



SAFE PASSAGE: YOUTH TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER CARE

A Special Initiative of Dade Community Foundation's DadeFund

2009 Grants Program - Request for Proposals Program Summary & Proposal Guidelines

The Foundation will be working directly with Our Kids of Miami-Dade, around strategies to strengthen the state-funded community-based system of care. Therefore, Full Case Management Agencies of the Our Kids network will NOT be eligible to apply for direct funding through this current RFP.

Proposals Due: 5 p.m., Friday, December 19, 2008
Notification of grant awards: March 2009
Grant Amount: Up to \$30,000.00
Grant Period: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010

- ❖ *Proposals must be in the Foundation's office by 4:59 p.m. on the due date.*
- ❖ *Submit one original and one copy of the proposal.*
- ❖ *No faxed, emailed or late proposals will be accepted. Use only staples or a large clip to hold it together. No binders, folders, or other covers, please.*

Address Proposals to:
Ruth Shack, President
Dade Community Foundation
200 South Biscayne Blvd. - Suite 505
Miami, FL 33131

Required forms can be downloaded from the Foundation's website –
www.dadecommunityfoundation.org – or request them by emailing Betty Alonso

For questions contact any of the following program staff at 305-371-2711 or their email address.

Betty Alonso, Associate Director of Programs Betty.Alonso@dadecommunityfoundation.org
Charisse Grant, Vice President for Programs Charisse.grant@dadecommunityfoundation.org

Safe Passage is a special funding initiative established in partnership with the DadeFund, Inc., a supporting organization of Dade Community Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1967 as Greater Miami's permanent philanthropic endowment to enhance the quality of life of all residents. The Foundation conducts grants programs in a range of areas and is committed to supporting efforts that can build community and change lives.

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The *Safe Passage Initiative* represents a funding effort by Dade Community Foundation to make strategic investments toward improving the lives, opportunities and successful outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care to living independently. This includes focusing on foster care youth during the years they need to and should be receiving comprehensive preparation and the years after they have aged out of the system and must sustain themselves on their own. The initiative will seek to help strengthen the child welfare system of care, strengthen other community services and resources that can provide support to these youth, and foster connections with other systems reaching these youth. Our primary goal is to help build our community's capacity to provide foster care youth with the preparation, support and permanent relationships they need to succeed in life on their own. This opportunity is made possible by the Foundation's DadeFund – a supporting organization committed to using its funds toward programs for children, youth and families in Miami-Dade County.

“Permanency is having someone there to help you when you need it, someone you don't need an appointment to talk to, and someone to lean on for support when obstacles come your way.”

*- Tyler Bacon -fosterclub.com
Miami Herald editorial*

The Foundation established the Safe Passage Initiative in 2007 after devoting significant time to exploring the issue of youth aging out of foster care from a local, regional, state and national perspective. Through review of a range of research, programs and program models and meetings and consultations, the Foundation sought to identify whether and how it might play a role within ongoing efforts to bring attention to and improve the situation for youth aging out of care in Greater Miami and to shape a funding strategy toward that end. That research indicated that in Miami-Dade County about 24 % of the children in foster care were 13 to 17 years of age – about 1,000 of 4,200 children. Research also indicated that about 600 former foster care youth 18 to 23 received some type of state financial support to pursue higher education and manage living independently. By Florida law, beginning at age 13 children are required to receive services to prepare them for living independently.

“This is a manageable number of young people. We can and should assure every youth who leaves the care of the state is educated, housed, banked, employed and connected to a permanent supportive “family” by the time they reach the age of 25.”

*- Independent Living Advisory Council
2006 Report on Independent Living
Services for Florida's Foster Care Youth.*

The Opportunity: There are increasing efforts locally, statewide and nationally to bring attention to the struggles that foster care children face as they age out of the child welfare system. Each year about 200 children in foster care turn 18 and face the daunting prospect of living on their own – with limited personal and community resources to which they can turn for support. The state-funded child welfare system's “Independent Living” programs - charged with preparing and supporting these youth - are severely challenged by underfunding, program fragmentation and inconsistent quality of services delivered for youth. Yet, there is clearly local will and momentum for change within the system and among many groups and advocates. Equally important is reaching beyond the providers and advocates typically involved with foster care to engage other partners providing broader services which youth transitioning out of foster care

need in such areas as education, workforce development, housing, etc. The current environment presents a timely opportunity to target the Foundation's DadeFund resources to improve the lives and outcomes of foster care youth making the challenging transition to independence.

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FOUNDATION GOALS & PURPOSE: The guiding goal for this initiative is to help advance efforts to achieve demonstrative improvement in the circumstances, opportunities and life success of youth making the transition from foster care to independence. The local service systems, community providers and networks are our community's "vehicles" toward that end. The Foundation will make a limited number of grants to support well-defined strategies that reflect the following elements:

1. Focus on either preparing foster care youth ages 13 to 17 while they are still in state care, and to the degree possible approved relative/non-relative placement; and/or providing the essential support former foster care youth 18 to 23 need to successfully live independently. (Referred to as the "target youth population" throughout this document.)
2. Strengthen community-based programs, organizations or resources outside but connected to the state-funded child-welfare system of care (*i.e. Our Kids/ contracted Full Case Management Agencies*) that can provide essential preparation and support services to youth in the target population.
3. Build on existing promising work around strategies that increase organizations' capacity and ability to improve the quality, consistency, effectiveness, availability and access to services and supports for the target youth population.
4. Efforts or programs that are themselves or incorporate key elements of best practices around the issue of youth transitioning from foster care.
5. Address any of the following Areas Critical to Success: ★ "Permanency" in terms of on-going personal relationships/a place to call home ★ Personal* and community support networks ★ Educational attainment ★ Employment/career attainment ★ Housing ★ Life skills/real world experiences ★ Financial literacy and financial management abilities ★ Basic needs, health care - physical and mental. (**Reliable, caring individuals who can help youth manage their lives and affairs and overcome challenges and obstacles they face living independently.*)
6. Translate into improvements in the lives of youth that can be defined, measured and tracked.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING: In 2009, the Foundation will be working directly with Our Kids of Miami-Dade, around strategies to strengthen the state-funded community-based system of care. ***Therefore, Full Case Management Agencies of the Our Kids network will not be eligible to apply for direct funding through this initiative.*** Given the initiative's intent to build on and advance existing promising work, eligibility is limited. In addition to the six elements outlined above, applicant organizations must be able to demonstrate:

1. Current engagement in and a track record of success around programming with the target youth population and around any of the Areas Critical to Success.
2. A working relationship (referral agreements, service contract, memorandum of understanding, etc.) that connects them with the state-funded child welfare system, or Our Kids/Full Case Management Agencies that allows applicants to consistently access youth in the target population; ***and/or*** defined relationships with other local entities that provide them strategic access to former foster care youth 18 to 23 who may or may not be receiving Independent Living services from the child-welfare system.
3. A strategic position within the community – based on their role around this issue, the nature of their work, their ties to youth, etc. - to complement and enhance the current system of care and support.
4. Eligible applicants include tax-exempt organizations based in Miami-Dade County or if based outside the County are working in formal partnership with an eligible organization in Greater Miami. While the Foundation will not provide direct funding to government or quasi-governmental entities (e.g. Miami-Dade Public Schools, the Homeless Trust, South Florida Workforce, etc.) we strongly encourage partnerships between nonprofit organizations and these entities.

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GRANT SIZE & USE OF FUNDS:

The Foundation will award grants of up to \$30,000 for a grant period of one year. The size of the grants will be in line with the project's relationship to the Foundation's funding priorities, potential impact, quality of the project and the capacity of the organization. Funds may not be used to supplant funding for state-funded and/or mandated programs and staffing.

Grant funds may be used to cover expenses directly related to the proposed program/project including: staff, professional consultants, stipends; training and educational activities for participants or program/project staff; supplies and materials; ***non-monetary incentives*** for participation; local travel for program activities, limited out-of-town travel for staff for program/project-related professional development, program design or technical assistance; direct office support and the purchase of media services as appropriate.

Grant are not made - nor may funds be used for - memberships, fundraising events, memorials, grants to individuals, standard in-direct cost rates of colleges and universities, research not directly related to program/project implementation, capital construction, or substitution of funds appropriated for similar services. Grantees must maintain appropriate accounting records and complete scheduled reports related to use of funds.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Stage One Review: The Foundation will first look at whether proposals are in line with eligibility requirements, the initiative's goals and purpose and whether their quality as presented is adequate to warrant further consideration.

Stage Two Review: Staff will evaluate the quality and viability of the proposal around the following six areas - which are the basis for developing your proposal.

1. **Organizational Background**
2. **Community Issues, Needs & Resources**
3. **Accessing & Engaging the Target Youth Population**
4. **Implementation: Activities, Strategies & Objectives**
5. **Project Outcomes & Impact**
6. **Project Resources & Organizational Capacity**

APPLICATION & AWARD PROCESS: Proposals are due by 5:00 pm, Friday, December 19, 2008. Funding decisions will be made in March 2009. Grant Period: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010

Submit one original and two copy of the proposal (3 copies total). **The Foundation will accept only one grant request per applicant.** The applicant's proposal must demonstrate eligibility for the initiative and reflect the goals, purpose and priorities outlined in these guidelines. Required forms can be downloaded from the Foundation's website - www.dadecommunityfoundation.org - or request them by contacting Associate Director of Programs, Betty Alonso by email at betty.alonso@dadecommunityfoundation.org or by calling 305-371-2177.

Foundation staff will first screen all applications for completeness and relative to Stage One Criteria. Those passing this level of review will be evaluated in terms of Stage Two criteria. Phone interviews or site visits may be conducted during the evaluation process. Final approval of grants rests with the DadeFund Board and the Foundation's Board of Governors.

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FUNDING PRIORITIES

Through this Request for Proposals the Foundation seeks to strengthen the array of community-based programs and resources that are not directly part of - but are working with - the state-funded child welfare system of care (*i.e. Our Kids/ contracted Full Case Management Agencies*) that are available to serve and support youth in the target population. All proposals must reflect the goals and purpose and eligibility requirements previously outlined. The Foundation seeks:

Organizations which are particularly strong in terms of:

- ✧ Past track record of providing programming and demonstrating positive outcomes for youth in the target population
- ✧ Working relationships with the child welfare system of care and/or other community organizations or service systems that can provide strategic access to the target youth population

Proposed strategies with strong potential to build the applicant's capacity and ability around any or all of the following:

- ✧ Improve the quality and effectiveness of their programs that serve youth in the target population
- ✧ Expand their programs availability and reach or improve access for youth in the target population
- ✧ Ensure youth in the target population receive required and available services from the child welfare system of care

Proposed strategies with strong potential around any or all of the **Areas Critical to Success:**

- ✧ Permanency in terms of youths' on-going primary personal relationship(s) – a place to call “home”
- ✧ Personal* and Community Support Networks (**Reliable, caring individuals who can help youth manage their lives and affairs and overcome challenges and obstacles they face living independently – e.g. mentors, life coaches*)
- ✧ Educational Attainment, such as: improved current school achievement, assistance and support preparing for post-secondary education (*e.g. school selection, application, financial aid, etc.*), educational mentors or advocates, guidance counseling, on-campus experiences, etc.
- ✧ Employment/Career Attainment, such as: securing current employment; assistance in preparing for the workforce (*e.g. identifying a career, applying for jobs, work experience opportunities, etc.*)
- ✧ Housing, such as assistance in securing affordable, safe housing
- ✧ Life Skills/Real World Experiences, such as providing high quality preparation that includes skills training and practical experience
- ✧ Financial Literacy & Financial Management skills and abilities
- ✧ Other Basic Needs for themselves and their children if they have them (*i.e. food, clothing, transportation, health care - physical and mental*)
- ✧ Central Information Resources, in terms of improving the availability of or access to information about services and support provided through the child welfare system and within the community

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A. COVER LETTER: Provide a letter on the organization's letterhead, *signed by the chief executive officer/ or person authorized to enter funding agreements*, stating the purpose and amount of the request.

B. PROPOSAL COVER SHEET: Complete and attach the Cover Sheet included with these guidelines

C. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Provide a summary of *no more than 2 pages* that defines the following:

1. The purpose of your project/program: The issue and needs you will address; what you seek to accomplish for the target youth population around that issue and need; the key activities and strategies you will implement; and how funds will be used toward those activities.
2. How the proposed program/project meets the purpose, goals and priorities stated in this RFP.
3. Your current engagement and track record of success around programming with the target youth population and the Areas Critical to Success you propose to address.
4. Describe the working relationship (referral agreements, service contract, memorandum of understanding, etc.) that connects you with the state-funded child welfare system, Our Kids/Full Case Management Agencies, which allows you to consistently access youth in the target population; *and/or* defined relationships with other local entities that can provide strategic access to former foster care youth 18 to 23 who may or may not be receiving services from the child welfare system.
5. Your strategic position - *based on your role around this issue, nature of your work, experience, relationships, skills, best practice model, etc.* - to complement and enhance the system of care and network of services and supports that can improve outcomes for youth in the target population.

D. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE: The narrative should be *no more than 6 pages* and address the following:

1. Organizational Background:

- ✦ State the mission of your organization and describe its current major programs or activities, who they serve and how many they reach on an annual basis. How does the proposed project fit into your mission and current programming?
- ✦ If you are implementing this program/project in partnership with another organization – *i.e. sharing responsibility and grant funds to implement key activities* – state the mission of the partner organization and why it was selected as a partner.

2. Community Issues, Needs & Resources: *Should demonstrate the organization's knowledge and understanding of the issues, needs and resources regarding the issue and needs you will address.*

- ✦ Describe the issue or problem you seek to address and the scope of the problem at the local level. Describe how the issue effects the target youth population and the needs for services that are created for the youth.
- ✦ How does your program/project represent a promising opportunity to strengthen and improve services and supports and address areas critical to successful outcomes for youth?
- ✦ What other key organizations locally provide programming similar to what you are proposing?

3. Accessing & Engaging the Target Youth Population: *Should demonstrate your potential for reaching and engaging the target youth population.*

- ✦ Within the priorities for this initiative, define the specific target youth population for your proposed program/project. Describe the key demographics and characteristics of the youth.
- ✦ Describe your working relationship with the child welfare system that will facilitate access to the target youth population and/or relationships with other local entities that can provide strategic access to former foster care youth 18 to 23. Identify other organizations you know of – but may not have a formal relationship with - that have strong relationships with the youth that could provide additional points of access.

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3. Accessing & Engaging the Target Youth Population (continued):

- ✦ Describe the key strategies you will use to reach and engage the target youth population. Include any specific organizations or networks you will work through. Also include how you will market your efforts to make them relevant from the youths' perspective and whether youth were involved in developing and designing the program/project.

4. Implementation: Activities, Strategies & Objectives: *Should demonstrate sound planning to implement your program/project and reflect the Goals, Purpose and Priorities for this initiative.*

- ✦ Outline your plans and strategies for implementing your program/project. *This should include specifics on the key activities will deliver for and do with youth you engage; where activities would be conducted - specific locations or concrete examples; when, in terms of time of day, they will be conducted to meet the realities of youths' lives; how often they will be conducted, etc.*
- ✦ Describe the design and content of the model or approach you will use and why they were selected. Explain how the model or approach is a best practice, or incorporates key elements of best practices around the issue of youth transitioning from foster care.
- ✦ Outline your objectives for the program/project in terms of demonstrative improvements in the lives of youth, and in your organization's capacity as a provider of services and support for youth in the target population.

Note: Timeline and Benchmarks Attachment: *As a separate attachment you will provide a timeline and benchmarks for implementing and tracking progress on key activities for your program/project.*

5. Project Outcomes & Impact: *Should define your plan for tracking results of your program/project.*

- ✦ How many youth do you intend to reach and serve during the funding period of one year?
- ✦ Describe your plans for tracking and measuring your results in terms of outcomes for youth and increased capacity of your organization, which you outlined in Question #4. Define what indicators and measures of progress and success you will use.
- ✦ What information or data will you collect to track and measure your results? How will you collect the data or information? What tools, data collections systems do you have in place already and what if any will you need to develop? What baseline data do you have related to the indicators and measures you plan to use to track your results?

6. Project Resources & Organizational Capacity: *Should demonstrate the organization's capacity to implement the project, achieve its outcomes.*

- ✦ Describe programming you are currently providing that is similar to what is being proposed, how many youth it is reaching and the outcomes you have achieved.
- ✦ Describe the responsibilities, qualifications and experience of the individuals who will have a primary role in implementing the program/project.
- ✦ What are the total financial resources you will need to implement the program/project? How much is secured or committed and what are your plans to secure the balance of funding needed?

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REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS: (These are not part of the six page maximum for the narrative.)

- Timeline and Benchmarks Attachment:** As a separate attachment provide a timeline and benchmarks for implementing and tracking progress on the key activities related to your proposed program/project.
- Proposal Budget Form:** Please use the Project Budget Form included in this RFP to show expenses and income for the total cost of the proposed program or project during the grant period and budget justification.
- Resumes of key project staff**
- Agency's current annual operating budget**
- Agency's list of board members**
- Agency's IRS letter of determination regarding 501(c)3 status**
- Independent Audit for most recently completed fiscal year: (Contact the Foundation prior to submission if you do not have one.)**
- Documentation, if available, any agreements that demonstrate a working relationship with the state-child welfare system** to receive referrals, provide services and/or work in collaboration to address the needs of children in foster care or former foster care youth.
- Collaborative Partner or Key Sub-contractor Agreements:** If your proposal includes allocation of resources to another organization or consultant to play a key role in implementing the project, you must provide a one-page letter signed by both parties that explains: 1) the specific role the organization/consultant will play and activities for which it will be responsible; 2) the share of the grant funds the partner organization or consultant will receive; 3) any financial or in-kind resources the partner will contribute to the project, if applicable.
- Example of Program Materials:** *Selectively* attach examples of materials, program models, outcomes measurement tools or reports you will use for your program/project you think would help the Foundation better understand your proposal.