

THE JUNCTION

The Public Service Grant Newsletter

July-August 2009

Volume 1, Issue 2

City Government and Non-Profit Organizations Meeting the Needs of the Community

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Greetings from the Editor:



The staff of the Grant Compliance Unit hopes that the first issue, March 2009, of the Public Service Grant Newsletter was of interest to our readers. We would appreciate your feedback, including success stories with photographs, as well as articles that you would like to post. The next issue is projected for the end of September. Following that issue, the newsletter will be a quarterly publication with issues in December, March, June and September.

By now, most of the PSG funded organizations have been visited by a PSG Council member assigned to your non-profit. We hope that these visits have enabled the council members to have a greater understanding of the work that you do. As you know, the PSG Council made their recommendations for funding during their May meeting. Of course, the final decisions are pending City Council's approval of the FY 2009-2010 budget. This is a crucial time for Public Service Grant recipients to make the public aware of how so few grant dollars can help provide so many services to the citizens of Jacksonville.

In this, our second issue, we highlight two Lutheran Social Services programs that are partially funded by Public Service Grants: Second Harvest Food Bank and the Refugee Education Program. Marina Mirzoyeva, the Refugee Education Program teacher, provided two vignettes of two students. The Second Harvest Food Bank story tells us about their recent record breaking, Be A Hero Food Drive, held in collaboration with First Coast News and United Way volunteers. Thanks to Richard Mochowski and Tom Strother at Lutheran for their help in getting those stories to you.

Also in this issue, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA) provided the first in a series of articles depicting how PSG funding makes such a significant difference, not only in changing lives of the people they serve, but sometimes saving lives. Thanks to Christa Figgins for her help in connecting us with this story and others in future issues.

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- Sandy Arts, Human Services Planner II
- John Snyder, Human Services Planner II
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PSG FY 2008 - 2009 Closeout Procedures



Requirements to receive the 10% Retainage: 1. Complete all programmatic reporting requirements; 2. Invoices/documentation showing your agency expended your grant award amount according to the contract; 3. A final September 2009 Monthly Financial Report showing zero balances for each budget line item. (Note: Even if your agency submitted a fiscal report with backup showing all expenditures, you are still responsible for a September Financial Report indicating all money is spent and nothing is left outstanding); 4. Current with your insurance certificate - no expired insurance certificates; 5. Not on the Council Auditor's Hold List. Please contact your grant administrator with any questions or Nancy Kirts at 630-2099.

We're Excited! Online PSG Application Rolling Out for FY 2010-2011

Sandy Arts, one of the Grant Compliance Unit's Human Services Planners, has been researching and fine-tuning an electronic version of the Public Service Grant Application for the past two years. Our intention is to roll out the new online application for all the PSG applicants for FY 2010-2011. This past PSG cycle, Sandy spearheaded a pilot project that allowed the five trust fund programs, administered by the Unit, to complete their applications for FY 2009-2010 online. The project succeeded with only a few minor glitches.

The online application should prevent applicants from being disqualified for not having provided all required forms and documents. The application cannot be submitted without those required accompanying attachments. It will also allow applicants to start, save, and return to their work. In addition, they can work right up until the last minute. However, the electronic system will shut off at the exact deadline.

The Grant Compliance Unit will provide training and technical assistance throughout the process. The system will also have a "help" feature for online assistance or to directly contact the Public Service Grant staff. In the near future, PSG recipients will be invited to participate in focus groups, prior to the final finishing touches.

Dates to Remember:

September 15 Public Service Grant Council Meeting, Tuesday at 10:00 a.m., Ed Ball Building, 8th Floor Meeting Room

September 21 Deadline for submitting requests for budget line item adjustments for FY 2008/2009

September 30 Last day of City's Fiscal Year and termination date of FY2008/2009 PSG Contracts



Snapshots of Participants in the Refugee Education Program at Lutheran Social Services

Submitted By: Marina Mirzoyeva, Refugee Education Teacher

Yenesey arrived in the United States on June 5, 2009 from Cuba. On July 6, 2009 she started our orientation classes. During her first days, it was very hard for her to understand the teacher because her English was not very good. After four weeks in the class, I saw Yenesey making progress with word comprehension. Now she can answer my questions about her age, name, address, where she is from, and how many children she has. She can write on the board the days of the week. She is learning about American money and can fill out a bank check. Yenesey has also started to communicate with classmates and with time will continue to learn more and more.

Yasameen, with her two sons, arrived in the United States as a refugee from Iraq on March 19, 2009. On April 14, 2009 she started orientation classes. She knew English, but she had some problems understanding other people and speaking out. In the class she was very active with questions about life in America and the benefits a single mom could get. She was a good student. Yasameen did not miss one day in our class. She became employed at Winn Dixie two weeks after graduating from the program and is very happy about her achievements. She comes to see me often.



A New Life

How Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. was able to help a neighbor through the City of Jacksonville Public Service Grant Program.

***"One step must start each journey."
Unknown***

Jessica Main* came to Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. (JALA) with a terrifying problem. Her boyfriend and the father of her baby had become violently abusive. After he beat her so badly that she lost consciousness, he subsequently threatened her with certainly fatal violence. Jessica had no choice but to flee with her child to save their lives.

Jessica, working part-time and trying to finish high school, had no funds to hire a private attorney to help her protect herself and her baby from the violent man they had fled. On her own, Jessica was able to file an Injunction for Protection. The child's father then hired a private attorney and filed a paternity action in which he sought primary custody

of the baby, despite the fact that the child had lived with Jessica since birth.

Jessica fortunately found her way to JALA. JALA receives Public Service Grant (PSG) funding from the City of Jacksonville to provide many legal services, among them services for victims of domestic violence. Using PSG funding, JALA attorneys accepted Jessica's case and went to work assisting her and her child in rebuilding their lives in a safe and secure environment.

Ultimately JALA attorneys were able to resolve the case successfully. JALA attorneys represented Jessica in the paternity action and successfully retained custody of Jessica's child. Jessica is now receiving child support from the child's father and was able to complete high school and vocational training that will allow her to make a life for herself and for her baby.

Jessica's story is only one in the hundreds JALA attorneys could tell about clients that have been helped because of the PSG Program. In the last three months using PSG funding JALA has assisted more than 200 clients with family law issues ranging from establishing child support and helping retain child custody to securing alimony and fair settlements in dissolution cases. Many of these efforts have been in cases involving domestic or sexual violence.

Jessica's life and that of her baby are better today because of PSG funding. JALA is proud to be a part of the family of non-profit agencies using PSG funding to assist our friends and neighbors live happier and healthier lives.

** Not her real name.*

Be A Hero Food Drive

First Coast News teamed with Second Harvest North Florida July 17-18 to put on the Be A Hero Food Drive – an event designed to draw awareness to the issue of hunger in our community, while encouraging people to take action to help feed their neighbors who are in need. The event shattered the record for local food drives – with First Coast residents donating more than 95,000 pounds of food at the two primary drop-off

sites, St. Johns Town Center and the Orange Park Mall. United Way provided volunteers for both days, and numerous local businesses contributed giveaways to the successful event. First Coast News promoted the event for a full week prior to the food drive and told numerous stories of First Coast residents who are currently in need of assistance. The station then did live cut-ins at the top of every hour on Friday and early Saturday morning. The 95,000 pounds of food collected will

produce more than 63,000 meals for residents in Jacksonville and the 18 counties served by Second Harvest.



PHOTO CAPTION: Ken Amaro from First Coast News assists United Way volunteers in unloading a donation on Friday, July 17, during the Be A Hero Food Drive.