Volunteer Florida Proposal
Rural Community Assets Fund

## Background

Volunteer Florida is the Governor's lead agency for volunteerism and national service in Florida, administering more than $31.7 million in federal, state, and local funding to deliver high-impact national service and volunteer programs in Florida. Volunteer Florida promotes and encourages volunteerism to meet critical needs across the state. Volunteer Florida also serves as Florida's lead agency for volunteers and donations before, during, and after disasters. For more information, visit: www.volunteerflorida.org.

## Contract/Grant Period

**The Rural Community Assets Fund (RCAF) application** is due to Volunteer Florida on **Wednesday, November 30, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. EST** via the outlined application process. The contract period is six months, beginning January 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2017. Volunteer Florida reserves the right to allocate funds based on internal programmatic and fiscal review and funding availability.

## Grant Overview

Florida's rural communities are uniquely resilient, but also battle lack of access to quality education, transportation, and job opportunities. Household income lags behind metropolitan areas, and poverty rates are significantly higher:

- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS), the average per-capita income for Florida residents in 2013 was $41,497. Per-capital income in rural counties was $30,844.[1]
- Estimates from 2013 indicate a poverty rate of 16.8% in urban areas of the state, compared with 24.3% for rural areas.[2]
- The USDA's report notes 13.6% of the population in urban areas have not completed high school. In rural areas, that number is a staggering 22.3%.[3]

Federal, state and local governments, as well as the private and nonprofit sectors continue to develop strategies to strengthen these communities.

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[1,3,4] State Fact Sheets. *United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.* December 08, 2015. http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/state-fact-sheets/state-data.aspx?StateFIPS=12&StateName=Florida

Floridians can capitalize on an additional, effective solution: Leveraging existing human capital to meet essential local needs through volunteering.

**Volunteer Florida's Rural Community Assets Fund will allow grantees to recruit, equip and mobilize volunteers in eligible rural areas across the state to address the acute educational needs of underserved children and youth.**

Volunteer Florida will distribute up to $100,000 to a maximum of ten grantees, each receiving $10,000 in grant funding and training support for their participation in the FY2016-2017 Rural Community Assets Fund program. Grantees must provide a 25% cash or in-kind match.

Grantees will receive comprehensive training, funding for program enhancements and ongoing technical assistance, and coaching to establish or strengthen volunteer programs.

<u>Eligibility</u>
Applicants may be public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities (e.g., states, cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; or Indian Tribes. Applicants must have experience meeting educational needs in eligible rural areas for underserved children or youth in at least one level of the K-12 education system. More specifically, applicants must have a service location in, have staff deployed to or volunteers deployed to an eligible rural area. RCAF funding must only be used to support services for underserved children and youth residing in eligible rural areas.

It is not necessary that the organization as a whole provide educational programming exclusively. The organization need not serve students at <u>all</u> levels of the K-12 education system. For example, an organization might only serve third-grade students, only students in high school, etc.  Organizations may provide educational programming to students who have left school, if the intent is to move students toward high school graduation, readiness for postsecondary education without remediation, or on-time postsecondary graduation.

Volunteer Florida will encourage geographic diversity by actively seeking proposals from all three Rural Areas of Opportunity, as defined by Florida Statute and used by the Department of Economic Opportunity. See Appendix A for eligible counties and municipalities: http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants.

## Volunteer Management Practices

Successful applicants will effectively engage and track volunteers and increase organizational volunteer management practices. Applicants must develop practices in at least two of eight areas or functions for effectively managing volunteers as defined in the report "Volunteering Reinvented: Human Capital Solutions for the Nonprofit Sector."[4]

1) Market Research and Community Needs Assessments
2) Strategic Planning to Maximize Volunteer Impact
3) Recruiting and Marketing to Prospective Volunteers
4) Interviewing, Screening, and Selecting Volunteers
5) Orienting and Training Volunteers
6) Ongoing Supervision and Management
7) Recognition and Volunteer Development
8) Measuring Outcomes and Evaluating the Process

## Special Consideration

Special consideration will be given to applicants providing educational programming centered on college preparation and on-time graduation in one of these areas:

1) Academic Achievement: Mentoring, tutoring, test preparation or study skills.
2) Financial Management: College affordability, financial aid opportunities or financial literacy skills.
3) Advising: Career exploration and planning, professional development or range of post-secondary options.

## VF Tech Assistance and Conference Calls

Volunteer Florida will host a technical assistance conference call for Rural Community Assets Fund applicants Monday, October 31, 2016 at 10:00 A.M. EST.

Applicants may join the meeting via GoToMeeting.com by computer, tablet or smartphone. Click on the following link: https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/215779501

Applicants may also join the meeting by phone using one of the following call-in numbers:

United States (Toll-free) 1 877 309 2070

United States +1 (571) 317-3116

Access Code: 215-779-501

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[4] Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007, page 4.
http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0719_volunteering_reinvented.pdf

To ensure that this funding process is carried out in a fair and equitable manner, all questions concerning the application should be submitted to **RCAF@volunteerflorida.org**.

<u>**Performance Measures:**</u>
1) <u>Program Capacity</u>: Grantees will show an increase in capacity in at least one area over the course of the contract period:
    - Number of students served
    - Number of volunteers recruited and/or retained
    - Types of services offered to students
    - Number of services provided per student
2) <u>Proficiency in Volunteer Management Practices:</u> Grantees will:
    - Show an increase in effective <u>volunteer management practices</u> as measured by the pre/post assessment in Appendix B- Reporting Requirements and Templates: http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants.
    - Establish or update a volunteer management plan, based on the volunteer management practices the grantee has identified to develop.

<u>**Budget**</u>
Funds awarded to grantees are intended to be used for capacity building activities to develop or strengthen volunteer programs. Fifty percent of grant funding will be distributed at the beginning of the contract period, and the remaining fifty percent (50%) will be distributed halfway through the contract period. The budget template and a sample budget are provided in Appendix D: http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants.
1) <u>Training and Support Expenses</u> – funds may be used to support existing personnel to develop or augment a volunteer program (capacity building). This may include the cost of background checks for volunteers, or pertinent capacity building training materials for staff or volunteers. For example, volunteer management training for staff, registration for applicable training for volunteers, mentoring/tutoring curriculum for volunteers, or other program supports to equip volunteers.
2) <u>Travel Expenses</u> – funds may be used for travel costs which are directly related to the recruitment, support, management and retention of volunteers, as well as travel costs associated with training staff and volunteers. All travel must be in accordance with State of Florida travel requirements.
3) <u>Technology/Equipment</u> – funds may be used for technology, equipment or software that are directly related to the recruitment, support, management and retention of

volunteers and tracking volunteer demographics and activities (capacity building through infrastructure).

## Technical Assistance and Training

The Rural Community Assets Fund grantees will receive and be required to attend a comprehensive training to establish or strengthen a volunteer program. In addition, grantees will receive ongoing technical assistance and coaching. The Rural Community Assets Fund grantee training is anticipated to be in January 2017.

## Reporting

Successful grantees must report data associated with listed performance measures, number of volunteers engaged (new or retained), number of hours volunteers served, volunteer demographics, and schools served. This data must be submitted at the beginning of the contract period as a baseline, mid-term, and at the end of the contract period. Volunteer Florida will provide instructions and report templates for measurement and documentation. See Appendix B for reporting and measurement templates: http://www.volunteerflorida.org. Volunteer Florida will administer an evaluation for volunteers to assess volunteer experience.

## Background Checks

Successful applicants will be required to complete a check of the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website for all volunteers.

## Rural Community Assets Fund Anticipated Timeline

Application opens – Tuesday, October 25, 2016

Application technical assistance call – Monday, October 31, 2016, 10:00 a.m. EST

Application due to Volunteer Florida – Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 5:00 p.m. EST

Application review and scoring – Thursday, December 1 – Thursday, December 8, 2016

Notice of Intent to Award posting – Monday, December 12, 2016 9:00 a.m. EST – Thursday, December 15, 2016 9:00 a.m. EST

Contracts provided to successful applicants – Tuesday, December 20, 2016

Volunteer Florida RCAF contract overview conference call – Wednesday, December 21, 2016

Anticipated date of Contract execution – January 1, 2017

Rural Community Assets Fund Training - required for grantees – January 2017

Contract period ends – June 30, 2017

**Application Scoring Criteria** See Appendix C for narrative samples:
http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants.

**Cover Sheet & Project Demographics (10 points)**
1) The applicant fully and accurately completes the cover sheet and project demographics as indicated by the application template.
2) The applicant indicates which two (at minimum) of the eight (8) steps or functions for effectively managing volunteers will be implemented or expanded by the project.
3) The applicant indicates the primary area(s) of volunteer engagement related to K-12 educational programming, either existing or planned, for underserved children and youth.

**Executive Narrative (35 points)**
1) The applicant describes the existing K-12 educational programming for children and youth that it performs, including number of students served, number of existing volunteers (if any), and site(s) where programming occurs, where staff is deployed and/or where volunteers are deployed. The programming must be located in an eligible rural area. See Appendix A- Eligible Counties and Municipalities: http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants.
2) The applicant describes how volunteers will be engaged in, and produce contributions to, K-12 educational programming for underserved children and youth, including site(s) where programming will occur.
3) The applicant clearly describes the proposed roles of leveraged volunteers.

**Special Consideration (5 points)**
1) The applicant describes how volunteers will address the special consideration (if applicable), which is educational programming centered on college preparation and on-time graduation in the areas of academic achievement, financial management or advising.

**Organizational Capacity (10 points)**
1) The applicant describes how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
2) The applicant explains the organization's infrastructure and experience managing grants.
3) The applicant clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its volunteer program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.

4) The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with state rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities.

**Performance Measures (10 points)**
1) The applicant clearly describes how the performance measure targets will be met and tracked.
2) The applicant describes the equipment or software that are directly related to the recruitment, support, management and retentions of volunteers and tracking volunteer demographic activities.
3) <u>Program Capacity</u>: The applicant indicates at least one area in which capacity will be increased over the course of the contract period:
   - Number of students served
   - Number of volunteers recruited and/or retained
   - Types of services offered to students
   - Number of services provided per student
4) <u>Proficiency in Volunteer Management Practices:</u> The applicant indicates whether a volunteer management plan will be established or updated, and again states the two (at minimum) of the eight (8) steps or functions for effectively managing volunteers that will be will be incorporated or enhanced during the contract period, and why.

**Budget and Budget Narrative (30 points)**
1) The applicant's budget contains only allowable expenses and meets state cost allowance guidelines.
2) The applicant included twenty-five percent (25%) match ($2,000) and uses the budget narrative to clearly explain the source of funds, the type of contribution (cash/in-kind), the amount and the intended purpose of the match.
3) The applicant's budget narrative is detailed and provides a full explanation of associated costs including their purpose, justification and the basis for the calculations.
4) The applicant's budget narrative calculations are presented in an equation format, identifying the number of persons involved, cost per unit, etc.
5) The budget narrative thoroughly explains how the proposed program budget reflects the program's goals and design as described in the Executive Narrative section of the application.

6) The applicant's budget narrative provides the organization's current budget, percentage of the budget this grant would represent and how they will comply with fiscal compliance oversight.

Application Instructions: Rural Community Assets Fund Application

Complete the following steps to submit the Rural Community Assets Fund application. Review the Application Instructions and Scoring Criteria to align responses accordingly. Go to the Rural Community Assets Fund webpage and click on the application link. Download the application and complete using the appropriate software (ex. Microsoft Word or Excel). Do NOT print and handwrite entries.

Remember to:
- Respond clearly and thoroughly to all prompts
- Check the box agreeing with the background statement
- Check the box agreeing with the statement regarding the accuracy of the application
- Insert Applicant Electronic Signature and Date
- Complete the RCAF 2016-2017 Budget Worksheet
- Review application before sending

E-mail your completed application, which includes the budget worksheet, to **RCAF@volunteerflorida.org by Wednesday, November 30, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. EST**. List the name of your organization in the subject line, for example, "Helping Kids Foundation USA". Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an e-mail from Volunteer Florida within one (1) business day confirming receipt. If you do not receive e-mail confirmation within one (1) business day, your application the application was not received.

All Appendices are available online at http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants.
**Appendix A:** Eligible Counties and Municipalities
**Appendix B:** Reporting Requirements and Templates
**Appendix C:** Strong Application Language Examples
**Appendix D:** Budget Worksheet and Sample