



# Volunteer Generation Fund

## VOLUNTEER GENERATION FUND

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Request for Proposals

**Request for Proposals:** Volunteer Generation Fund FY 2023-2024

**Due:** Friday, August 11, 2023, by 5:00pm EDT

Proposals must be submitted to Volunteer Florida through the Blackbaud Grantmaking online portal no later than Friday, August 11, 2023, at 5:00pm EDT. **Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered for funding.** Volunteer Florida does not require organizations to submit a notice of intent to respond. Award of all sub-grantee funding as described herein is contingent upon the award by AmeriCorps of the full amount of Volunteer Generation Fund program funding requested by Volunteer Florida. For the 2023-2024 contract year, match is required. Please see below for the further details regarding match.

### 1. **Background**

Volunteer Florida is the Governor's lead agency for volunteerism and national service in Florida, administering more than \$22 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](http://www.volunteerflorida.org).

### 2. **Grant Period**

Volunteer Generation Fund proposals must be submitted to Volunteer Florida in the Blackbaud Grantmaking online portal by Friday, August 11, 2023, at 5:00pm EDT. The grant period is a twelve-month period, beginning October 1, 2023, and ending September 30, 2024. Volunteer Florida reserves the right to allocate funds based on internal programmatic and fiscal review and availability of funding. The contract period will be effective from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024.

### 3. **Grant Overview**

Volunteer Florida administers the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF), an initiative of AmeriCorps that focuses investment on volunteer management practices that increase volunteer recruitment and retention. Volunteer Florida seeks to support local organizations to increase their capacity to recruit, manage, support, and retain skills-based volunteers to serve in high-value volunteer assignments.

In anticipation of federal funding for the VGF program for FY 2023- 2024, Volunteer Florida will make available up to \$512,000 for an estimated twenty-five (25) organizations serving the needs of Floridians. New applicant organizations and organizations in their second year of funding will be eligible to receive \$20,000 in grant funding. Organizations entering their third year of VGF funding will be eligible to receive \$24,000 in grant funding. All subgrantees will receive additional training support associated with the VGF program.

Subgrants will be awarded only in the amounts listed. New organizations, organizations entering their second year, and organizations entering their third year of funding should request \$20,000 or \$24,000, respectively.

Volunteer Florida's VGF program will provide sub grants to an estimate of twenty-five (25) organizations serving the needs of Floridians, and will also provide each organization with relevant, comprehensive training with an emphasis on increasing the number of skills-based volunteers, service hours, and types of activities. Funding will strengthen the capacity of volunteer organizations to identify resources, challenges, and areas of need. Subgrantees will receive comprehensive training, funding for program enhancements and ongoing technical assistance, and coaching to establish or strengthen a skills-based volunteer program.

#### **4. Eligibility**

Eligible entities must be public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; governmental entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; or Indian Tribes. The FY 2023-2024 VGF program is intended to build capacity that will result in sustainable skills-based volunteer programs.

- A. Eligible entities must mobilize people and resources to deliver creative solutions to community problems through programs and services that encompass the following:
  - 1. Recognize that all volunteers have skills and talents to share;
  - 2. Connect people with opportunities to serve;
  - 3. Promote volunteering at all levels and ages; and
  - 4. Build or establish partnerships and collaboration among organizations in the community.
  
- B. The Volunteer Generation Fund cannot be used as an expansion of existing federally funded national service programs such as AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Senior.
  
- C. Organizations receiving VGF program funds for more than three (3) years are not eligible for FY 2023-2024 VGF funding.
  
- D. Organizations receiving the following Volunteer Florida grants are not eligible for the FY 2023-2024 VGF funding: AmeriCorps, Florida Disaster Fund and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

## 5. Funding Priorities

Volunteer Florida is soliciting proposals from Florida organizations that use volunteers to provide services in the following six (6) AmeriCorps priority areas: 1) Disaster Services, 2) Economic Opportunity, 3) Education, 4) Environmental Stewardship, 5) Healthy Futures, 6) Veterans and Military Families.

- A. Proposals including one of the priority areas listed below will receive a three (3) point scoring priority.
  1. Rural Communities - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
  2. National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) – organizations that expand, launch or improve high impact tutoring or mentoring, aligned with in or out of school time.
  3. United We Serve – organizations aligned with the A Nation of Bridgebuilders initiative (i.e. Team Up).
- B. To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes, and must include a high-quality program design. Applicants priority consideration does not guarantee funding.
- C. Organizations including priority areas are not required to have a prescribed number of skills-based volunteers recruited or hours served for those service areas. Volunteers recruited for the priority area programs can be a subset of overall volunteers recruited.
- D. Volunteer Florida will encourage geographic diversity by actively seeking proposals from all ten (10) regions of the state, as defined by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. <https://www.volunteerflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FLDEM-Regions-Map-July2023.pdf>

## 6. Fatal Criteria

Proposals will not be reviewed for funding unless ALL of the following criteria are met:

- The proposal is submitted in the Blackbaud Grantmaking online portal and received by Volunteer Florida no later than **Friday, August 11, 2023, by 5:00pm EDT**. Note: Proposals will not be accepted via email or hard copy.

- The proposal includes all of the following performance measures:
  1. 400 skills-based volunteers recruited
  2. 3,000 hours served by skills-based volunteers
  3. Participation in a pre-/post-test assessment measuring organizational implementation of effective volunteer management practices.
- The proposal requests the allowable sub grant amount of \$20,000 (new or second year application) or \$24,000 (third year application.)
- The proposal is inclusive of the Volunteer Florida budget template.
- The proposal provides 100% match of \$20,000 (new or second year application) or \$24,000 (third year application.)

## 7. Funding Criteria

### A. Skills-based Volunteering

Skills-based volunteering focuses on leveraging the direct professional expertise of volunteers to deliver professional services at a caliber an organization would otherwise have to pay for on the market.

Taproot Foundation “Understanding the Spectrum of Skills-Based Volunteering”  
<https://taprootfoundation.org/understanding-spectrum-skills-based-volunteering/>

There are many types of skills-based volunteering, including but not limited to: tutoring, mentoring, job skill training, board placement, IT assistance, marketing support, and event coordination.

### B. Volunteer Management Practices

Successful subgrantees will effectively engage and track skills-based volunteers and increase organizational volunteer management practices during the grant year. Each management practice should support at least one of the functions for effectively managing volunteers as defined in the report “Volunteering Reinvented: Human Capital Solutions for the Nonprofit Sector” listed below.

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

Source: AmeriCorps, 2007, page 4.

<https://search.issuelab.org/resource/volunteering-reinvented-human-capital-solutions-for-the-nonprofit-sector.html>

## 8. Performance Measures

Successful applicants MUST opt in to the following performance measures:

- A. Number of skills-based volunteers recruited by organizations or participants: Target 400
- B. Number of hours skills-based volunteers will serve: Target 3,000
- C. A pre-/post-test assessment measuring organizational implementation of effective volunteer management practices.

**Note:** Successful subgrantees will track number of volunteers and hours served and report to Volunteer Florida the following volunteer demographics as applicable: name; relevant demographic information, including location of residence (city), method of recruitment, participation in orientation and/or training activities, planned and actual role; assignment(s) or activities; start and end dates of service.

## 9. Budget

Funds awarded to subgrantees are intended to be used for capacity building activities to develop or strengthen skills-based volunteer programs. Grants will be cost reimbursement only, where costs are reimbursed once they are paid. Subgrantees will submit monthly invoices for costs paid in that month and will be required to supply supporting documentation for all costs such as but not limited to timesheets, payroll documentation, invoices, and proof of payments. The same documentation will also be required to document the match.

Applicants may include the following budget categories only:

- A. Personnel Salaries and Fringe Benefit Expenses – Funds may be used to hire new personnel or support existing personnel for up to two (2) personnel positions to develop or augment a skills-based volunteer program (capacity building).
  1. Employer paid fringe benefits can include: FICA (Social Security and Medicare), health insurance, workers compensation, retirement, life insurance, dental insurance, and unemployment.

- B. Travel – Applicants **MUST** budget for and include estimated travel costs in their budget to represent the travel expenses associated with attending the Annual VGF Training for 2 staff members (1 Program Staff and 1 Finance Staff) in Orlando). Half (50%) of the total travel costs should be budgeted in the VGF Reimbursable Share and the other half (50%) must be included as subgrantee Match Share. Travel expenses to be included are Lodging (not to exceed \$225 per night), per diem (not to exceed \$36 per day), transportation cost (rental car, airfare if most cost efficient and approved by VF), fuel (fuel for rental car), parking and tolls.
- C. Database Software – Funds may be used for software which is directly related to the recruitment, support, management, and retention of skills-based volunteers and tracking volunteer demographics and activities (capacity building through infrastructure).
1. These funds do not include the purchase of computers, tablets, or other equipment to implement database software.

All applicants are required to submit their most recent audit report including the Management Letter and the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs, if applicable. Organizations without an audit, will need to upload the Statements of Financial Position (Balance Sheet and Income Statement), and Statements of Revenues and Expenditures for your last two fiscal years.

Grantees are required to provide a 100% in-kind and/or cash match of \$20,000 (new or second year applications) or \$24,000 (third year applications) and must list the funding sources in the budget narrative.

The budget should use the approved Volunteer Florida budget template found on Volunteer Florida's website: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants/availablegrants/>

## 10. **Technical Assistance and Training**

The VGF subgrantees (one program and one finance staff member) will be required to attend a comprehensive training to establish or strengthen a skills-based volunteer program. In addition, subgrantees will receive ongoing technical assistance and coaching. The Volunteer Generation Fund sub grantee training is anticipated to be in person during the week of November 14-16, 2023.

## 11. **Reporting**

Successful subgrantees will report to Volunteer Florida on Volunteer Generation Fund Performance Measures as specified herein, including number of volunteers engaged, hours served, volunteer demographics, and the increase of organizational effective volunteer management practices.

**12. Background Checks**

Successful subgrantees will be required to complete an online training through AmeriCorps to appropriately handle all background checks.

Subgrantees are required to comply with the AmeriCorps's Criminal History Check Rule. The requirement applies to Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grantee staff who are considered "covered" under the NSCHC definitions (grantee or match share). All grantee staff that are covered individuals will have their background checks initiated on or before their first day of work. In general, this includes a National Sex Offender Registry check, State of Residency and a FBI fingerprint based check. Volunteer Florida will be responsible for initiating, completing and considering all checks through TrueScreen and Fieldprint.

Source National Service Criminal History Check (AmeriCorps Requirements)

<https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>

**13. Technical Assistance**

Volunteer Florida will host a technical assistance conference call for the Volunteer Generation Fund FY 2023-2024 funding opportunity. The technical assistant call is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 11, 2023, from 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT via GoToMeetings.**

Please register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6705464452580687707>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

To ensure that this funding process is carried out in a fair and equitable manner, all questions should be submitted to [VGF@volunteerflorida.org](mailto:VGF@volunteerflorida.org).

**14. Timeline**

Application opens – June 26, 2023

Application technical assistance call – July 11, 2023 - 1:00 PM

Application due to Volunteer Florida – August 11, 2023

Internal programmatic and budget review – Aug 14, 2023-August 25, 2023

Clarification provided to applicants – September 5, 2023

Final applications/budgets with clarification changes due to Volunteer Florida – September 19, 2023

Contracts provided to successful applicants – September 29, 2023

Volunteer Florida VGF contract overview conference call – October 6, 2023

Letters to applicants not receiving funding (as applicable) – October 31, 2023



Volunteer Generation Fund Training - required for sub grantees – November 14-16, 2023 (anticipated)

## 15. Resources

AmeriCorps Focus Areas: <https://americorps.gov/about/what-we-do>

AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund: <https://americorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/volunteer-generation-fund>

Volunteer Florida Available Grants:

<http://www.volunteerflorida.org/grants/availablegrants/> (Location for proposal information)

## 16. Scoring Criteria

Cover Sheet & Project Demographics (5 points)

- The proposal includes a complete and accurate cover sheet and project demographics.
- The proposal clearly indicates the primary area(s) of volunteer engagement related to the six (6) AmeriCorps priority areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, or veterans and military families.

Executive Summary (0 points)

The proposal should provide a brief overview of the organization and the applicant's project. Please use the following template:

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have 400 volunteers, contributing 3,000 hours who will [service activities the volunteers will be doing] in [the locations where the volunteers will serve]. In addition, [list one or more types of volunteer management practices] will be improved. Examples of anticipated improvements include: [list anticipated improvements]. At the end of the contract year, the volunteers will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project].

Notice Priority (3 points)

The proposal will describe its special consideration (if applicable).

- Rural Communities - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.

- National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) – organizations that expand, launch or improve high impact tutoring or mentoring, aligned with in or out of school time.
  - United We Serve – organizations aligned with the A Nation of Bridgebuilders initiative (i.e. Team Up).

#### Executive Narrative (40 points)

Scoring (20 returning applicants/40 new applicants)

- The proposal clearly describes the community problem/need.
- The proposal describes its existing volunteer program and how skills-based volunteers will be engaged or expanded.
- The proposal clearly describes the proposed roles of skills-based volunteers in addressing the community problem/need.
- The proposal clearly describes how skills-based volunteers will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- The proposal will describe a key area of service in one of the following AmeriCorps priority areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, or Veterans and Military Families.
- The proposal discusses use of new technology that will improve overall organizational productivity, efficiency, or service to its volunteer or volunteer programs (if applicable per the budget).

#### Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees Only

Scoring (20 points for returning applicants/ 0 new applicants)

Current or former subgrantees are eligible for up to 15 points through the narrative. Volunteer Florida will be providing a pass/fail of 5 points based on performance of programmatic and financial compliance of previous grant. Any applicant that has received VGF funding for the same project in any of the past three (3) years must address this criteria.

- The proposal describes the impact of previous Volunteer Generation Funding award.
- The proposal clearly describes any areas of financial weakness/risk identified during the previous year(s) of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.
- The proposal clearly describes any areas of organizational weakness/risk identified during the previous year(s) of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.
- The proposal clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the previous year(s) of program operations.

Pass/Fail- to receive a pass and the 5 points, the following will be necessary: 70% of funds spent by August 1, 2023, 60% of PER invoices submitted on time, and timely submission of mandatory documents: Exhibit IX: Required Trainings, pre-test, and mid-year report.

#### Organizational Capacity (10 points)

- The proposal clearly describes how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
- The proposal clearly explains the organization's infrastructure and experience managing grants.
- The proposal clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its volunteer program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The proposal clearly describes how the organization will comply with federal and state rules and regulations, including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities.

#### Performance Measures (10 points)

- The proposal opts in to the required Performance Measures and Targets.  
Applicants may increase the Targets:
  - Number of community volunteers recruited by organizations or participants.  
Target: 400
  - Number of hours community volunteers will serve. Target: 3,000
- Applicant will participate in a pre-/post-test assessment measuring organizational implementation of effective volunteer management practices.
- The proposal describes how the Performance Measure targets will be met and tracked.
- The proposal describes the equipment or software which is directly related to the recruitment, support, management, and retention of skills-based volunteers and tracking volunteer demographics and activities.

#### Budget Narrative (15 points)

- The budget narrative describes the different types of grants (local, state, or federal) the organization has received and managed.
- The budget narrative is detailed and provides a full explanation of associated costs, including their purpose, justification, and the basis for the calculations.
- The budget narrative calculations are presented in an equation format, identifying the number of persons involved, cost per unit, etc. All costs should be listed separately or individually.

- The budget narrative includes a 100% match and clearly explains the source of funds, the type of contribution (cash or in-kind), the amount, and the intended purpose of the match.
- The budget narrative provides the organization's current budget, percentage of the budget this grant would represent, and how it will comply with fiscal compliance oversight.

#### Budget (15 points)

- The proposal includes an approved Volunteer Florida budget template.
- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- The Budget includes the required 100% match.
- The Budget contains only allowable expenses in the budget categories listed and meets both federal and State of Florida cost allowance guidelines.

#### Audit (5 points)

- 5 points – Audit for the most recent previous fiscal year with:
  - An unmodified audit opinion;
  - No material weaknesses;
  - No material litigation;
  - No material negative subsequent events and;
  - No ongoing concern.
- 3 points – Audit that is:
  - Two fiscal years old or
  - That has one material weakness.
- 1 point – Internally prepared financial statements (Balance Sheet and Income Statement) for
  - The applicant's most recent previous fiscal year;
  - Must be deemed acceptable by Volunteer Florida's finance department.
- Applicant will not be funded if the following financial status exists:
  - A current audit with:
    - Two or more material weakness;
    - Material litigation;
    - Material negative subsequent events;
    - An adverse opinion;
    - A disclaimer of opinion.
  - An audit that is more than two fiscal years old or;
  - The applicant cannot produce internal financial statements for their most recent previous fiscal year; that are deemed acceptable by Volunteer Florida's finance department.

17. **Proposal Submission**

- A. Complete the steps outlined in this section to submit the Volunteer Generation Fund proposal via Blackbaud Grantmaking online portal. Proposals are submitted through the Blackbaud Grantmaking electronic application system.

Application Link: [https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_2153?SA=SNA&FID=35613](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_2153?SA=SNA&FID=35613)

- B. To return to an 'In Progress Application' or view a previously 'submitted application', use this link: [www.GrantRequest.com/SID\\_2153?SA=AM](http://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_2153?SA=AM)
- C. Log in to the grants management system by either using an existing username and password or by creating a new username and password.

Existing subgrantees - Insert your previously created username and password, then select 'Login.'

New entities - Select "New Applicant?" insert e-mail, create password (must contain at least 5 characters, with both letters and numbers), and then select continue.

- D. Once the username is created, the user will be prompted to log in and enter the organization's Tax Identification Number. The three (3) eligibility questions must be answered.

- E. The user must enter the following information:

- 1. Cover Sheet
  - a. Organization Name
  - b. Tax ID
  - c. Application Type
  - d. Florida Region
  - e. Address
  - f. Phone
  - g. Website
  - h. CEO name, title, e-mail, and phone number
  - i. Name, title, e-mail, and phone number of the person submitting the proposal
  - j. Name, title, e-mail, and phone number of fiscal contact

2. Project Demographics
  - a. Project Title
  - b. Cities and Counties Served
  - c. VGF Primary Focus Area
  - d. Notice Priority (if applicable)
  
3. Proposal Narrative and Organizational Capacity
  - a. Complete the Executive Summary, Notice Priority (if applicable), Executive Narrative, Past Performance (if applicable), and Organizational Capacity.
  
4. Performance Measures
  - a. Check all three (3) performance measures.
  - b. Describe how the performance measures will be met.
  
5. Budget and Budget Narrative
  - a. Name the completed budget document (e.g. AgencyABC\_vgf\_budget) and upload it to the Blackbaud Grantmaking system
  - b. Name and upload most recent audit report including the management letter and the schedule of findings and questioned costs.
  - c. Complete Budget Narrative
  
6. Submission
  - a. Check the box agreeing with the background statement.
  - b. Check the box agreeing with the certification of content statement.
  - c. Insert electronic signature and date.
  - d. Select "Review and Submit".
  
7. Review My Applications
  - a. Review the Volunteer Generation Fund proposal.
  - b. Correct any problem(s) indicated in red then select "Update".
  - c. Once completed, select "Submit" to submit the proposal for funding consideration.
  - d. If the proposal is not ready for submission select "Save & Finish Later".
  
- F. Once the proposal is submitted, the user will receive an automated e-mail from Volunteer Florida with a copy of the submission and a tracking number. If no

tracking number is received, the proposal was not submitted and the user should follow the above listed steps to submit.