strengthening partnerships, including those with: the Executive Office of the Governor, legislators (state and federal), state agencies, nonprofit partners, national service partners and other state commissions. As a non-partisan Commission it continues to be important to be on good terms with all elected or appointed officials regardless of political affiliation.

Opportunities on the horizon include increasing media events and public awareness, strengthening Volunteer Florida programs through additional trainings and/or conferences, and collecting additional "success stories" to share from partners, perhaps through more data collection systems.

There are also opportunities to apply for and secure additional funding, through Volunteer Florida's Foundation, the Florida Disaster Fund, state funding or additional grants based on availability.

THREATS

The biggest threat to Volunteer Florida is insecure funding. While state funding stabilized for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, this is reflective of 6 prior years of continuous budget cuts representing an overall 60% decrease in state education funding.

Additionally, Congressional budget cuts have impacted AmeriCorps programs across the nation, and the administrative funding that is granted to state Commissions to administer these programs has been reduced. While current staff have continued to systematically reduce expenses and operate more efficiently, budget cuts threaten the Commission's ability to apply for and administer additional funds, and recent reductions in staff could hinder the Commission's plans for growth and expansion.



2013-2018 STRATEGIC GOALS

The following goals serve as the foundation for Volunteer Florida's Strategic Plan, which will be accomplished while leading and operating at the highest level of accountability, integrity and transparency.

GOAL 1: STRENGTHENING FLORIDA'S COMMUNITIES

Volunteer Florida will improve Florida's communities through volunteerism and national service. Volunteer Florida will utilize resources and work with its partners and communities to focus volunteerism and national service where the need is greatest.

Objectives:

- VF will positively impact needs in Florida communities by ensuring AmeriCorps programs achieve at least 85% of their required performance measures.
- VF will fully implement all phases of the Florida Mentoring Partnership.
- VF will strive to build sustainability for all programs and grantees through increased support, training and technical assistance.
- VF will strive to increase the number of Competitive, State and other AmeriCorps grants made available to Florida.
- VF will continue to work to support and assist the establishment of volunteer centers in counties in need.
- VF will facilitate a thorough grants management process inclusive of outreach/education, technical assistance, assessment and feedback provided to applicant organizations.
- VF will engage Floridian peer reviewers to provide key feedback and guidance to the national service grant funding process.

GOAL 2: RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERISM AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Volunteer Florida will be a leader in recognizing and celebrating volunteerism and national service. Volunteer Florida will inspire more Floridians to serve and commend current volunteers and national service members.

Objectives:

- Champion of Service Awards will be awarded to at least 12 recipients every year, including a formal presentation and annual Governor's reception.
- VF will continue to promote the President's Volunteer Service Awards and participate in local awards.
- VF will seek out opportunities to work with the Executive Office of the Governor to recognize public service and identify other populations that are under-recognized.
- VF will encourage, promote and participate in annual events that promote volunteerism and national service including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, AmeriCorps Week and Florida Volunteer Month.
- VF will raise awareness of AmeriCorps members and volunteers by annually increasing its social media subscribers by 15 percent.

GOAL 3: CONNECTING FLORIDIANS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Volunteer Florida will facilitate connections to opportunities for all Floridians to serve.

Volunteer Florida will continue to work to ensure that all Floridians desiring to serve will have that opportunity.

Objectives:

- Promotion of the VF website, including its interactive map feature and utilization of serve.gov, will connect more Floridians to volunteer opportunities.
- VF will develop and deliver excellent training programs for leaders and managers of volunteers annually. These may include: AmeriCorps Program Directors trainings, an AmeriCorps conference, Excellence in Volunteer Management Training, or joint trainings with the Florida Association for Volunteer Resource Management (FAVRM) or the Points of Light Institute.
- VF will continue to prioritize disability inclusion in national service and volunteerism through training, partnerships and promotion.

GOAL 4: INCREASING FLORIDA'S DISASTER RESILIENCY

Volunteer Florida seeks to ensure that all of Florida's counties are better equipped to manage and utilize volunteers and donations in a disaster.

Objectives:

- VF will provide or organize training for government, non-government and private sector organizations on disaster volunteer and donations management.
- VF will conduct outreach and disaster volunteer donations management training for a minimum of 30% of the counties in greatest need.
- VF will update all of its Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with ESF-15 support agencies every 5 years.
- VF will require disaster resiliency elements into all of its AmeriCorps programs.
- VF will convene ESF-15 partners in annual hurricane exercises and other appropriate forums.
- VF will take advantage of all feasible opportunities to update technology and systems for the Volunteer and Donations Hotline and the Florida Donations Portal.
- As the lead agency for ESF-15, VF will recruit new partner agencies and work to maintain existing partnerships.



GOAL 5: SUSTAINING DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

Volunteer Florida will be sustained and robust with diversified funding. The organization will continue to seek diversified avenues for funding.

Objectives:

- VF will clearly and effectively illustrate the return on investment for all funding sources through advocacy and communications.
- VF will increase the number of grants applied for each year.
- VF will strengthen its partnership with the VF Foundation by clarifying roles and increasing training.
- VF will seek out new innovative funding streams and new partnerships through the VF Foundation.
- VF Foundation will increase the share of private dollars in Volunteer Florida's revenue equation on a gradually increasing scale, to reach at minimum 25% by 2018.

GOAL 6: ACHIEVING NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Volunteer Florida has long been sought after for program ideas from other states. The organization will continue this effort and seek new opportunities to lead the vanguard of state service commissions.

Objectives:

- VF will support Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) staffing disaster requests through VF and government agency partner personnel.
- VF will conduct trainings at the national level annually.
- VF will equip Commissioners, VF Foundation board members, partners and subgrantees with marketing materials to ensure they are furthering the organization's reach.
- VF will ensure that all work products are properly distinguished as Volunteer Florida products.
- VF will seek out opportunities for participation on national boards, committees and work groups.
- VF will continue to distribute and share information about the organization on social media, consistently reaching a network of national service partners and voluntary organizations.

GOAL 7: MAINTAINING EXCELLENT STEWARDSHIP

Volunteer Florida will be an excellent steward of its resources. Volunteer Florida will continue to have audit results that bring recognition to its stewardship of public and private funds. This continued accountability and transparency will assist in raising funds and embarking on new programs.

Objectives:

- VF will be fully compliant with all applicable state and federal regulations ensuring the organization is free of fraud, waste and abuse.
- VF will maintain an annual A-133 audit cycle.
- VF will ensure that statewide AmeriCorps operations are sustained in a capable and responsive manner by ensuring that a majority of the awarded programs will have received a “B” or better scoring in the award process.
- VF will ensure that statewide AmeriCorps programs and other subgrantees spend funds in an allowable manner through monitoring and review of invoices.
- VF will ensure that statewide AmeriCorps programs meet program compliance, partnership and impact objectives through monitoring and data collection.
- VF will ensure statewide AmeriCorps programs and other subgrantees are adding value for stakeholders as documented through the AmeriCorps Statewide Evaluation.
- VF will ensure that employees have the tools and training necessary to complete their jobs successfully.
- VF will ensure that its organizational structure optimizes resources and capabilities.



NEXT STEPS

This strategic plan is designed to guide Volunteer Florida toward a sustainable, thriving future. This plan will be reviewed quarterly by staff and annually by the full Commission to ensure objectives are being met and progress is being made. By laying this groundwork, the Commission and staff can most effectively work with the Corporation for National and Community Service's required State Service Plan toward unified achievements.

CONCLUSION

With the development and execution of this strategic plan, Volunteer Florida aims to realize its vision: that Florida is a place where all citizens are inspired to do their part to strengthen communities. Volunteer Florida has a unique role and obligation to Floridians: to promote national service and volunteerism; administer high-quality programs; prepare communities to be more disaster resilient; and connect with partners who can multiply our reach and impact. This strategic plan sets Volunteer Florida on an exciting path on which the organization can increase sustainability and expand its already-successful programs, while attracting new resources and programs as they align with the organization's mission, vision and values. With each accomplished objective, Volunteer Florida shall empower the state's diverse communities, making Florida a national beacon of service.



volunteerflorida