



Volunteer Florida
Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant
Notice of Funding Opportunity

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) Mini-Grant Application is due to Volunteer Florida on **Tuesday, January 17, 2017** via the outlined application process. The contract period is five months, beginning February 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 \$30,844.²⁴
- Estimates from 2013 indicate a poverty rate of 16.8% in urban areas of the state, compared with 24.3% for rural areas.²⁵
- 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%.²⁶

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

²⁴ 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 Mini-Grant 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 \$20,000 to a maximum of 4 grantees, each receiving \$5,000 in grant funding and training support for their participation in the FY2016-2017 Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant program.

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

Eligibility

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 for underserved children or youth in early childhood education settings or at least one level of the K-12 education system. The experience need not be in an eligible rural area. RCAF funding however, must only be used to support services for underserved children or youth residing in eligible rural areas. In other words, applicants must plan to have a service location in, or volunteers deployed to, an eligible rural area.

It is not necessary that the organization as a whole provide educational programming exclusively. In addition, the organization need not serve children or youth in early childhood education settings and all levels of the K-12 education system. For example, an organization may serve pre-kindergarteners only, third-grade students only, students in high school only, etc. Organizations may provide educational programming to children and youth 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 one of eight areas or functions for effectively managing volunteers as defined in the report "Volunteering Reinvented: Human Capital Solutions for the Nonprofit Sector."⁵

- 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

Performance Measures:

- 1) Program Capacity: Grantees will show an increase in capacity in at least one of the following areas over the course of the contract period:
 - Number of children or youth served
 - Number of volunteers recruited and/or retained
 - Types of services offered to children or youth
 - Number of services provided per child or young person
- 2) Proficiency in Volunteer Management Practices: Grantees will:
 - Show an increase in effective volunteer management practices as measured by the pre/post assessment in Appendix B- Reporting Requirements and Templates: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>. Appendix B is provided for reference, and need not be completed in conjunction with the application process.

⁵ Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007, page 4.
http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0719_volunteering_reinvented.pdf

Budget

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>. The budget template must be completed in Microsoft Excel format and submitted as a component of the application.

- 1) Training and Support Expenses – 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) Travel Expenses – 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) Technology/Equipment – 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

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**.

The Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant 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 Mini-Grant grantee training is anticipated to be in February 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, schools served, etc. as outlined in Appendix B- Reporting Requirements and Templates: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>. This data must be submitted at the beginning of the contract period as a baseline and at the end of the contract period. Volunteer Florida will administer an evaluation for volunteers to assess volunteer experience. Appendix B templates are for reference only, and need not be completed in conjunction with the application process.

Background Checks

Successful applicants will be required to complete a check of the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website for all volunteers who are supported in some way by RCAF funding.

Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant Anticipated Timeline

Application opens – Thursday, December 15, 2016

Application due to Volunteer Florida – Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 5:00 p.m. EST

Application review and scoring – Wednesday, January 18, 2017 – Friday, January 20, 2017

Notice of Intent to Award posting – Monday, January 23, 2017, 9:00 a.m. EST – Thursday, January 26, 2017, 9:00 a.m. EST

Contracts provided to successful applicants – Monday, January 30, 2017

Volunteer Florida RCAF contract overview conference call – Thursday, February 2, 2017

Anticipated date of Contract execution – Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant Training - required for grantees – February 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 (3 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 one (at minimum) of the eight (8) steps or functions for effectively managing volunteers will be implemented or expanded by the project.

Executive Narrative (15 points)

- 1) The applicant describes all relevant details about the existing educational programming for children or youth that it performs. Example details include type of educational programming, number of children or youth served, number of existing volunteers (if any), site(s) where programming occurs, where staff is deployed and/or where volunteers are deployed, etc.
- 2) The applicant describes how early childhood or K-12 educational programming needs will be met by volunteers as a result of being awarded RCAF funds. The applicant clearly describes the proposed roles and activities of leveraged volunteers.

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 any experience managing grants.
- 3) The applicant clearly describes the organization's ability to fully expend grant funds within the 5-month period for the purposes described in the Executive Narrative.
- 4) The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with state rules and regulations, including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities, and any safeguards the organization utilizes or will use to ensure program compliance.

Performance Measures (7 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 is directly related to the recruitment, support, management and retention of volunteers and tracking volunteer demographic activities.
- 3) Program Capacity: The applicant indicates at least one area in which capacity will be increased over the course of the contract period:
 - Number of children or youth served
 - Number of volunteers recruited and/or retained
 - Types of services offered to students
 - Number of services provided per child or young person

Budget and Budget Narrative (15 points)

- 1) The applicant's budget contains only allowable expenses and meets state cost allowance guidelines.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The applicant's budget narrative calculations are presented in an equation format, identifying the number of persons involved, cost per unit, etc.
- 4) 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.
- 5) The applicant's budget narrative provides the organization's current budget, percentage of the budget this grant would represent and explains how they will comply with fiscal compliance oversight.

Application Instructions: Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant Application

Complete the following steps to submit the Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant Application. Review the Application Instructions and Scoring Criteria to align responses accordingly.

Go to the Rural Community Assets Fund Mini-Grant section of the "Grants" page: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>. Click on the application link. Download the application and complete using the appropriate software (Microsoft Word and Excel). Do NOT print and handwrite entries.

Remember to:

- Respond clearly and thoroughly to all prompts
- 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 in Microsoft Word format, which includes the budget worksheet in Microsoft Excel format, to **RCAF@volunteerflorida.org** by **Tuesday, January 17, 2017 5:00 p.m.** 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 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

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**.