

ST. PETERSBURG FREE CLINIC
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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA SAINT PETERSBURG
RESPONSE TO STUDENT BOARD
NOFO/RFP #9

COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT: STIMULATING ENVIRONMENTAL OR ECONOMIC PROGRESS TO EMPOWER UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

A. Executive Summary of the Program

St. Petersburg Free Clinic is a 501 (c)(3) organization that has served the unserved and underserved in Pinellas County for forty years. Ours is a multi-service agency addressing the need for food, shelter and health care through five essential programs: Health Center, Food Bank, We Help Services, Beacon House (homeless men's shelter), and Women's Residence (homeless shelter). Primary beneficiaries of the Free Clinic's programs are families and individuals in Pinellas County who lack the means to provide adequate health care for themselves and their families and who fall through the cracks of existing systems and services. Specifically, they are a combination of low income and working-poor, ages 18-64, who cannot afford medical care and have no other place to call their medical home. All services are provided by volunteers (including physicians and nurses) under the supervision of a small staff.

One Free Clinic program with specific and timely needs is our Diabetic Program that is experiencing steady growth. The need is due to increases in patients tested, number of patients with a medical history of diabetes, and number of patients attending diabetic health education sessions. These individuals constitute the target population for our Diabetic Program.

Diabetes affects the uninsured and ethnic disparities particularly hard. Of the more than 6,000 patients seen annually by the Free Clinic's Health Center, roughly one third have a medical history of diabetes and/or are identified as having the disease. Over a two-year period our Diabetic Program has experienced a 57% increase in number of patients. During this time there has been a 27% increase in the number of individuals attending our diabetic classes. By strengthening our Diabetic Program the Free Clinic will be able to test more clients, provide the needed medications, and enlarge our diabetic classes for those individuals who, almost without exception, could not obtain these services otherwise. This initiative is particularly critical in view of the fact that, thanks to newly acquired funding, the Health Center will extend its hours into a third weekday evening and one Saturday morning each month. This is expected to serve an additional 720 patients annually of which approximately one third are likely to be diabetic. By receiving timely care these clients will have a healthier lifestyle and be able to be productive citizens.

B. One Year Plan

- i. Within the first 120 days we are positioned to increase the target population for our Diabetic Program thanks to extended hours of service. Funds provided by the USFSP SPB #9 grant will allow us to test additional patients for diabetes and provide them with medication and ongoing education.
- ii. Over the course of twelve months and as a direct result of added hours of service the Diabetic Program anticipates at least 240 new clients will have diabetes. These clients will require diabetic strips, medications, and diabetic classes. By helping them help themselves it is likely that these clients will be able to sustain employment and avoid homelessness and poverty.

C. Program Goals Linked to Critical Needs

The Health Center of St. Petersburg Free Clinic seeks to meet an unfilled need among homeless, low-income, and/or uninsured clients for diabetic testing, treatment and follow-up education. The USFSP SPB #9 grant being sought for this program will facilitate the expansion of an existing program to one additional weekday evening and one Saturday per month. Within an anticipated increase of 720 patients, 240 of them are likely to have diabetes and require medications and diabetic classes over an extended period of time.

D. Program Activities

i. Diabetes is among the top three most prevalent symptoms in our clients. The Health Center at St. Petersburg Free Clinic is the only venue serving mid- to south-county clients who are uninsured and do not qualify for any other healthcare plan. Diabetes affects two groups especially hard, and both of them are prominent among the population we serve: uninsured and ethnic disparities. Those from within our target population are likely to be recently unemployed and/or at or below the national poverty level. If fortunate enough to be employed, their schedules are likely to prevent them from visiting the Free Clinic's Health Center during normal weekday hours. Lack of health care exacerbates diabetes and often leads to complications and even death.

ii. During the twelve-month period of the grant the target population for our Diabetic Program will be able to utilize existing space and equipment thanks to the added hours of service (one additional weekday evening) and will benefit from the skills of a new group of volunteer physicians and nurses that has offered its services on one Saturday per month. Existing volunteer physicians, nurses and lay volunteers will staff the clinic during the additional weekday evening. A private grant that will cover the minimal staffing for additional support staff required has been secured. The USFSP SPB #9 grant will cover the added cost of medications and educational materials. Thanks to the added hours of service during this twelve-month period we anticipate identifying an additional 240 clients with diabetes.

Long-term resolution to existing conditions will be addressed by means of weekly evening diabetic classes that include nutrition counseling and group support. These classes will be free of charge to the target population.

iii. The mission of St. Petersburg Free Clinic is, in part, "...to meet basic, unserved human needs through resources, volunteers and advocacy." The Free Clinic addresses the need for food, shelter and health care through five essential programs. While our Health Center is the focus of this grant, it is important to note that three other programs – We Help Services, Beacon House (men's shelter) and Women's Residence (homeless shelter) – monitor clients on a continuing basis and refer them to our Health Center when a need for medical care is indicated. This allows the Free Clinic to fulfill multiple needs on the part of clients and thereby empower them to escape homelessness, poverty and economic underdevelopment. Concurrently, the additional clients served as a result of the USFSP SPB #9 grant represent a savings in excess of \$200,000 during the year if each of the additional clients avoided just one visit to a hospital emergency room.

iv. Many of the clients in the target population for this proposal have lost their jobs – and their medical insurance – and either go without health care or allow illnesses to progress to the point that it is necessary to visit a hospital emergency room. Uninsured adults in the target population are at least twice as likely to go without a doctor visit in the past year. Clients who have been accustomed to steady employment but have lost their jobs are struggling to provide at least subsistence income and often work at more than one low-paying job to do so. Their schedules often prevent them from visiting the Free Clinic’s Health Center during normal weekday hours, so the proposed availability of care on Saturdays and in the evenings will greatly enhance their accessibility to care. Inevitably, the result will be less homelessness and poverty as clients are able to maintain their health and employment and provide basic needs for themselves and their families.

By helping control their diabetes we will lower their risk of complications whereby they will gain, on average, five extra years of life, five more years of eyesight, six years free from kidney disease, and six years free from amputations and nerve damage.

v. The Health Center at St. Petersburg Free Clinic is the only venue serving mid- to south-county clients who are uninsured and do not qualify for any other healthcare plan. For many within the target population of this proposal the availability of care and long-term treatment is unprecedented. This is particularly significant when dealing with diabetes because plans of care must be developed and ongoing access to required medications must be assured.

vi. The number of clients and the seriousness of their conditions will be monitored on a continuing basis. Indicators will include number of patient visits; patient demographics including ethnicity and economic indicators; and how many would have opted for Emergency Department care in the absence of Free Clinic Health Center access. The quantity of diagnostic and imaging testing as well as the volume of medications will be evaluated. The degree to which clients served by the expanded access enjoy long-term benefits will be tracked in an effort to determine both the impact on their lives and the cost savings.

vii. Based on the steady increase in number of clients affected by diabetes over the past two years a plan of action is indicated. With the support system in place it will be possible to sustain the expansion of service at minimum cost. Since the program as proposed is in keeping with the Free Clinic’s mission, a sustained need that is not met elsewhere will be fulfilled beyond the one-year period covered by this request.

Diabetes continues to be among the top three most prevalent symptoms in our clients, and the demand for testing, providing medications and offering diabetic classes has increased steadily.

We have secured funding for our diabetic educator and an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner from a foundation for three years. In view of the impact the program is having, we are confident that this support will be renewed. With approximately 25 Floridians dying each day due to complications of diabetes we are committed to securing other sources of support as necessary to sustain and possibly further expand this program.

viii. Budget	
a. Training (diabetic classes)	\$1,400
b. Equipment	
c. Supplies (diabetic test strips/medications)	\$3,600
d. Consultants/Independent Contractors	
Totals	\$5,000

ix. Expenditure of funds from the USFSP SPB #9 grant will be specific to the diabetic test strips/medications that are obligatory for control of the disease and the materials necessary for weekly diabetic classes that will help clients understand and take control of their condition. The approximately 240 clients who benefit directly during the twelve-month period represent an expenditure of less than \$21.00 per client during this time.

E. Assessment Plan and Performance Measures

i. The criteria for success include 1) availability of unserved and underserved Free Clinic clients in Pinellas County who either know they have diabetes or are newly diagnosed with the disease; 2) ability to treat these clients effectively via the Diabetic Program; and 3) ability to sustain a year-round program of monitoring and education whereby clients can enjoy a healthier lifestyle and be productive citizens.

Success will be achieved once clients known to have diabetes or its symptoms have participated in the Free Clinic's Diabetic Program over a sustained period of time. Their understanding of the disease will be established and their overall health will have improved. It is important to note that those clients who are able to return to the work force and regain private insurance coverage will no longer need the services of the Free Clinic's Diabetic Program. This is the best kind of success for the client and the Free Clinic to experience.

ii. Clients will be monitored and counseled on an ongoing basis with regard to what is required to sustain their improved quality of life. This will occur weekly and for as long as desired by the client. At the end of the twelve-month period the activity of the year will be evaluated and a plan of action for the following year will be established.