

## **FLORIDA DISASTER FUND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

### **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 and the Foundation receive 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 the designated service 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.

All previous grant recipients are eligible to apply for the 2020 grant cycle if they have completed all close out paperwork on any previous grant and are in good standing with Volunteer Florida.

Current grant recipients may submit an application if they have expended at least 75% of their funds in their current grant award prior to the application deadline on March 27, 2020. Those who have not reached the 75% level by the application deadline are **NOT** eligible to apply.

### **Can I use a "Fiscal Agent" if I do not qualify as an eligible organization on my own?**

Yes. However, the fiscal agent must qualify on their own and must be identified in the application. Fiscal agents are responsible for the execution of the grant and must agree to accept donations on behalf of the applicant who is not an IRS tax exempt organization.

### **If I am a current Florida Disaster Fund grantee, can I act as a fiscal agent for another group?**

Yes. However, groups who are applying with the assistance of a fiscal agent must have funds available to support their efforts beyond the Volunteer Florida Foundation funds.

### **When are applications due?**

The window for submitting applications begins at 9:00 am Eastern Time on Monday, March 9, 2020 and will close at 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time on Friday, March 27, 2020. Subsequent application cycles may occur until 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: Click here to download the Agreement and Certification Form. 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. If your organization has a Board of Directors, include list of board members.
5. Most Recent Fiscal Year Budget.
6. Financial Statements (audited, if available) to include:
  - a. Copy of latest Audit including:
    - i. Balance Sheet, Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Cash Flows
    - ii. Most recent management letter and/or reports on internal controls
    - iii. If an Audit is not available, provide prior two years of fiscal year-end financial statements.
7. W9
8. Most recent 990

### **What are typical funding priorities?**

Volunteer Florida prefers to fund 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 or federal disaster recovery funds. Stronger applications will demonstrate integration of volunteers. Volunteer Florida expects projects to be initiated within 30 days of contracting and to be completed or demonstrate measurable impact within the first 12 months.

### **What types of expenses are not 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 in concert with applicable contractual 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 will provide funds on a cost-reimbursement basis.

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) 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:

- Purchase of food or alcohol;
- Equipment, furniture, or fixtures not listed in the approved budget;
- Receptions, gifts, and membership dues;
- Lobbying fees for any branch of state government;
- Administration cost in excess of 10% of the award;

- Project operating costs incurred before the applicant and Volunteer Florida Foundation execute the grant agreement;
- Business entertainment expenses, including meals or activity fees;
- Direct financial benefit for Board members, staff of Volunteer Florida, or Volunteer Florida Foundation from any grant funds, e.g. travel, lodging, or conference cost reimbursements.

### **Are matching funds required?**

Yes. A match requirement of 50% of the total award must be documented and explained in the budget narrative of your application and included in the budget provided with your application. 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. Match documentation such as proof of payment (canceled checks, bank statement, etc.), time cards, or other documentation is required when submitting monthly invoices if it was completed in that reporting period.

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

Yes. The minimum amount that may be requested for this grant is \$100,000 and the maximum grant request shall not exceed \$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. Applications should show what can be accomplished if less than the maximum award is approved.

### **Is an advance available?**

Yes. An organization may request an advance of not more than 30% of the total award. If an advance is desired, the request will be completed during the Budget Review and Approval phase. Once an advance is approved, no additional funds will be dispersed against monthly invoices until the entire advance is exhausted.

### **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 made by the Foundation's Executive Committee / Foundation Board.

### **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 previous 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.

### **How is funding disbursement handled?**

Funds are provided on a cost-reimbursement basis. 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 a quarterly report 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. 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.

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 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 to 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 using the contract amendment form attached to the original contract in executed and signed by the Foundation Executive Director. Advances or other funds not accounted for with proper documentation shall be returned by the Grantee to Volunteer Florida. Funds shall be reverted if the Foundation elects to terminate the grant.

### **Who can I contact during the application process to discuss a project or application?**

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