FLORIDA DISASTER FUND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What role does Volunteer Florida and the Volunteer Florida Foundation play in managing the Florida Disaster Fund?

In the wake of the devastating impact of Hurricane Andrew in 1994, Volunteer Florida began serving as Florida's lead agency for mobilizing volunteers and coordinating donations before, during and after disasters. Formally recognized as the Florida Commission on Community Service, Volunteer Florida receives federal and state funding, along with private contributions, to expand national service, promote disaster resiliency, and advocate for volunteerism in Florida. The Florida Disaster Funds is administered by the Volunteer Florida Foundation as a direct support organization of Volunteer Florida.

Who is eligible for Florida Disaster Fund grants?

An organization applying for a Florida Disaster Fund grant must:

1. Be responding to a need created by a qualifying disaster in the geography specified by the disaster declaration;
2. Be classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, a faith-based entity headquartered or registered in the State of Florida, a municipality or local government acting as a fiscal agent, or an organization making use of a fiscal agent with such a designation; and
3. Complete an online application.

Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply for FY 2019 – 2020 grants if they have completed all close out paperwork on the previous grant. Current grant recipients are not eligible to apply for FY 2019 – 2020 grants unless they have expended at least 75% of their funds from any previous grant award prior to submitting a subsequent application.

When are applications due?

The window for submitting applications begins at 9 am EDST on Monday, August 12 and will close at 5 pm EDST on Friday, August 23. Subsequent application cycles are anticipated until all available funds are committed.

What is required in the application process?

The online application must be completed, including support documentation required to qualify for consideration:

1. Agreement and Certification Form: The Agreement and Certification form will be available for download upon the opening of the application window. The document must be signed and dated by two authorized officials of the applicant organization. For 501(c)(3) organizations, one signatory must be a member of the applicant organization's board of directors.

2. Project Budget: Complete the project budget and narrative form identifying project expenses and funding sources for those project costs.
3. Evidence of Tax-Exempt Status: A copy of the current IRS determination letter of exemption (for 501(c)(3) organizations only).
4. Board of Directors: List should include the organization's board members along with their addresses and occupations.
5. Most Recent Fiscal Year Budget: For 501(c)(3) organizations only.
6. Financial Statements (audited, if available) to include:
a. Balance Sheet, Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Cash Flows
b. Most recent management letter and/or reports on internal controls
c. Prior two years of fiscal year-end financial statements (501(c)(3) organizations only (If not currently available, please provide a letter so stating.)
7. W9
8. Most recent 990
9. Task List (detailing planned activities, timeline, and outcomes)

What are typical funding priorities?

Preference will be given to projects that meet needs not covered through other sources, such as FEMA Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs, Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, or other state disaster recovery funds. Stronger applications will demonstrate integration of volunteers. Preference will be given to projects that can be initiated within 30 days and be completed or demonstrate measurable impact within the first 12 months.

What types of expenses are <u>not</u> eligible?

Grant funds shall only be used for the specific purpose(s) stated in the award notification and may be spent only in accordance with the project plan and budget as approved by the Foundation and applicable terms and conditions. Expenses charged against a grant may not be incurred prior to declaration of the designated disaster or after the end of the grant period. No funds provided by the Foundation may be used for any political campaign or to support attempts to influence legislation or regulatory activity by any governmental body. Grants shall provide funds on a cost-reimbursement basis unless otherwise stipulated.

All expenditures must be in accordance with the State of Florida requirements, rules and regulations. Travel and other administrative expenses not specifically identified in the Budget (Attachment B) and Plan of Action (Attachment C) will not be authorized for reimbursement. Additionally, travel must comply with section 112.061, F.S. to be reimbursed. The following expenses will not be reimbursed:

A. Purchase of food or alcohol
B. Only equipment, furniture, or fixtures listed in the task list are allowed
C. Receptions, gifts, and membership dues.
D. Lobbying any branch of state government.
E. Administration of the project in excess of 10% of the award.

F. Project operating costs incurred before the applicant and Volunteer Florida execute the grant agreement.
G. Business entertainment expenses, including meals or activity fees.
H. Board members or staff of the Commission or Foundation may not receive direct financial benefit from any grant funds, e.g. travel, lodging, or conference cost reimbursements.

Are matching funds required?

Grant applications for amounts above $100,000 must identify matching funds equal to the Fund amount requested. Matching funds shall be consistent with the Fund's stated allowable expenses and may include cash equivalents, in-kind contributions and volunteer labor cost equivalents. In-kind donations applied towards satisfaction of a matching contribution requirement must be identified and approved by the Foundation's Executive Director or designee.

Is there a limit on the amount of funds or number of projects that may be requested?

The maximum grant award shall be $2,000,000. The Fund's balance and the merit of the application will have a bearing on the award amounts. The award amounts may be less, but not more than, the request made.

How is Volunteer Florida evaluating and prioritizing projects?

Each complete application shall be evaluated and acted upon in a multi-stage process balancing timeliness with fiduciary responsibilities. Stage 1 involves staff review and preparation. Stage 2 involves evaluation by members of the Foundation's Advisory Committee who will score and forward qualifying applications for aggregation and review. Final determination of award recipients and award amounts will be made by the Foundation's Executive Committee with exceptions made for Expedited Applications.

What qualifies as an Expedited Application?

Response and recovery needs experienced by communities impacted by disaster often present time horizons too short for a formal grant application and review process. To accommodate those situations in which timing is paramount, particularly in the case of restoring safety and basic needs, the Foundation's Executive Director is authorized to approve requests in the amount of $100,000 or less with corresponding checks and balances to ensure transparency and accountability. Requests must be made using the Foundation's portal and online application.

Are multiple applications by the same organization permitted?

Organizations with delinquent paperwork corresponding to a previous award may not submit a new application until the current project is officially closed by the Foundation. Initiating multiple concurrent applications is prohibited, unless the applications are for different designated disasters. A

qualifying organization with an active project may submit a subsequent application for the same disaster if the active award is at least 75% complete and in good standing. Entities applying for $100,000 or less under expedited processing provisions may submit a second application concurrently. No entity may submit two applications under expedited processing.

Are administrative fees applied to grants?

A charge of three (3) percent but no more than $30,000 shall be withheld from each grant disbursement and retained by the Foundation to offset for administrative costs.

How is funding disbursement handled?

Funds are provided on a cost-reimbursement basis unless otherwise stipulated by contract. Grantees will receive payment only after expenditures are made, standard proofs of payment submitted and deemed allowable and within the approved budget.

What are typical tracking and reporting requirements?

Grantee shall submit periodic reports, typically on a quarterly basis, in accordance with the reporting schedule provided in the award notification or contract covering both the substance of activities related to the project and financial details of how grant funds have been expended. Expenses must be documented for reimbursement using standard proofs of payment unless otherwise stipulated by contract. Matching funds shall be documented by standard proofs of payment or accounting of in-kind contributions. Such reports should also include copies of all press releases, public announcements, or any other materials related to the project. Reports must demonstrate meaningful progress towards project goals. If meaningful progress has not been made, the report shall explain all substantive variances from expected progress along with an action plan for reaching the application's stated goals.

Grantee is responsible for reporting any material changes in the program/project as described in the application for funding. Changes in purpose, funding from other sources used as match, timeframe of program, contractual relationships with other agencies material to the delivery of the funded project, budget, or other items impacting program delivery shall require review and approval by the Foundation's Executive Committee.

Grantee shall maintain complete and accurate accounting records, consistent with generally accepted accounting practices, and copies of any reports submitted to the Foundation. Grantee shall retain such records and reports for a period of five (5) years after grant funds have been fully spent. The Foundation may examine Grantee's financial records and accounting procedures at any time.

Can a grant be terminated during the project's implementation?

The Foundation reserves the right to terminate grants if: (a) the Foundation is not reasonably satisfied with progress towards grant milestones; (b) there is a change in tax status or financial solvency; (c) a change in organizational structure/control is deemed an insurmountable threat the project's success; (d)

Grantee has made any misrepresentations about the organization or the program; or (e) Grantee is deemed in any way to have misappropriated grant funds.

Allocated funds shall not extend beyond the designated grant period unless permission is granted in writing from the Foundation Executive Director. Funds not accounted for with proper documentation shall be returned. Reserved funds shall be reverted if the Foundation elects to terminate the grant.

Whom can I contact during the application process to discuss a project or application?

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