



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RURAL COMMUNITY ASSETS FUND FY 2017-2018**

I. 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.

II. Contract/Grant Period

Rural Community Assets Fund (RCAF) Proposals are due to Volunteer Florida on **Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at 5 p.m. EST**. The contract period begins on the date of contract execution and ends June 30, 2018. Volunteer Florida reserves the right to allocate funds based on internal programmatic and fiscal review. Grant award distribution is contingent upon funding availability.

III. Grant Overview

Florida's rural communities are uniquely resilient, but also face specific challenges related to adequate educational resources, necessary transportation and sustainable employment. Household income lags behind that of metropolitan areas, and poverty rates are significantly higher as identified in the following statistics:

- 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, compared to 22.3% in rural areas.³

^{1,2,4} 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>



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

Floridians can capitalize on an additional resource by leveraging existing human capital to meet essential local needs through volunteering.

Volunteer Florida's Rural Community Assets Fund (RCAF) 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 a total of \$100,000 in funding and training support for grantee participation in the FY2017-2018 Rural Community Assets Fund program. Respondents may request between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and 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 existing volunteer programs.

The Request for Proposals, Appendices and other relevant RCAF information are available online: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.

IV. Eligibility

Respondents 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.

Respondents must have experience meeting educational needs for underserved children or youth in early childhood education settings or the K-12 education system. This experience need not be in an eligible rural area, but programming funded through RCAF must occur in an eligible rural area. Respondents must currently have or plan to have a service location in, or volunteers deployed to, an eligible rural area.



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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. Additionally, respondents are not required to serve all education levels. Organizations may also provide educational programming to children and youth who have left school, if the intent is to move students toward high school graduation or readiness for postsecondary education without remediation.

Counties and communities eligible for RCAF funding must meet either the definition of “rural community” outlined in F.S. 288.0656, or as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural-Urban Continuum Codes 3-9. See Appendix A- Eligible Counties and Municipalities: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.

V. Volunteer Management Practices

Successful respondents will demonstrate the capacity to effectively engage and track volunteers and strengthen organizational volunteer management practices by developing at least two of the eight functions listed below. These areas are considered necessary components of an effectively managed volunteer program, 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

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



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VI. Special Consideration

Special scoring consideration will be given to respondents providing educational programming centered on college preparation and on-time graduation in one of the following 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.

VII. Volunteer Florida Technical Assistance Conference Call

Volunteer Florida will host a technical assistance conference call about the Rural Community Assets Fund proposal process on **Thursday, May 25 at 10:00 A.M. EST**. Interested individuals may join the meeting via GoToMeeting.com by computer, tablet or smartphone.

Click on the following link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/801667381>.

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

United States (Toll-free): 1 877 309 2073

United States: +1 (224) 501-3216

Access Code: 801-667-381

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

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VIII. Performance Measures

1) Program Capacity:

Grantees will show an increase in capacity in at least two 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 children or youth

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 (1 of 3) - Reporting Requirements: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.
- Establish or update a volunteer management plan, based on the volunteer management practices the grantee has identified to develop.

IX. Budget

Funds awarded to grantees are intended to be used for capacity building activities to develop or strengthen volunteer programs. **Respondents may request a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$10,000 in funding. Respondents must provide a 25% cash or in-kind match.** Fifty percent (50%) of grant funding will be distributed at the beginning of the contract period, and the remaining fifty percent will be distributed halfway through the contract period. The Proposal Budget Worksheet must be completed in Microsoft Excel format and submitted as a component of the Proposal.

See Appendix C- Proposal Budget Worksheet and Sample:

<http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.

Budget Categories:

- 1) Training and Support Expenses – Funds may be used to support existing personnel financially or programmatically to develop or augment a volunteer program (capacity building). This may include salary costs, the cost of background checks for volunteers, or pertinent capacity building training materials for staff or volunteers. For example, funds can be utilized for volunteer management training for staff, registration for applicable training for volunteers,



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mentoring/tutoring curriculum for volunteers, or other program supports for volunteer programming.

- 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 (F.S. 112.061).
- 3) Technology/Equipment – Funds may be used for technology, equipment or software that are directly related to the recruitment, support, management or retention of volunteers, and tracking volunteer demographics and activities (capacity building through infrastructure).

X. Technical Assistance and Training

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

XI. Reporting

Successful grantees must report data associated with listed performance measures, such as 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, at mid-cycle, and at the end of the contract period. Volunteer Florida will provide instructions, reporting guidelines and documentation information. See Appendix B - Reporting Requirements: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>. Volunteer Florida will administer an evaluation for volunteers to assess volunteer experience.

XII. Background Checks

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



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XIII. Rural Community Assets Fund Anticipated Timeline

- Request for Proposals opens – Monday, May 22, 2017
- Proposal technical assistance call – Thursday, May 25, 2017, 10 a.m. EST
- Proposals due to Volunteer Florida – Wednesday, June 21, 2017, 5 p.m. EST
- Proposal review and scoring – Thursday, June 22, 2017 – Wednesday, July 5, 2017
- Notice of Intent to Award posting – Thursday, July 6, 2017 – Monday, July 10, 2017
- Contracts provided to successful respondents – Friday, July 21, 2017
- RCAF contract overview conference call – Monday, July 24, 2017, 10:30 a.m. EST
- Anticipated date of Contract execution – Tuesday, August 1, 2017
- RCAF Training - required for grantees – Early Fall, TBA
- Contract period ends – June 30, 2018

XIV. Proposal Scoring Criteria

See Appendix C: Budget Worksheet and Sample and Appendix D: Proposal Narrative: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.

1) Cover Sheet & Project Demographics (10 points)

- a) The proposal includes a fully and accurately completed cover sheet with project demographics as listed.
- b) The proposal clearly indicates which two (at minimum) of the eight (8) steps or functions for effectively managing volunteers will be implemented or expanded by the project.
- c) The proposal clearly indicates the primary area(s) of volunteer engagement related to early childhood or K-12 educational programming, either existing or planned, for underserved children and youth.



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2) Proposal Narrative (35 points)

- a) The proposal clearly describes the existing early childhood or K-12 educational programming for children and youth that the organization 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.
- b) The proposal clearly describes how volunteers will be engaged in, and produce contributions to, early childhood or K-12 educational programming for underserved children and youth in eligible rural areas, as a result of being awarded RCAF funds. The respondent lists the site(s) where programming will occur.

See Appendix A- Eligible Counties and Municipalities:

<http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.

- c) The proposal clearly describes the proposed roles of leveraged volunteers.

3) Organizational Capacity (10 points)

- a) The proposal clearly describes the organization's experience, staffing, and management structure capacity to plan and implement the proposed program.
- b) The proposal fully explains the organization's infrastructure and experience managing grants.
- c) The proposal clearly describes how the respondent's organization, in implementation and management of its volunteer program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- d) The proposal clearly describes how the organization will comply with state rules and regulations related to prohibited and unallowable activities.

4) Special Consideration (5 points)

- a) If applicable, the proposal clearly describes the extent to which the program provides educational support centered on college preparation and on-time graduation in the areas of academic achievement, financial management or advising.



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5) Performance Measures (10 points)

- a) The proposal clearly describes how performance measure targets will be met and tracked.
- b) The proposal clearly describes the equipment or software already acquired or needed that are directly related to the recruitment, support, management and retention of volunteers and tracking volunteer demographic activities.
- c) Program Capacity: The proposal identifies at least two areas 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 children or youth
 - Number of services provided per child or youth
- d) Proficiency in Volunteer Management Practices: The proposal indicates whether a volunteer management plan will be established or updated, and describes the two (at minimum) of the eight (8) steps or functions for effectively managing volunteers that will be incorporated or enhanced during the contract period, and why.



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6) Budget and Budget Narrative (30 points)

- a) The proposal budget contains only allowable expenses and meets state cost allowance guidelines.
- b) The proposal and budget include twenty-five percent (25%) match and clearly explain the source of funds, the type of contribution (cash/in-kind), the amount and the intended purpose of the match.
- c) The proposal is detailed and provides a full explanation of associated costs including their purpose, justification and the basis for the calculations. Calculations are presented in equation format, identifying the number of persons involved, cost per unit, etc.
- d) The proposal thoroughly explains how the proposed program budget reflects the program's goals and design as described in the Proposal Narrative section.
- e) The proposal's budget narrative states the organization's current budget, the percentage of the organization's budget this grant would represent, and how the organization will comply with fiscal compliance oversight.



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XV. Instructions: Rural Community Assets Fund Proposal

The Rural Community Assets Fund (RCAF) Proposal consists of 2 parts: The Proposal Budget Worksheet (Appendix C) and the Proposal Narrative (Appendix D).

Both must be submitted to Volunteer Florida according to the below instructions by Wednesday, June 21, 2017, 5:00 p.m. EST.

- 1) DO NOT attempt to change the formatting of the Proposal Budget Worksheet or the Proposal Narrative.
- 2) Complete the Proposal Budget Worksheet using Microsoft Excel and the Proposal Narrative using Microsoft Word. Do NOT print and scan, handwrite or create portable document format documents (PDF) of either the Proposal Budget Worksheet or the Proposal Narrative.
- 3) Respond clearly and thoroughly to all prompts.
- 4) Proposal Narrative certifications: Check the boxes agreeing with the background statement and the statement regarding the accuracy of the Proposal.
- 5) Insert electronic signatures and dates.
- 6) Review the Proposal Budget Worksheet and Proposal Narrative carefully.
- 7) E-mail your completed proposal (Proposal Budget Worksheet and Proposal Narrative) to **RCAF@volunteerflorida.org**. Enter the name of your organization in the subject line, for example, "Helping Kids Foundation USA".

You must submit both the Proposal Budget Worksheet and the Proposal Narrative simultaneously. Once you have submitted your full proposal, 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 proposal was not submitted properly. You may resubmit your proposal, unless the deadline has passed. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

The Request for Proposals, Appendices and other relevant RCAF information can be found here: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants>.

Appendix A: Eligible Counties and Municipalities

Appendix B: Reporting Requirements (3): Pre-Assessment, Volunteer Demographics and Reporting, Data and Activities

Appendix C: Proposal Budget Worksheet and Sample

Appendix D: Proposal Narrative