



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 1003

1. Project Title Best Foot Forward Grounded for Life: Empowering At-Risk Foster Care Students

2. Senate Sponsor Tina Polsky

3. Date of Request 12/20/2022

#### 4. Project/Program Description

Since 2010, Best Foot Forward's Grounded for Life program has successfully graduated from high school hundreds of at-risk, foster care students by providing critical academic support to help them prepare for college and life. Best Foot Forward has a 100% high-school graduation rate, a stark contrast to the national average: only 46% of foster care students graduate from high school, and only 4% graduate from college. This appropriation request will allow BFF to expand the Grounded for Life program to serve approximately 200 students each year. BFF employs graduation coaches to provide weekly personalized tutoring, life mentoring, test taking and study skills assistance, and career guidance, empowering students to advocate for themselves and achieve their academic and life goals. Grounded for Life propels these at risk teens to maximize their potential, ending the cycle of dismal outcomes (unemployment, homelessness, incarceration) that statistically too often plague foster youth.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Education

State Agency contacted? Yes

#### 6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	203,189
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>203,189</b>

#### 7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	203,189	24%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	18,480	2%
Other	626,373	74%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2023-2024</b>	<b>848,042</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. Has this project previously received state funding? No

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future funding likely to be requested? No

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

Yes

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

Yes, Best Foot Forward received EIDL funding PPP in the amount of \$134,000.

## 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

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

No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

The project does not apply. Not a construction project.

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

This is not a construction project.

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.

no owners so does not apply

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

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs: Other</b>		
Salary and Benefits	Salaries and benefits include 5 additional staff to deliver services/programming at a percentage of their time: Grounded for Life Director @24%-\$15,534, College Director @24%- \$16,459, Career and Life Skills Coordinator @ 24%-\$11,782 and 2 part-time Grounded for Life Coaches \$30,720+25,758.	100,253
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Supplies: Includes learning materials, career readiness, internship prep, wellness care packages, student and senior year student fees, college prep, scholarships, summer learning activities, tutoring costs, SAT/ACT prep for students, achievement incentives, and cost of living stipends for student internships (\$79,196). Staff and volunteer expenses: Includes volunteer support expenses (\$2,500). Travel/Other: Includes student transportation to school, internships, and jobs, and student cell phone	102,936



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Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>203,189</b>

#### 14. Program Performance

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

Through transformational learning, Best Foot Forward's goal is for foster youth in the program to stay on-track for promotion to the next grade level and graduate from high school and/or college. BFF's overall impact is to empower foster youth in Palm Beach County to become self-sufficient adults, who positively contribute to our local community. Through Grounded for Life, the road to graduation consists of 1) fostering youth's commitment to attend school and meetings with program staff; 2) participating in weekly program activities; 3) maintaining or improving classroom behavior, social attendance and grades; 4) and working toward achieving individualized academic, behavioral and communication goals.

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

Students meet one-on-one in person with Graduation Coaches to work on individualized educational plans created with the student and staff to map out a plan for success. Coaches assist foster youth with developing study and test-taking skills, provide extended tutoring, homework assistance and help with school credit recovery that enables them to graduate and/or advance to the next grade. Coaches monitor students' academic progress by accessing grades, test scores, and progress reports electronically. Students learn to use technology to maintain contact with their Coach via cell phone (calling, video-chatting, texting, emailing). Older students are provided with college preparation and career readiness. BFF provides students with cell phones and small incentives, celebrate birthdays and holidays to motivate students and celebrate their wins.

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

Through weekly support, BFF's Graduation Coaches provide personalized tutoring, mentoring, test taking and study skills assistance, helping foster youth learn to advocate for themselves, communicate their needs and gain confidence to achieve their academic goals. BFF's College Team begins working with students in 11th grade. The college team helps students navigate college admissions, SAT/ACT prep, scholarships and financial aid and continues support through college, through tutoring, career readiness and connecting foster youth to housing and transportation. BFF also underscores mental health support, using trauma informed care practices, to address students' anxiety and help them with conflict resolution. The consistency of BFF's Graduation Coaches helps to create a recipe for foster students' success.

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

Foster care youth in Palm Beach County face significant academic disadvantage due to learning gaps and difficult, traumatic experiences. Trauma for foster youth resurfaces throughout their lives in the forms of behavioral issues, toxic stress, sporadic social connections, chronic health conditions, which disrupts their educational success. Palm Beach County youth in foster care are shuffled to new living and school environments an average 4-6 times a year. This transiency of home and schools, often accompanied by sporadic school attendance, causes children in the foster care system to fall behind educationally. Grounded for Life focuses on serving 150-200 youth from middle school, high school, and college through a support system of caring trusted adults to help empower foster youth to navigate through school and life, well after BFF programming ends.

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

For many of students in the program, it is the first time in their lives that a trusted adult advocate is able to provide foster youth with a consistent, long-term relationship that results in extensive academic and social emotional support. For more than 10 years+, BFF students have had a 100% high school graduation rate. BFF's college students have a 75% graduation rate--an enormous feat, since nationally only 4% of foster youth graduate from college. Grounded for Life's framework is based on the evidence-based, drop-out prevention model Check and Connect. The program utilizes pre and post assessments that measure student outcomes, skills learned and knowledge gains. Intake forms, coaches' notes track the number of students served, report cards, grades, FSA Assessments, and other academic achievement.



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**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?**

Failure to meet deliverables without notification of good reasoning, will result in financial penalties as described in contract.

#### 15. Requester Contact Information

**a. First Name** Donna **Last Name** Biase  
**b. Organization** Best Foot Forward Foundation, Inc.  
**c. E-mail Address** dbiase@bestfoot.org  
**d. Phone Number** (561)470-8300 **Ext.**

#### 16. Recipient Contact Information

**a. Organization** Best Foot Forward Foundation, Inc.  
**b. Municipality and County** Palm Beach

#### 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** Donna **Last Name** Biase  
**e. E-mail Address** dbiase@bestfoot.org  
**f. Phone Number** (561)470-8300

#### 17. Lobbyist Contact Information

**a. Name** Matt Spritz  
**b. Firm Name** The Spritz Group  
**c. E-mail Address** spritz@thespritzgroup.com  
**d. Phone Number** (954)612-2185