

## **Agency: Volunteer Center of Story County**

November 25, 2019

Liaison: Kirk Youngberg

### **1. Need for the Program.**

The need for the VCSC in Story Sounty is great, as the organization facilitates and streamlines the way that people looking to provide volunteer service in Story County can do so.

### **2. Program Strengths.**

The VCSC is the a very large hub in Story County that acts as an organizer and facilitator of volunteers and volunteer events. They help those looking for service work in Story County to find the opportunities they are looking for in a streamlined and efficient process. They have an online portal that brings volunteers closer to more service opportunities they may never know about without it (thousands a year!), and they are able to provide training and other resources to the agencies they collaborate with. They are able to increase the effectiveness of volunteers, reduce redundancy in services provided, and while they help volunteers of all ages, they have a number of great programs that target youth with service opportunities, as well as recognition for service minded youth.

Through their efforts, they not only supply other agencies with needed volunteers (thereby increasing their effectiveness and decreasing their resource use on this needed aspect of service), but also have a number of programs of their own that are beneficial to the community. From reducing landfill garbage, helping people winterize homes, and tracking Silver Cord graduation honors, they are critical in encouraging a service mindset in the youth of Story County as well as utilizing those who are already looking for ways to contribute. They are in the top 20% of organizations in the Points of Light Foundation which judges agencies on the effective use of resources.

### **3. Needs and Weaknesses.**

Similar to last year, the needs of the VCSC are many regarding funding. They have essentially reached a critical mass on what they can do with one payrolled employee, and expecting any more of that level of work from volunteers is simply not realistic. They are moving ahead with their online presence as a pace that they can sustain, but for the VCSC to grow noticeably from where it is, it would likely be through another paid employee. Funding through ASSET is crucial due to the nature of the work they do. It's not terrible flashy, though it is arguably one of the best uses of donor money, as the VCSC has a very effective return on investment (north of \$3,000,000 in value to the community through arranged service). However, it is rarely the recipient of larger donations. They are in need of, and are working on, creating additional revenue through seeking grants and fundraising events to further their capabilities. They have navigated the scorecard system and are working to continue to utilize ASSET funds for ASSET approved agencies while doing what they can to maintain the level of service to the other agencies they work with.

The creation and utilization by ISU of the GivePulse system should be a positive to the organization if they are able to work collaboratively, but it seems the two systems could be redundant and pull from

each other's resources if not. Both should be better with the help of the other, as each would lose a great deal of volunteers (from the community and ISU specifically) if they can not work together.

#### **4. Financial Outlook.**

The company continues to work with their budget very well, and are hopefully continuing to increase their budget with the above-mentioned fundraising events. As stated earlier, they will need more financial support to continue to grow their agency and its level of service to all agencies that seek their aid. Due to their "behind the scenes" nature, it is unlikely they will be able to grow beyond where they currently are with outside donations. ASSET funds are still crucial to their work.

#### **5. Internal Management Practices.**

The VCSC has one paid employee, and is utilizing volunteers to help fulfill the goals of the organization well beyond what one paid employee can do. The board typically has 10 members, but there are some new appointments and resignations currently happening. The board is diverse and highly motivated.

**General Assessment:** The VCSC's quiet role in orchestrating thousands of volunteers for hundreds of service projects each year can not be overstated. The value in equivalent dollars (using the states figures) they mobilize is remarkable and would be a terrible loss if funding were cut. Their greatest uncertainty would be the way in which GivePulse is run (combatively or collaboratively), and the reduction in funding that could result from competition over ASSET funds.