



**Florida Department of Environmental Protection
CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT
(pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes)**

Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Name: Friends of Biscayne Bay

Mailing Address: 1277 NE 79th St Miami FL 33138

Contact: friendsofbiscayneBay@gmail.com

Website Address (*required if applicable*): <https://friendsofbiscaynebay.org/>

☒ Check to confirm your Code of Ethics is posted conspicuously on your website: Yes

Statutory Authority:

Section 20.2551, F.S., Citizen support organizations; use of property; audit; public records; partnerships. In summary, the statute specifies the organizational requirements, operational parameters, duties of a CSO to support the Department of Environmental Protection (Department), or individual units of the Department, use of Department property, audit requirements, public records requirements, and authorizes public-private partnerships to enhance lands managed by the Department.

Section 20.058, F.S., Citizen support and direct-support organizations. In summary, the statute specifies the organizational requirements to submit an annual report each year for each designated CSO and to post that information on the Departments website.

YOUR MISSION AND LAST CALENDAR YEAR'S PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

CSO's Mission: (Consistent with your Articles and Bylaws)

The Friends of Biscayne Bay's (FOBB) mission is to support and benefit the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves, by aiming to preserve, protect, and enhance the bay and all natural waterways tidally connected to the bay in an aesthetically natural condition so that its biological and aesthetic values may endure for the enjoyment of future generations.

Describe Last Calendar Year's Results Obtained: Brag! (List or discuss the past calendar year's accomplishments and contributions. Cite specific support from last calendar year's Annual Program Plan.)

2024 was an exciting year for Friends of Biscayne Bay, as it was the first of 2 landmark 50th anniversaries of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves. This year we celebrate a second 50th Anniversary of the Aquatic Preserves Act and state recognition of the Biscayne Bay Cape Florida to Monroe County Line Aquatic Preserve in 2025. It was FOBB's intention to commemorate this historic anniversary with greater activation around water quality issues in 2024 and 2025 with an adopt a drain program, but we are still working on the funding needed to launch this wonderful plan, we hope to begin in the fall of 2025 . FOBB embarked on several initiatives to improve outreach, advocacy, and fundraising for Biscayne Bay preservation and restoration efforts:

Outreach

Friends of Biscayne Bay launched a monthly email newsletter that as of December 2024 consists of 2120 readers. This newsletter informs recipients about Biscayne Bay events, advocacy opportunities, and Friends of Biscayne Bay initiatives. Some examples are dates of cleanups, state & county Biscayne Bay meetings, ways the reader can help the Bay, and opportunities to support legislation beneficial to Biscayne Bay. In 2024 FOBB also continued to revamp and update our website, ensuring it is up to date on all our ongoing projects. On top of that FOBB has a Facebook page and Instagram page for public outreach and awareness, which have both grown throughout 2024 (@friendsofbiscaynebay)

In 2024 FOBB also printed brand-new stickers, working with a vendor that uses sustainable ink and printing practices. These stickers shared the message “Its All Connected” with the 50th Anniversary logo and Friends of Biscayne Bay logo, along with a QR code linking to the FOBB website. FOBB distributed 5000 of these stickers to 27 sites at Miami Dade County’s annual Baynanza cleanup day and over 1000 stickers for International Coastal Cleanup Day. FOBB now includes these stickers in all tabling events going forward. FOBB also collaborated in hosting 2 cleanups during Baynanza in the spring and International Coastal Cleanup Day in the fall at the J Farina Mangrove Preserve in North Miami. We also distributed about 15000 at the biannual Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit (BBMHS) and hosted a panel which flushed out the adopt a drain program and how it would fit within the county program as well as review the history of the preserves with the public. We recruited reporter and historian Connie Crowther to join the board who was the original reporter who helped get the Aquatic Preserve Act passed.

FOBB participated in 2 table display community outreach events in 2024: One at Green Day in Miami Shores and one at the bi-annual Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit. At the Marine Health Summit, FOBB worked with organizers to share the message that it was the 50th anniversary of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve to nearly 500 attendees. FOBB also hosted a panel discussion on the history of how the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves came to be through community action in the 70s.

FOBB has partnered with Miami-Dade County Biscayne Bay Friendly Program and the Cortada Foundation to create a Biscayne Bay environmentally-focused art, engagement, and action campaign across Miami-Dade County known as “The Flow-Its All Connected!” It is FOBB’s intention to commemorate this historic anniversary with greater activation around water quality issues into 2025.

Finally, FOBB was honored with the Dade Heritage Trust’s Annual Preservation Award for the organization’s work honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Aquatic Preserves with advocacy and action. FOBB was also featured on the front page of their Preservation Today 2024 magazine with an article about Friends of Biscayne Bay and the history of Bay advocacy.

Advocacy

FOBB has stepped up its advocacy efforts in 2024 through the use of the Action Network platforms. This platform allows constituents to automatically email their elected officials in favor or in opposition to a piece of legislation. In 2024, FOBB created and distributed 4 action alerts that sent a combined total of 23,504 letters to government officials. The largest action alert was used by an astonishing 1,311 people.

Some of FOBB’s advocacy wins include:

- At Everglades Acton Day, FOBB dropped off information about Biscayne Bay’s ecological and economic importance to the entire Dade Delegation in Tallahassee and discussed the importance of buying land for restoration activities.
- FOBB successfully advocated for Leave no Trace implementation for City of Miami spoil islands in Biscayne Bay to reduce marine debris and pollution.
- FOBB helped shut down development plans in state parks, including Oleta River State Park in North Biscayne Bay and pass SB 60 to ensure they could not be developed inappropriately in the future.

- FOBB advocated for an impervious surface ordinance in Miami-Dade County, which will preserve green space and reduce contamination of runoff into the Bay; this has passed and been implemented.
- FOBB successfully advocated for a single-use plastics ban for county contracts. This will phase out single-use plastics in all County parks, County marinas, all county buildings, the Miami International Airport, and the Port of Miami.
- FOBB supported the County's ongoing Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP) process to improve Biscayne Bay water quality standards.
- FOBB advocated for \$3,000,000 in extra funding for endangered lands in the County budget to preserve green space in Miami-Dade County.
- FOBB advocated for an allocation of \$3,800,000 in funding for
 - Biscayne Bay bulky debris removal
 - Biscayne Bay Reasonable Assurance Plan technical modeling
 - Cutler Wetlands restoration and planning

Fundraising

FOBB also received a grant from Florida International University (FIU) and DEP establishing a partnership with the FIU Institute of Environment. The goal of this partnership is to locate 8 brand new, state of the art water quality monitors (Sondes) in Biscayne Bay and its tributaries. FOBB's role in this project is to find 8 willing landowners to locate these sondes on their docks and seawalls. FOBB is proud to announce that by December 2024 there were 2 devices installed, with all 8 installed by May 2025. All data is publicly available to view and download at go.fiu.edu/marinerobotics. Part of this funding also goes towards spreading awareness about water quality and FIU water quality monitoring and improvement projects via social media, which FOBB is also leading.

FOBB also supported an FIU effort to increase Biscayne Bay data transparency known as the Biscayne Bay Reef Observation Interpretation and Prediction System (BBROIPS). This project will create a publicly available visuospatial one-stop shop for all types of Biscayne Bay data. FOBB supported and continues to support this effort by publicizing meetings, actively participating in discussions at the meetings, and working with project leads at FIU to bring BBROIPS to fruition. In addition we continue to try to locate and help gather data for this project, by always advertising it in our newsletter and locating and securing historic data sets and ensuring they do not get lost.

FOBB held several kayak outings around Biscayne Bay and a sailing outing to raise funds to support our efforts. These outings were led by a knowledgeable guide and a FOBB board member around Biscayne Bay so participants could have a fun day on the water while learning about the importance of the Bay's ecosystems.

FOBB stepped up in fundraising to support these efforts and prepare for the launch of our 50th Anniversary Project. This year was FOBB's first year participating in Give Miami Day where FOBB raised a total of \$16,948, blowing past the goal of \$10,000.

Describe the CSO's Plans for the Next Three Calendar Years:

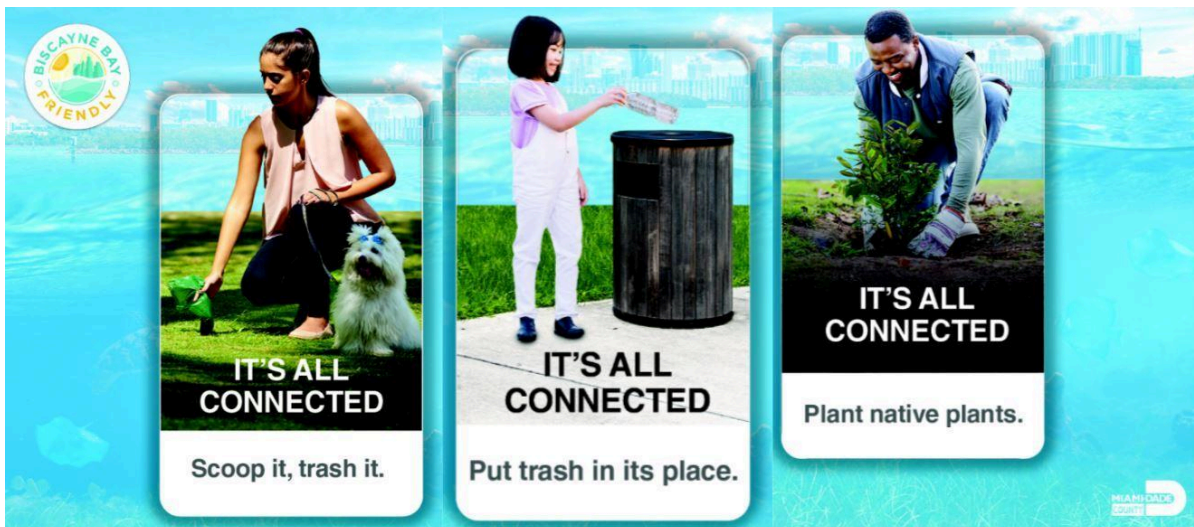
The Friends of Biscayne Bay (FOBB) plans to continue to support the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves in its mission of stewardship and to preserve, protect, and enhance Biscayne Bay. FOBB will aid in public education, volunteer events, such as clean-ups, and provide financial assistance to the Aquatic preserves to address "Issue Four: Public Access and Use" of the BBAP Management Plan. FOBB will continue our monthly newsletter, social media, and website updates to keep interested individuals and groups informed about any updates or upcoming Biscayne Bay related events/happenings. FOBB will also continue to table at local events to spread awareness about Biscayne Bay advocacy

and how residents can help Biscayne Bay in their everyday lives.

FOBB will continue to support the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves Management Plan strategies to address issues of poor water quality and inconsistent water quantity in Biscayne Bay by supporting policies on the local and state level. FOBB intends to do this by working with local and state partners on innovative approaches to Biscayne Bay restoration, like the Miami-Dade County Reasonable Assurance Plan. This will involve active participation in the Miami-Dade County Commission, Biscayne Bay Watershed Management Advisory Board, Biscayne Bay Commission, and more. This addresses the Water Quality and Habitat loss Issues outlined in the BBAP Management Plan. FOBB will continue to defend Biscayne Bay from the pressures of development, pollution, and climate change impacts. FOBB is also collaborating with DEP to improve the draft Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves Management Plan to guide our advocacy for the next decade and beyond.

FOBB will use 2025, the 50-year anniversary of the BBAP, to launch our countywide community engagement project “The Flow-Its All Connected.” Our plan is to use the 50th anniversary to support the County’s Reasonable Assurance Plan process and inspire action around Biscayne Bay water quality. Specifically, we are gathering funds to launch a countywide “Adopt A Storm Drain Program,” with artwork and QR codes placed near storm drains around Miami-Dade to engage residents and teach how to take action on a healthy Biscayne Bay. For this historic anniversary, we are partnered with the Miami-Dade County Biscayne Bay Friendly Program and community organizations like The Cortada Foundation and Dade Heritage Trust.

FOBB also anticipates further collaboration with the FIU Institute of Environment and other universities following the successful completion of our initiatives on water quality monitoring and data gathering for Biscayne Bay. FOBB knows that local collaborations with stakeholder groups and other nonprofits are central to maximizing the impact of our work.



We are promoting these three “Biscayne Bay Friendly” as actions any resident can take for the 50th Anniversary of the BBAP, graphics courtesy of Miami-Dade County.

CSO’s LAST CALENDAR YEAR STATISTICS:

Total Number of CSO General Membership: N/A we do not have a membership but our newsletter circulation is 2,214 people, and we have a board and advisory board of 20 people.

Total Number of Board of Directors: 9

Advisors: 10

Total Volunteer Hours for the Board of Directors: ~1140

ORCP & CSO RELATIONSHIP:

Don’t duplicate by describing accomplishments and contributions in the summary. Brag in the above Results Obtained. Describe the relationship here.

Manager’s Comments on the CSO & ORCP Relationship and Support:

Provide your perspective on

- Changing developments of the managed area(s) provided by the CSO.
- Effectiveness of the organization in fulfilling their purpose to support the managed area(s).
- Effectiveness of the Board of Directors in completing their Annual Program Plan.
- The relationship between ORCP team and CSO. What went well? Are there areas of improvement?

The relationship between the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve (BBAP) and Friends of Biscayne Bay (FOBB), our Citizen Support Organization (CSO), has continued to evolve over the past year. Through regular engagement and shared initiatives, both organizations have worked toward strengthening communication and aligning efforts to support the long-term protection of the preserve.

Contributions and Developments

FOBB has remained active in advocacy and community outreach, continuing to raise awareness about the importance of Biscayne Bay. Over the past year, there has been a growing focus on aligning their advocacy and programming more closely with the mission and priorities of BBAP and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This shift reflects a shared desire to deepen collaboration and impact.

The management plan update process served as an important opportunity for open dialogue. FOBB contributed feedback on several components of the draft plan and helped promote public participation during the review period. Their outreach efforts contributed meaningfully to community engagement, helping ensure that the public had a voice in the planning process.

Board Engagement and Planning

FOBB’s Board of Directors has remained engaged throughout the year, meeting regularly and advancing key initiatives. Among the most exciting developments is the planning of the 2025 Biscayne Bay Derelict Trap Rodeo — a community-driven marine debris removal event that will be hosted by FOBB with support from BBAP. This event exemplifies the kind of collaborative effort that can yield both environmental and public engagement benefits.

Looking Ahead

While every partnership involves growth and refinement, this past year laid important groundwork for a more connected and coordinated relationship. BBAP looks forward to continued collaboration with FOBB and ORCP as we prepare for the 50th anniversary of the Aquatic Preserve Act. Events like the Derelict Trap Rodeo offer a strong foundation to build on, and we are optimistic about the potential for shared successes in the year ahead.

CSO President's Comments on the CSO & ORCP Relationship and Support:

Provide your perspective on the relationship between the ORCP and CSO. What went well? Are there areas of improvement?

This past calendar year has enlightened the benefits of strong communication and cooperation with the Preserve Manager and staff. In the past, the staff has worked on many more aspects of the FOBB day to day. Currently, the FOBB board has provided funding for their own staff to perform these activities and more.

We will actively work to strengthen the current relationship so that we may benefit from maximum cooperation. While we have had many successes in the past years, we know we need more cooperation and planning to better implement the management plan together. FOBB and the ORCP office are also working on effective communication to ensure that voices from both parties are heard and we can collaborate the best we can to advantage the goals of the management plan. We have ideas on how to strengthen this relationship and bring higher success to our conservation efforts, especially since we will be planning for our 50th anniversary. We have experienced gaps in communication where the ORCP office did not share the draft management plan with us in a timely manner. We also believe the draft management plan presented has been significantly weakened since the 2012 plan. We hope to work with the ORCP office in 2025 to make this management plan as strong as possible, since this plan is our guiding document for our preservation, restoration, and advocacy work.

The ORCP office has been helpful in providing FOBB with tabling materials and supplies to help with outreach, including informational pamphlets, giveaway goodies, and a tablecloth. But many of these materials are dated and need updating and this really should have been done in advance of the 50th anniversary. We hope to use this milestone Anniversary continuing into 2025 as a springboard into better education programs for the public and additional fundraising opportunities so that we can afford to purchase what is needed to continue our strong advocacy towards the needs of the Aquatic Preserves.

We hope that there is more assistance from DEP over the coming year to help celebrate this milestone anniversary as there was for the 40th anniversary. Help with Public Relations, Video Production, Event Space, Swag, New Pamphlets for the public that include Friends of Biscayne Bay contact information are a few ideas. We suggest a meeting to discuss how we can celebrate the 50th which for us is 2024 and 2025 together for the big overall anniversary of the Aquatic Preserves.

We also struggle with a revenue stream as our Bayologist Camp and educational programs have funded the friends group in the past. We should consider how to reopen these activities, however to do this space would be needed and more cooperation with the aquatic preserve including storage of equipment and supplies at the office. This has been problematic under new management but was not an issue in the past, we hope this can be corrected moving forward.

SUMMARIZE FINANCIAL ACTIVITY FOR LAST CALENDAR YEAR, DIRECT SUPPORT & REVENUES:

Program Service Expenses are costs related to providing your organization's programs or services in accordance with your mission. Describe and provide expenses that directly support the managed area(s). For established nonprofit organizations, program service expenses generally represent most of the overall expense of the organization. For the last calendar year provide description and total \$ for each that apply. Replace examples with your information.

Friends of Biscayne Bay 2024 Budget			
Total Income	45,360.58		
Total Expense	29,878.48		
Revenue	15,482.10		
Ending Balance:	24,444.74		
Budget Breakdown			
Item	Income	Expense	In-Kind
Fundraising			
Grants	9500		
Other Fundraising	17337.53		
Give Miami Day	16948.05		
Event Fundraising (Kayaking + Sailing Outings)	1575		
Staffing			
Labor		24,000	
Travel		602.89	
Materials		66.71	
Projects			
Public Engagement			
BBROIPS Workshop		667	
Outreach			
Printing Outreach Supplies		325	
Tabling + Panel		1000	
Stickers		3,125	
Website			420
Miscellaneous			
Accounting			450
Solicitation of Contributions		76.88	
Legal Services (12 hrs)			7800
Advisor Consult (24 hrs)			2400
Bank Fees		15	
Total:	45,360.58	29,878.48	10,650

Total Expenses: \$ 29,878.48

Total Revenue: \$ 45,360.58



NET ASSETS: \$ 24,444.74

Organizations end of last year's Total Liabilities minus Total Assets. This is not the above's Visitor Service Revenue minus Program Service Expenses.

CSO AUDIT THRESHOLD:

Last Calendar Year's Total Expenses (including grants) \$29,878.48

Are the CSO's annual total expenses \$300,000 including grants? Then Section 215.981(2), Florida Statute requires an independent CPA audit using Government Audit Standards ([U.S. GAO Yellow Book](#)). The audit is **due by September 1** (or 9 months after the CSO's calendar year ends) to the Florida Auditor General and to the Department.

This information is complete to the best of my knowledge pursuant to Section 20.058 Florida Statutes			
Title	Name	Signature	Date
CSO President	Bruce Matheson		6/4/2025
ORCP Manager	Griffin Alexander		6/4/25

- ☐ CSO's Code of Ethics is attached
- ☐ CSO has attached the most recent Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N receipt. All IRS Form 990's must be *complete* with Part III Program Service and *all* appropriate Schedules (A, O and others as appropriate). If filing an IRS extension, attach the IRS 8868 receipt and the most recent complete 990 and schedules.

Friends of Biscayne Bay, Inc.

CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

- (1) It is essential to the proper conduct and operation of Friends of Biscayne Bay, Inc. (herein “CSO”) that its board members, officers, and employees be independent and impartial and that their position not be used for private gain. Therefore, the Florida Legislature in Section 112.3251, Florida Statute (Fla. Stat.), requires that the law protect against any conflict of interest and establish standards for the conduct of CSO board members, officers, and employees in situations where conflicts may exist.
- (2) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state that no CSO board member, officer, or employee shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or incur any obligation of any nature which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties for the CSO. To implement this policy and strengthen the faith and confidence of the people in Citizen Support Organizations, there is enacted a code of ethics setting forth standards of conduct required of Friends of Biscayne Bay, Inc. board members, officers, and employees in the performance of their official duties.

STANDARDS

The following standards of conduct are enumerated in Chapter 112, Fla. Stat., and are required by Section 112.3251, Fla. Stat., to be observed by Friends of Biscayne Bay, Inc. board members, officers, and employees.

1. Prohibition of Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

No Friends of Biscayne Bay board member, officer, or employee shall solicit or accept anything of value to the recipient, including a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service, based upon any understanding that the vote, official action, or judgment of the CSO board member, officer, or employee would be influenced thereby.

2. Prohibition of Accepting Compensation Given to Influence a Vote

No Friends of Biscayne Bay board member, officer, or employee shall accept any compensation, payment, or thing of value when the person knows, or, with reasonable care, should know that it was given to influence a vote or other action in which the CSO board member, officer, or employee was expected to participate in his or her official capacity.

3. Salary and Expenses

No Friends of Biscayne Bay board member or officer shall be prohibited from voting on a matter affecting his or her salary, expenses, or other compensation as a CSO board member or officer, as provided by law.

4. Prohibition of Misuse of Position

A Friends of Biscayne Bay board member, officer, or employee shall not corruptly use or attempt to use one's official position or any property or resource which may be within one's trust, or perform official duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption.

5. Prohibition of Misuse of Privileged Information

No Friends of Biscayne Bay board member, officer, or employee shall disclose or use information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of one's official position for one's own personal gain or benefit or for the personal gain or benefit of any other person or business entity.

6. Post-Office/Employment Restrictions

A person who has been elected to Friends of Biscayne Bay's board or office or who is employed by Friends of Biscayne Bay may not personally represent another person or entity for compensation before the governing body of the CSO of which he or she was a board member, officer, or employee for a period of two years after he or she vacates that office or employment position.

7. Prohibition of Employees Holding Office

No person may be, at one time, both a Friends of Biscayne Bay employee and a Friends of Biscayne Bay board member at the same time.

8. Requirements to Abstain From Voting

A Friends of Biscayne Bay board member or officer shall not vote in official capacity upon any measure which would affect his or her special private gain or loss, or which he or she knows would affect the special gain or any principal by whom the board member or officer is retained. When abstaining, the Friends of Biscayne Bay board member or officer, prior to the vote being taken, shall make every reasonable effort to disclose the nature of his or her interest as a public record in a memorandum filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting, who shall incorporate the memorandum in the minutes. If it is not possible for the Friends of Biscayne Bay board member or officer to file a memorandum before the vote, the memorandum must be filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting no later than 15 days after the vote.

9. Failure to Observe CSO Code of Ethics

Failure of a Friends of Biscayne Bay board member, officer, or employee may result in the removal of that person from their position. Further, failure of Friends of Biscayne Bay to observe the Code of Ethics may result in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection terminating its Agreement with Friends of Biscayne Bay.

Form 990-N

Electronic Notice (e-Postcard)

OMB No. 1545-2085

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

for Tax-Exempt Organization not Required to File Form 990 or 990-EZ

2024

Open to Public Inspection

A For the **2024** Calendar year, or tax year beginning **2024-01-01** and ending **2024-12-31**

B Check if available

☐ Terminated for Business☒ Gross receipts are normally \$50,000 or lessC Name of Organization: **FRIENDS OF BISCAYNE BAY INC****3191 GRAND AVENUE,
MIAMI, FL, US, 33323**

D Employee Identification

Number **84-1721430**

E Website:

F Name of Principal Officer: **BRUCE C MATHESON****3191 GRAND AVENUE,
MIAMI, FL, US, 33323**

Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice: We ask for the information on this form to carry out the Internal Revenue laws of the United States. You are required to give us the information. We need it to ensure that you are complying with these laws.

The organization is not required to provide information requested on a form that is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act unless the form displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a form or its instructions must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any Internal Revenue law. The rules governing the confidentiality of the Form 990-N is covered in code section 6104.

The time needed to complete and file this form and related schedules will vary depending on the individual circumstances. The estimated average times is 15 minutes.

Note: This image is provided for your records only. Do Not mail this page to the IRS. The IRS will not accept this filing via paper. You must file your Form 990-N (e-Postcard) electronically.

CLIENT COPY
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