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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

On #GivingTuesday, Mayor Bowser Announces Grant Funding for Local Non-Profits to Support Volunteerism in Response to COVID-19

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(WASHINGTON, DC) – Today on #GivingTuesday, Mayor Muriel Bowser and Serve DC, The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism and Partnerships, announced a Request for Proposals for grant funding to help nonprofits effectively recruit, retain, and engage volunteers amidst the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Serve DC will distribute a total of $75,000 in sub-grant awards of up to $7,500 per grantee. The deadline for organizations to apply is May 29, 2020. To view the Request for Proposals and learn more, visit Serve DC.

The 2020 Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) will be awarded to District-based non-profits to directly support organizations with resetting, re-imagining and re-engaging their volunteers, in light of this recent public health emergency and its effects on their service delivery, outreach efforts. This funding will support with the development and sustainability of key strategies, resources and tools, designed to best position community-based organizations to resume volunteer activities and effectively prepare for COVID-19 recovery.

The VGF is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and administered by Serve DC. Serve DC seeks to fund effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retain volunteers, and develop strategies to use volunteers to effectively address District-wide priorities and challenges.

Special funding consideration will be given to eligible organizations and initiatives that specifically recruit, train, and engage volunteers as a strategy to position and prepare vulnerable communities to better recover from emergencies and disasters. The focus areas include mass food distribution, mass shelter, outreach and social services, housing stability and economic security, youth engagement/development, and mental health services, and through the development of various tools and platforms.

This year's VGF grant scope was informed by direct feedback from the nonprofit community, captured by a volunteer assessment survey conducted by Serve DC, to understand the current volunteer engagement needs and operations of nonprofits in light of the District's current declaration of a public health emergency. The findings revealed:

- More than 50% percent of non-profits surveyed suspended volunteer operations in light of COVID-19, and subsequent health and safety guidance
- 52% expressed a need for communication strategies and tools to effectively recruit and retain volunteers during these uncertain times
- 100% affirmed that volunteers are vital to their service delivery, outreach, and operations

For more information on the District's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.