



Bringing Out the "BEST" in Neighborhoods



What is the BEST Neighborhoods Service Grant all About?

Leon County's VolunteerLEON has been awarded \$25,000 in federal funding through the Corporation of National and Community Service (CNCS) and Volunteer Florida - the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The grant is awarded through the Volunteer Generation Fund of CNCS. In Florida it is called Build-Engage-Sustain-Transform (BEST) Neighborhoods. The BEST Neighborhoods grant is based on "neighboring," a model concept of community engagement that uses volunteering as a tool to empower, mobilize and facilitate positive changes within communities.

VolunteerLEON is proudly partnering with Council of Neighborhoods Association, Leon County's Housing and Veteran Services Departments in a joint initiative called "Bringing Out the BEST in Neighborhoods" a series of **six** family friendly service project initiatives that will help foster and cultivate the "neighbor helping neighbor" concept. Strong and united neighborhoods are the foundation of our community and we recognize that a neighborhood is known, not by a point on a map, but by its outstanding residents.

What Will the Grant Funding Support?

Funding will be used to purchase service project materials, and for volunteer leader training in neighborhoods and volunteer recognition. VolunteerLEON will coordinate six services projects during 2011 in collaboration with the Council of Neighborhood Associations to meet of our goal of six family friendly neighborhood service projects. All projects must be completed by September 30, 2011.

How Do We Go about Developing our Projects?

VolunteerLEON will assist neighborhoods in identifying the neighborhoods assets which starts with each and every resident. We believe that very resident in a community has something to offer that can help a neighbor, and the BEST model will build upon these existing frameworks and utilize the strength of local connections for the collective good of the neighborhood. Each neighborhood will hold a round table discussion to talk about challenges and needs in their neighborhoods and potential solutions through service projects to help address need



Is Project Management Training Available from VolunteerLEON?

Project leader training is a big part of any project's success and will provide the technical assistance needed in order to insure that your projects are well managed and successful. VolunteerLEON will conduct training sessions for Project Leaders and interested residents.

How Do We Submit our Project Application?

Download the Bringing Out the BEST in Neighborhoods application and send it to VolunteerLEON by fax to 606-1971 or by e-mail to Bushj@leoncountyfl.gov

How Many Volunteers Do We Need for Service Projects?

A minimum of 50 neighborhood volunteers is required; however projects can have more depending on the size of the projects. It is important to ensure that volunteers who have signed up to participate will have their time used wisely and that they feel that their service made a difference and that they were appreciated.

What is the Deadline for Project Applications?

Applications should be sent to VolunteerLEON by April 20th. One project a month will be conducted until the grant's end on September 30.

Neighborhood Application Information

Neighborhood Leader Contact Information

A contact person must be designated who is familiar with the details of the project and able to respond to questions about the application during the review process which will be conducted by the BEST Neighborhood Council comprised of neighborhood residents, leadership and partner organizations.

Project Description

1. Please describe the proposed project (attachments not to exceed 300 words).
2. What is the specific location (s) of the project?
3. Proposed Project Date/Times:
4. Materials and tools needed for project:
5. Inclement Weather Contingencies - Can this project be completed if it rains? If yes, are there alternate plans the volunteers should know about ahead of time?



Project Ideas to Get you Thinking

Neighborhood Beautification

- Start a community garden
- Bulb or tree planting
- Invasive plant species removal in your park
- Spring landscaping clean-up
- Neighborhood spruce-up
- Create a nature trail
- Bike or walking trail repair
- Paint a neighborhood mural
- Paint the fence in a community garden
- Graffiti removal

Civic Engagement

- Voter registration drive
- Create a Neighborhood Crime Watch Program or re-energize a current one
- Invite neighborhood firefighters and/or police officers to your gathering -great way for you to meet and learn the names of the people who protect and serve your neighborhood - plus kids love it when the fire truck comes to a gathering!
- Invite the community health center to set up a resources table at your gathering, hand out information and brochures, answer questions, discuss services, etc.
- Invite local nonprofit organizations to come and hand out information about their services

Safety Projects:

- Child car seat inspection
- Bicycle tune-up
- Crime Fighting
- Start a Crime clue box.
- Survey your neighborhood to find out what people think are the leading crime causes.
- Start a neighborhood watch program.
- Join community crime prevention organizations such as DARE or McGruff Program.
- Work with local government to start a victim's aid support service.
- Create a TV or radio public service announcement against drugs and alcohol.
- Paint over graffiti.
- Organize a self defense workshop.
- Create a billboard for goo graffiti, allow people to paint sections.
- Produce an anti-crime, anti-drug, anti-violence play.
- Sponsor a TV blackout event that kids spend time with their family rather than watch TV.
- Create and distribute a list of hotlines for kids who might need help

Local Businesses

- Involve any businesses in the neighborhood: open house, using their facilities for the event
- Ask local businesses to get involved – provide a coupon for a discount on services or products, donations: trees, flowers, food, drink