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Executive Summary

The Volunteer Louisiana Commission in the Office of the Lt. Governor envisions a future where the people of Louisiana are inspired to serve and are actively engaged in improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens. Building on the success of previous Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) initiatives, Volunteer Louisiana will expand partnerships and collaborations to increase volunteer engagement throughout Louisiana, especially in underserved rural parishes. In the next phase of our statewide "All We Need Is U" marketing campaign, Volunteer Louisiana's new Volunteer Management System (VMS) will be branded and promoted as a one-stop shop for connecting our volunteers and volunteer seekers across the state. Volunteer Louisiana will offer training and technical assistance for the VMS, along with targeted volunteer management trainings to build the capacity of local nonprofits. Volunteer Louisiana will also make subgrants available to support high quality service projects that utilize best practices, particularly in rural areas. The 2014 VGF will support the recruitment of 10,000 unique volunteers, over 25,000 hours of direct services, 15-25 community-based projects, and the implementation of volunteer management best practices for at least 40 organizations. \$121,000 of federal funds will be matched with \$123,781 of state and local funds.

Program Design

While national service has a strong and vibrant presence in Louisiana, the level of volunteer engagement across the state lags behind the rest of the country. According to the most recent (2012) "Volunteering and Civic Life in America" research report issued by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference on Citizenship, Louisiana ranks dead last, 51st among the 50 states and Washington, DC, in the percentage of residents who volunteer (20.4%). A statewide 2013 study by the LSU Public Policy Research Lab showed a higher level of volunteerism in Louisiana (36.7%), but one that represented a 25% decrease from the previous year. The LSU study also showed a significant gap between rural and urban volunteer engagement. The volunteer rate in rural communities was lower than 7 of the 8 metro areas surveyed, and nearly 50% less than the metro area with the highest level of participation. The need to increase volunteerism across Louisiana is clear.

To better understand the challenges in our state, Volunteer Louisiana conducted a series of 10 regional Listening Sessions in 2012. The sessions engaged over 250 individuals and non-profit stakeholders in town-hall style meetings to assess needs within the volunteer sector. Participants identified 4 key

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needs of volunteers and service organizations; 1) greater communication between the state and communities and between nonprofits within communities, 2) comprehensive state messaging about volunteerism and where to find opportunities, and 3) professional and resource development for nonprofits and faith-based organizations. These findings formed the basis of our 2013-2015 State Service Plan and inform our strategies for this 2014 VGF proposal.

Volunteer Louisiana will use a multipronged approach to increase volunteerism and help nonprofits build their capacity to offer quality volunteer opportunities. First, the Volunteer Louisiana Commission will strengthen relationships with volunteer connector agencies throughout the state. Volunteer connector agencies are any nonprofit or government agency that helps connect volunteers and volunteer opportunities. In previous grant cycles, we built relationships primarily with large connector agencies (United Way Volunteer Centers and HandsOn affiliates) located in 7 of Louisiana's 8 largest metropolitan regions. These agencies served as points of contact to promote volunteer opportunities, recruit and manage volunteers, and subgrant funds for service projects. We also worked with these agencies to develop and coordinate the Louisiana Association of Volunteer Center Directors (LAVCD). LAVCD conducts quarterly meetings to provide training and networking opportunities, promotion of service opportunities, and partnerships for multi-location projects. This strategy has been successful, and we look to build on that momentum to boost volunteer rates in each of our metropolitan areas.

What the LSU study makes clear, however, is that our strategy is not as successful in reaching rural communities. Most of the connector agencies in our network do have a multi-parish reach, but there are 24 rural parishes that are completely outside the coverage area of any agency. For 2014-15, our first priority will be to identify volunteer connectors in each of those 24 parishes to make sure that opportunities and resources are accessible in every corner of the state. This will require us to expand our network of connector agencies to include non-traditional entities such as police juries, mayor and sheriffs offices, schools, churches, and other faith-based organizations. These agencies will be invited to become LAVCD members and participate in all functions, trainings, and communications. We are excited about the opportunity to build these new relationships and broaden the reach of VGF funds into our rural parishes.

The second prong of our approach will be to renew the Commission's statewide "All We Need Is U"

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volunteerism marketing campaign, with a particular emphasis on our new HandsOn Connect volunteer management system (VMS) and redesigned website that will launch in late summer 2014. This component has been a long time coming. Funding for the HandsOn Connect VMS was included in our original 2010 VGF proposal, but a series of internal (state of Louisiana) bid and contract issues caused multiple delays in the approval process. We were awarded a no-cost extension for the 2010-12 VGF grant period to account for these circumstances, and the final contract was approved in May 2014.

When it launches, our VMS will build capacity for Volunteer Louisiana and all its partner organizations by offering volunteer registration, registration of non-profit organizations, promotion of volunteer opportunities, and volunteer screening and matching. Beyond direct registration, the HandsOn Connect VMS also has an aggregator tool that can pull volunteer opportunities in Louisiana from multiple online sources. This will allow us to brand volunteerlouisiana.gov to the general public, connectors, and other non-profit agencies as Louisiana's one-stop shop for volunteers and volunteer seekers. This will be a tremendous benefit to the entire volunteer sector, especially for small or rural-based non-profits that do not have the resources to support their own volunteer management system.

The third prong of our approach is offering training and technical assistance to volunteer connector agencies, national service programs, and non-profit organizations throughout Louisiana. The primary focus of these trainings will be Effective Volunteer Management and Best Practices. First, we will coordinate with our existing partner connector agencies to schedule 6 to 8 "regional" trainings within their coverage areas. These trainings will be offered to all stakeholders in the volunteer and service sectors, and will include an introduction and basic training on the Volunteer Louisiana website and VMS. We will also make these trainings available to and through our identified connectors in the 24 rural parishes. We will offer webinars for those unable to attend regional trainings, or in-person options for connectors with technology limitations. These training will help organizations inventory their current volunteer management activities, learn best practices, and develop an implementation action plan. Technical assistance for the VMS will also be an ongoing activity through personal contact with the Commission as well as access to the online technical workshops provided each Monday, Wednesday (1:00 -- 2:00 pm Central) and Friday (11:00 am -- noon) via the Hands On Network (at <https://pointsoflight.adobeconnect.com/hoc-training>). Any partner may attend, ask questions and get supplemental training support. Priority will be given to "How to" questions on

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basics functionality, but if no other questions are on the floor, staff will be available to tackle support issues as well. No appointment is needed. Additionally, videos demonstrating how to register, post a volunteer event, as well as managing volunteer's registration, service hours, registration for an event and running reports will be available on the Partner and Volunteer Resource pages.

The final prong of our approach will be to offer resources for quality projects. We will subgrant \$50,000 of VGF funds to volunteer connectors and/or local nonprofits who can meet important community needs while implementing best volunteer management practices. Participation in the Effective Volunteer Management and Best Practices training will be a prerequisite for subgrant awards. Awarded projects will be posted through the VMS, and recruited volunteers will register online. Agencies will also be required to implement at least three effective management practices currently unused or underutilized. Reimbursement Requests and Completion Reports will include receipts demonstrating what was expended, the roster of all volunteers managed at the event, a description of the effective management practices implementation and improvements realized during the project. Priority for these awards will be given to organizations from rural parishes.

Timeline:

August/September 2014: Launch VMS and opportunity aggregator box

August 2014 -- September 2015: VMS & Best Practices Training

October 2014-- June 2015: Major expansion of Volunteer Connector Organizations

October 2014 -- September 2015: Sub-grant funding for opportunities

October 2014 -- May 2015: All We Need is U! campaign

Our proposal addresses a key funding priority identified in the Notice of Funding Availability; Capacity Building. We will utilize 2 national performance measures, G3--3.1 (volunteer recruitment) and G3--3.3 (organizations using effective practices). Volunteer recruitment will be measured by the number of volunteers who register through our VMS, or who participate in volunteer opportunities listed on our VMS as measured by attendance sheets. We anticipate recruiting 10,000 unique community volunteers who will provide at least 25,000 hours of service. We will also provide effective volunteer management training to at least 80 organizations throughout the state, and at least 40 will implement at least 3 best practices as a result of the training. This training will be required for subgrant applicants, and made available to any agencies via regional training sessions, one-on-one

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sessions, or webinar. Implementation will be measured by pre-post organizational assessment tools conducted prior to training and again at the close of a project or VGF grant period.

We believe that our approach will be successful for several reasons. We are building on the successful approaches of previous VGF awards, particularly partnering with metro area connectors and subgranting awards for local projects that meet important community needs. Our long awaited VMS will launch by September 5, and the next phase of our All We Need Is U campaign will launch in the fall. The cross promotion of volunteerism generally and our Volunteer Louisiana website as a one-stop volunteer connection shop should generate widespread interest and measurable results. The Volunteer Management and Best Practices trainings will improve the volunteer experience and volunteer retention, and our targeted outreach will help bridge the gap between urban and rural parishes in awareness, opportunity, and participation. The CNCS investment of VGF funds will engage Louisianians in meaningful service and help lift our state from the bottom of national volunteerism rankings.

Organizational Capability

Volunteer Louisiana has the experience and organizational capacity to successfully manage a 2014 VGF grant. In 1993, Volunteer Louisiana was established in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to rekindle the spirit of service and citizenship among the citizens of Louisiana. Over the last 21 years, the Commission has met community needs, responded to multiple natural disasters, and successfully managed over \$59 million in CNCS grants. Our 2014 AmeriCorps State portfolio includes 13 AmeriCorps subgrantees and \$3.8 million in federal grant funds. The Volunteer Louisiana Commission has been awarded two previous Volunteer Generation Fund Grants (2010-2012 VGF and 2013 VGF) that have recruited volunteers, trained volunteer leaders, engaged community stakeholders, and supported community projects and national days of service. Volunteer Louisiana has also managed Learn & Serve grants, PDAT, and Disability grants as well.

The Volunteer Louisiana Commission is in the final year of its 4 year strategic plan and in year two of a 3 year state service plan. We track outcomes that can be viewed by the public at <https://wwwprd.doa.louisiana.gov/lapas/view/viewframe.cfm?tab=obj>. Volunteer Louisiana currently tracks: registered volunteers, number of registered volunteer organizations, number of registered volunteer opportunities, and number of in-state spontaneous volunteers. The Commission continues to strengthen strategic alliances with statewide and national groups that offer expertise,

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resources and/or funding in support of national service and volunteerism in Louisiana. Our active partners with which we regularly meet and collaborate are: *Louisiana State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service *National Civilian Community Corps--Vicksburg Campus *Louisiana Department of Education *Louisiana Association of Volunteer Center Directors (LAVCD) *Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LAVOAD) *Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO) *Louisiana Office of Community Development *Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) *Louisiana Civic Education Commission *Encore Louisiana Commission *Points of Light Institute/HandsOn Network * and DOVIA New Orleans.

The Volunteer Louisiana Commission is led by a committed group of 17 Commissioners who bring expertise and vision from across the state. The staff of four is led by new Executive Director Judd Jeansonne, who came to the Commission in April of 2014. He is responsible for the oversight and management of all Commission programs, including AmeriCorps*State programs and volunteer outreach initiatives. Judd brings 12 years in national service to the Commission as Program Director of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette AmeriCorps program from 2002-2014. There he recruited, trained, and supervised over 400 AmeriCorps members and successfully managed over \$1.9 million in CNCS funds. UL Lafayette AmeriCorps was a national finalist for the 2013 Innovation and Leadership Award from Association of State Commissions, and was named UL's Outstanding Student Organization of the Year in 2011 and 2013. He served as the volunteer manager for the University POD for Mass Prophylaxis and helped create and manage the community service requirement for first year students. Judd received his B.A from Louisiana State University, attended UT Austin for the Ph.D. program in Government, and has taught Political Science and Public Policy courses for 8 years at LSU and UL Lafayette.

Nicholas Auck is the Director of Volunteer Outreach and has the chief responsibility for the state's volunteer effort and works with the volunteer connector organizations regularly. Nick previously served as Exercise Officer and Voluntary Agency Liaison in the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP). He has also worked in the Governor's Office of Rural Development as a Field Coordinator where he managed \$6.5 million annually in grants to local governments for more than one third of the state. During his time at GOHSEP, he served as program manager for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and Citizen Corps including all coordination with the Department of Homeland Security for preparing the grant application,

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processing award documentation, developing the subgrantee RFP, processing applications and award documentation, and monitoring subgrantees. Previously, he has conducted and managed the State Citizen Corps training program, facilitated the State Citizen Corps Council and organized the State Citizen Corps Conference and Statewide Training Rodeo.

Volunteer Louisiana has two decades of experience managing CNCS grants and maintaining compliance with federal requirements. The Commission has a dedicated Fiscal Officer, Jawonna Mason, who works with the state's Office of Management and Finance to ensure that grants are administered properly, compliant with OMB circulars, and that reporting deadlines are met. She is responsible for all FFR's and oversees all program expense reimbursement (PER) requests to ensure that they meet the criteria for reimbursement. Our AmeriCorps Program Officer, Stephanie Trahan, monitors compliance for all of our AmeriCorps state programs and will do the same for all of our VGF grant related activity, particularly for subgrantees.

Our current operational budget is \$518,779; \$250,453 from our Commission Administrative Grant and \$268,326 from state general funds. Our request of \$121,000 would represent approximately 19% of our total budget. Currently, the Volunteer Louisiana Commission has two Volunteer Generation Grants open, 2010-2012 VGF and 2013 VGF. From the 2010-2013 VGF project, there were three performance measures, providing a Volunteer Management System (VMS) for the promotion of opportunities and registering of volunteers, training 325 Volunteer Leaders over the life of the grant and building 35 partnerships between local governments and nonprofits. Prior to the one year no-cost extension, 403 Volunteer Leaders were trained and 19 partnerships were created. While the VMS contracting process delayed its rollout, it will go live in July 2014. During the one year extension, additional Volunteer Leaders were trained and 39 partnerships have been formed. For the 2010-2012 VGF project, all program objectives were surpassed. The 2013 VGF project is nearing completion and is well on target to achieve our goals of 6,000 volunteers and 4,000 military & military family volunteers with our National Day of Remembrance & Service in September. Currently, we have tracked 4,218 volunteers and 1,856 military/military family volunteers as part of our Global Youth Service day in April. We have also met and surpassed our match requirements for each year of the award.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

The proposed budget is adequate, cost effective, and will support all initiatives in the upcoming grant

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cycle. The \$5,200 allocated for supplies and travel will allow us to meet with volunteer connector agencies across the state and provide the necessary materials to conduct training and technical assistance. \$35,000 in contractual services will allow us to renew our "All We Need Is U" statewide marketing campaign and create a tie in and cross promotion with the Volunteer Louisiana website and the new VMS tool, while the additional \$30,800 will support the second year of licensing fees. The \$50,000 allocated to subgrants will help support 15-25 service projects across the state, with rural areas receiving funding priority. The Director of Volunteer Outreach will dedicate 50% of his time to support the initiatives and activities in this proposal.

Our request of \$106,000 will be matched with \$108,735 of state and local funds. State general funds will provide in-kind match for 50% of the Volunteer Outreach Director salary and fringe, 100% of the criminal background check for that position, and 43% cash match for the statewide marketing campaign. (In addition to smart contracting for best rates in advertising, the Commission will leverage the media buys, as in years past, for additional community service advertisement of volunteer opportunities, volunteer connector information, and support of local initiatives for additional match not captured in the application.) Each awarded subgrantee will identify local sources of cash or in-kind match for their service projects as part of the grant application processes, providing at least \$20,000 in additional support. The Office of Lieutenant Governor will provide \$29,327 through its federally approved indirect cost rate.

Volunteer Louisiana has approximately \$69,000 remaining from VGF 2010-12 and VGF 2013 grant awards. We have released an RFP with an August 31 application deadline for the final \$35,000 of subgrants. These funds are dedicated to supporting 9/11 Day of Remembrance service projects across the state. With the HandsOn Connect contract finally approved, we anticipate a September 8 launch of the VMS system and our redesigned website. We have approximately \$24,000 remaining for Phase One of our All We Need Is U/VMS media campaign. This will include print materials, billboards, and the creative design for future marketing initiatives, including those supported by the 2014-15 VGF. We expect to spend all remaining (\$69,000) VGF funds by September 30. However, there may be some unexpended funds if actual subgrant expenditures are less than the awarded amounts.

CLARIFICATION RESPONSES

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Personnel Expenses

The Director of Volunteer Outreach is paid 100% by State General Funds. Beginning on October 1, 2014, that salary will be matched 50% to the Commission Support Grant and 50% to the Volunteer Generation Fund project. It will not exceed 100% across all CNCS grants for any period of time.

Programmatic Clarification

In the 2014-15 VGF cycle, Volunteer Louisiana plans to recruit 10,000 unique volunteers. That number includes both episodic and recurring volunteers. However, there are a number of strategies and procedures in place to encourage longer term volunteers.

First, the vast majority of volunteers will be registered through our online Volunteer Management System (VMS). Registered volunteers will identify service preferences and will be notified via email when new opportunities arise within their geographic and interest area. These tailored opportunities will make it easy for volunteers to serve more than just episodically. Second, nonprofit organizations who register their opportunities can search for local registered volunteers and contact them directly about opportunities. Nonprofits can also manage their event-specific volunteers through our system. This will help them identify outstanding volunteers they would like to target and recruit as long-term volunteers in their agency. The VMS also has a reminder capability to remind volunteers and nonprofits to attend events they are registered for, and tracks hours of recurring volunteers for recognition incentives such as the Louisiana Volunteer Service Award (LVSA). (LVSA is an award from the Lieutenant Governor which recognizes persons serving at least 150 hours in a 12 month period.) Finally, our Volunteer Management Training will instruct organizations on best practices and require implementation of those best practices, including volunteer retention. Our goal is to make the volunteer's experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. A positive volunteer experience can turn an episodic volunteer into a recurring one.

Clarification II

\$35,000 is budgeted for the statewide All We Need Is U campaign. The initial campaign was launched in 2012 to promote volunteerism broadly across the state and to create a brand and identity for the Volunteer Louisiana Commission. The new phase will be focused specifically on driving traffic to our

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VMS, both volunteer sand volunteer seekers. The VMS will go live by September 8, and we have contracted with Trumpet Media to use the remaining \$24,000 of 2010-14 VGF funds to do some limited billboard buys, print materials, and the creative design for the early soft launch (September 8) and the full hard launch in late fall. The \$35,000 in the current proposal is targeted for the hard launch. Trumpet has proposed 5 billboards in metropolitan areas with one month runs (\$15,000), print and online ads (\$10,000), and radio ads along with a video PSA (\$10,000). All We Need is U is still the theme, but with a call to action for volunteers and nonprofits to register through the online Volunteer Management System.

Grant Characteristics