



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 3122

1. Project Title
2. Senate Sponsor
3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

Links to Success is an organization in Desoto County dedicated to empowering under-resourced students. The College and Career Prep Program focuses on equipping students in grades 9-12 with the essential skills and resources needed for a successful transition from high school to post-secondary education and the workforce. The program achieves this through workshops, mentoring, and comprehensive monitoring, with the aim of increasing graduation rates, college enrollment, and access to financial aid and scholarships.

The Youth Empowerment Program within Links to Success recognizes the importance of early career exploration and educational planning. It offers workshops to students in grades 6-8 in team building, career exploration, time management, STEM exposure, and college tours to better prepare students for their future academic and career endeavors. Together, these initiatives help bridge educational gaps and provide vital support to students in Desoto County.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds
- State Agency contacted?

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	200,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	200,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	200,000	69%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	90,000	31%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025	290,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding?

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future funding likely to be requested?
- a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.
- b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.



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Sources of funding for Links to Success have been grants and contributions. These funds are often unreliable year to year and can affect the number of students served.

10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning
 Design
 Construction
 N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Percentage of salary to oversee financial and program management, board governance, fundraising development, and develop community and stakeholder relations. This salary includes a monthly stipend for healthcare.	80,040
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits	Percentage of two part time employees to cover workshop development, setup, and advertisement, student/ family contact and monitoring, college tours, and contracted services with workshop presenters. Hours per week may vary dependent upon workshop schedule. \$25 per hour not to exceed 1300 hours for the year.	44,850
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Percentage of travel to college campuses and introductory visits to work fields, workshop supplies, and facility rentals for workshops.	29,670
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Percentage to cover contracted services of presenters for workshops and a Program Analyst to evaluate program metrics and performance to identify system trends and opportunities for improvement.	45,440



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Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/ Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		200,000

14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

Desoto County faces a significant gap, with graduation rates 15% below the state average and a 20% deficit in college graduates. To bridge this disparity, Links to Success aims to optimize the impact of the allocated state funds. The organization will diligently educate students and families about the importance of post-secondary education while actively facilitating access to crucial financial support, ultimately empowering them to attain their post-secondary educational aspirations.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

Links to Success will utilize the allocated funds to provide a diverse range of workshops and activities for students in the College and Career Prep and Youth Empowerment Program tracks. These activities include orientation sessions with families, college tours, career exploration workshops, financial aid assistance, leadership training, and summer camps. Additionally, the program will extend support to students in the form of mentoring, scholarship guidance, and incentives like awards. These efforts collectively aim to empower students with the essential skills, knowledge, and resources needed for successful transitions into post-secondary education and the workforce.

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

These valuable workshops are offered to students entirely free of charge, ensuring accessibility to all, regardless of their economic circumstances. What makes the Links to Success program particularly impactful is its inclusion of families in various workshops and events. By involving families, the program fosters a comprehensive understanding of the importance of post-secondary education, making it clear to both students and their loved ones. This approach not only strengthens the students' resolve but also garners crucial familial support, a vital factor in their journey towards pursuing post-secondary programs and achieving their educational goal.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

Links to Success is designed to serve a specific target population of students who meet specific criteria. The program primarily caters to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as indicated by their poverty level. It also welcomes students with minority status, including underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, the program targets first-generation college students who are breaking new ground in their families by pursuing post-secondary education. A minimum GPA of 3.0 further ensures that participating students are academically motivated and capable, creating a supportive and driven community of learners. Currently, Links to Success serves 55 students with the hopes of increasing access through this appropriation.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

To measure the outcomes of the Links to Success programs effectively, the following methodologies, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods will be implemented
 Pre- and Post-Program Surveys: Administer surveys to students at the beginning and end of their participation in the program.
 Attendance and Participation Records: Keep detailed records of student attendance at workshops, mentoring sessions, and program activities
 Increase FAFSA completion rates, Increase Scholarship application rates among local scholarships, College Enrollment and Graduation Rates: Track the number of program participants who enroll in post-secondary education institutions and eventually graduate.

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?

- Reduced funding if measures are not met for this appropriation.

15. Requester Contact Information



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a. First Name **Last Name**

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number **Ext.**

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College
- Other (please specify)

d. First Name **Last Name**

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number