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Rockefeller Foundation Gives \$2 Million to Help Cities Promote Volunteerism

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Press release*

City Mayors to begin Applying for Service Leadership Grants

The Rockefeller Foundation and the newly formed Cities of Service coalition today announced the opening of the application period for the first-ever “Cities of Service Leadership Grants.” Funded exclusively by the Rockefeller Foundation, the grants will be awarded to ten cities, on a competitive basis, whose mayors have committed to increase the amount and impact of service in their communities. Each recipient city will receive \$200,000 over a two-year period for the specific purpose of hiring a Chief Service Officer, an individual who will lead local efforts on behalf of their city’s mayor to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to increase volunteerism. Today’s announcement comes just five weeks after 17 mayors from around the nation convened in New York City to form the Cities of Service Coalition and six months after Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which will result in the greatest federal investment in service and volunteerism in 75 years.

“During difficult economic times, when it is important for communities to pull together, the Rockefeller Foundation is proud to help America’s mayors bring President Obama’s call to service to their own cities,” **said Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin.** “As president of the University of Pennsylvania, I saw how a local institution’s commitment to civic engagement can save a neighborhood. With the Rockefeller Foundation’s support, *Cities of Service* will help local leaders across the country tap into similar engines of expertise, opportunity, and economic expansion.”

“Cities around the country today face increased need with fewer resources – and many mayors see great potential in tapping the willingness of Americans to help their neighbors as an important strategy to get through these difficult days,” **said Mayor Bloomberg,** who appointed the nation’s first municipal Chief Service Officer in June 2009. “The generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation will enable ten cities to dramatically accelerate their local efforts to increase the amount and impact of service.”

Eligibility

To be considered for the two-year Cities of Service Leadership Grant, a city’s mayor must be a member of the Cities of Service coalition and have signed and agreed to implement the coalition’s Declaration of Service. Mayors interested in joining the Cities of Service Coalition should visit www.citiesofservice.org for registration. In addition, all applicant cities must have at least 100,000 residents according to the 2000 census and be home to at least one community college or a four-year public or private university.

The Application

Applications must be submitted by the city's Office of the Mayor and should describe how they will achieve each of the following:

- Conduct an assessment of existing service levels and stakeholders within the city, so that a benchmark can be established for comparison purposes moving forward.
- Produce a coordinated citywide plan to increase service through a planning process that involves existing service and volunteer-reliant nonprofits, local volunteer management agencies, and local funders, if applicable.
- Meaningfully engage local universities in the development, implementation, and support of the service plan.
- Appoint a city Chief Service Officer who reports directly to the mayor or a deputy mayor or other appropriate designee (include organization chart).
- Identify at least two existing local high priority areas in which to target volunteerism, and demonstrate how the city will use service to advance existing or enhanced work in these challenge areas, including proposed outcomes and plans for measurement.

The application can be found at www.citiesofservice.org and must be received no later than December 15, 2009. The awards will be announced by Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

About the Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation works around the world to ensure that more individuals, institutions, and communities can tap into growth and opportunity while strengthening resistance to risks and challenges, affirming its founding mission to “promote the well-being” of humanity. The Foundation today supports initiatives to mobilize an agricultural revolution in sub-Saharan Africa, bolster economic security for American workers, inform more equitable, sustainable transportation policies in the United States, assure access to affordable, high-quality health systems in developing countries, and help vulnerable communities cope with the impacts of imminent climate change.

About Cities of Service

Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have answered the historic Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act's call to action. Cities – often at the front lines of our nation's most pressing challenges - are perfectly positioned to work together to engage millions more volunteers in service and develop strategies to increase the amount and impact of local service efforts. Coalition members, by signing a Declaration of Service, will work together to lead a multi-year effort to expand community service and volunteerism by:

- Developing a comprehensive service plan and a coordinated strategy focused on matching volunteers and established community partners to the areas of greatest local need;
- Working with other mayors and elected officials to advance strategies and best practices that accelerate the service movement and produce measurable results;
- Encouraging other mayors to join this national effort to engage our citizens; and
- Ensuring that the voice of cities is heard in federal legislative, policy, and program discussions related to service, which will help the country achieve the ambitious goals of the Serve America Act.

Founding Members of the Cities of Service Coalition are:

Mayor Shirley Franklin	Atlanta, GA
Mayor Sheila Dixon	Baltimore, MD
Mayor Richard Daley	Chicago, IL
Mayor Marilee Chinnici	Dublin, OH
Mayor John Peyton	Jacksonville, FL
Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa	Los Angeles, CA
Mayor Karl Dean	Nashville-Davidson County, TN
Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg	New York, NY
Mayor Cory Booker	Newark, NJ
Mayor Phil Gordon	Phoenix, AZ
Mayor Luke Ravenstahl	Pittsburgh, PA
Mayor David N. Cicilline	Providence, RI
Mayor Kevin Johnson	Sacramento, CA
Mayor Douglas H. Palmer	Trenton, NJ
Mayor Paul E. Winfield	Vicksburg, MS
Mayor Adrian Fenty	Washington, DC
Mayor Lois J. Frankel	West Palm Beach, FL

Additional coalition members include:

Mayor Thomas M. Menino	Boston, MA
Mayor Michael Nutter	Philadelphia, PA
Mayor Scott Lang	New Bedford, MA
Mayor Thomas McMahon	Reading, PA
Mayor Stephen R. Reed	Harrisburg, PA
Mayor Cynthia Matthews	Santa Cruz, CA

Information about the coalition can be found at www.citiesofservice.org.