



Item:

Children's Defense Fund - Freedom Schools

Requested Action:

1. The Trust is asked to allocate \$60,000 for the Freedom Schools – Summer Literacy Pilot
2. The Trust is asked to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate a contract with the University of Florida – College of Education Collaborative for Equity in Education

Background:

The Children's Trust of Alachua County released its 2021 Summer RFP with the intentions of funding summer camp providers offering a range of programming activities. 21 providers received summer contracts, providing summer camp services to 1,125 children. During the end of the Summer report, the Trust Board directed staff to identify programs that would specifically address improving literacy and addressing summer slide.

In an effort to take an intentional approach to addressing literacy during the summer, CTAC staff and the UF College of Education - Collaborative for Equity in Education are collaborating to bring the CDF - Freedom School model to Alachua County. Staff is recommending funding this pilot program for 40 low-income, public school children, who otherwise may not have access to books and educational enhancement programs during the summer, particularly African-American and Latino children from at-risk communities.

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools, a six-week summer reading camp that aims to motivate low-income and racially minoritized children to fall in love with reading. CDF Freedom Schools focus on addressing summer slide, where children fall behind academically because their families and/or community lack the resources to engage them in high quality summer programs. Freedom Schools also emphasize how scholars (students) can make a difference in themselves, their families, school community, the country and world. Specific program activities include:

- Integrated Reading Curriculum (3 hours/day)
- Weekly field trips
- Weekly parent meetings/workshops
- Extracurricular activities (e.g., music, dance, sports, arts, etc.)
- STEM development
- Weekly programming at the intersection of arts, culture, entrepreneurship, education, and wellness
- Teacher candidate and teacher professional development

Annual assessments of CDF Freedom Schools have shown that the program has a statistically significant,

positive effect on children's reading skills, attitudes toward learning, and belief in themselves, and in their ability to make a difference in the world around them.

This contract will be exempt from competitive procurement under Board Policy, 6.60,B,4 which exempts all Supplies or Services, purchased from another unit of government.

Attachments:

Resolution 2021-23

Programmatic Impact:

This initiative supports Goal 2 - All children can learn what they need to be successful, Strategy 2.3 - Support literacy and other academic supports.

Fiscal Impact:

\$60,000 for FY2021-2022

Account number 001.15.1500.569.82.00

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval