

Title	Partnership for the Future	07/19/2025
	by Dionne Henderson in Impact 100 Richmond Grant Application (2025)	id. 51110787
	4600 Cox Road, Suite 375 Glen Allen, Virginia 23060 United States 804-967-2559 Dionne.Henderson@partnershipforthefuture.org	

Original Submission	07/19/2025
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Score	n/a
1. Name of Organization	Partnership for the Future
2. 501C3 Number	32-1482889
3. Geographic Area(s) Served:	Henrico City of Richmond Chesterfield County
4. Application Contact Name:	Dionne Henderson
5. Application Contact Phone Number:	+18045277938
6. Application Contact Email:	dionne.henderson@partnershipforthefuture.org
7. Organization Website (if applicable):	www.partnershipforthefuture.org
8. Organization Executive Director/CEO Contact:	Dionne Henderson
9. Organization Executive Director/CEO Phone Number:	+18045106886

10. Organization Executive Director/CEO Email:	dionne.henderson@partnershipforthefuture.org
11. What is your highest rating on GuideStar (we recommend at least Gold):	Platinum
Provide a link to your GuideStar organizational profile, if applicable.	https://www.guidestar.org/profile/31-1482889
12. Please confirm that the following grant criteria are met by the applicant:	Organization has an annual operational budget above \$250,000. Organization has been in existence for 36 months or longer, and is currently in good standing in the state where the entity was formed. Project will serve needs in the City of Richmond and/or the surrounding counties (Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, and Powhatan). Funds will be utilized within 12 - 18 months, and the program/project has demonstrated sustainability following the use of Impact 100 Richmond funds.
13. Select ONE of Impact 100 Richmond's focus areas where your proposed work best aligns:	Education
14. Summary: Provide 1-2 sentences that summarize your specific funding request and the goal of this project or program effort?	This grant will fund a PFF-RPS partnership to increase college access, success, and economic mobility for low-income, first-gen students.

15. Organization: Briefly describe the history and mission of the organization.

For over 30 years, our organization has been dedicated to empowering underserved students by providing them with the tools and support necessary for academic success and personal growth. From the beginning, our mission has focused on bridging educational gaps and creating opportunities for students to excel in both their academic and professional lives.

Through a comprehensive program model, we offer 1:1 mentorship, college tours, financial literacy workshops, cultural capital sessions, a four-day immersive overnight experience on a college campus, and paid summer internships to prepare students for the challenges of higher education and the workforce. Additionally, our college success program ensures our students have adequate academic and emotional support to ensure they not only thrive in their college but also have a launching pad for success in life.

Our work is driven by the belief that every student deserves the chance to succeed, regardless of their background. We are committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive community that celebrates talent, ambition, and determination. By equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to navigate the complexities of education and career, we strive to create lasting change that empowers individuals and transforms communities for generations to come.

16. Community Need: Describe the community need(s) that the program/project will address.

PFF equips high-achieving high school students for success in college and beyond. Higher education is a powerful tool for economic mobility, but it is not the sole solution. Our strategy and program model address the unique needs of students from historically marginalized communities, ensuring they can launch careers, achieve financial stability, and build generational wealth.

Nationally, first-generation, low-income students face significant barriers to higher education. First-generation students make up about 30% of all undergraduates, yet only 51% enroll in college immediately after high school, compared to 71% of their peers from families with college degrees. This gap is further widened for students from economically disadvantaged communities.

PFF is committed to addressing these barriers. Our model provides mentorship, college readiness programs, cultural capital, and paid internships, ensuring our students receive the resources they need to succeed. The impact of our work is evident: 40% of our graduating seniors received full-ride scholarships, and nearly 75% are attending selective colleges and universities. Additionally, 77% of our students graduate in six years or less, seven times the national average for first-generation, low-income students. Our comprehensive approach bridges the opportunity and belief gap, empowering students to break the cycle of poverty and thrive in college and beyond.

17. Community Need: This grant will allow PFF to hire a full-time staff member dedicated to working within schools and expanding our community outreach program for first-generation students. With this new capacity, we can meet students where they are and create multiple entry points into our program for the first time. Each year, PFF sees an increase in program applications. This year, we received 299 applications for just 95 spots, resulting in a 35% acceptance rate. We work with all Richmond Public Schools (RPS) high schools, as well as Henrico, Hermitage, Highland Springs, JR Tucker, and Varina high schools in Henrico, and L.C. Bird and Meadowbrook high schools in Chesterfield.

Describe how a \$100,000 Impact 100 Richmond grant for this program/project would be transformational for your organization and/or the community.

However, we've observed a decline in applications from RPS students, especially Black males. In recent years, Richmond youth have been impacted by violence, and our local schools have struggled with graduation rates. While efforts focus on reducing dropout rates, higher-achieving students often lack the support they need to identify the right college, navigate the admissions process, and thrive in their academic and career pursuits.

Our work is grounded in an asset-based approach, reflecting the belief shared by one of our founding community leaders: "the goal is to make strong children stronger." This grant will help students realize their potential and achieve their dreams of higher education. This partnership will transform the lives of countless students, creating a ripple effect for generations to come.

18. Program/Project: A \$100,000 grant will fund a collaborative pilot program between PFF and RPS aimed at increasing the number of RPS students in the PFF program while addressing the opportunity and belief gap many students face. PFF has been committed to empowering first-generation students, providing the resources and support needed for success in higher education and the workforce. This grant will allow us to hire a full-time staff member to work within schools and expand our community outreach programs, representing a shift in how we engage with historically marginalized communities.

1. PFF in RPS High Schools

PFF will hire a full-time staff member to support high-performing students in select RPS high schools through the college admissions process. This position will ensure students plan for college early and create new entry points into our program. The staff member will also address the belief gap, especially for Black male students. Recent studies show a decline in Black male enrollment in higher education, with only one in three students at many HBCUs being male. The staff member will rotate between schools, offering support during school hours and after-school to assist students and families.

2. Keys to College Community Outreach Workshops

PFF will offer workshops and seminars open to all students to guide them through the college application process. These workshops will be grade-specific for tailored guidance. PFF staff attend national and statewide conferences to stay updated on the latest trends in college access. Our program will provide families with in-depth education on where to apply, writing strong essays, and navigating the financial aid process.

3. PFF Collegiate Chapters

PFF will launch up to five collegiate chapters at schools with a high presence of PFF students or where students face unique challenges. These chapters will offer ongoing support for students, especially those at selective colleges, helping them adjust academically and socially. These chapters will help students graduate on time, secure internships, and connect to career-building opportunities. A PFF staff member will establish chapters, recruit campus ambassadors, and organize events focused on financial planning, career development, and internships. Collegiate ambassadors will receive stipends for their involvement. Connecting students to a support network has been key to improving retention rates, with 100% of our college freshmen returning for their sophomore year last year. Our goal is to help students not only get into college but also graduate and transition into successful careers. By investing in this pilot program, we will expand access to higher education and support students through their academic journey, preparing them for life beyond college.

19. Program/Project: What challenges are you likely to encounter? How will your organization address them?	The greatest challenge we are facing is the messaging to economically disadvantaged students that college is not the pathway to economic mobility. While we recognize that all students will not go to college, this message is particularly pervasive in economically disadvantaged communities. We envision an academic environment where all students are educated and academically prepared so that college is an option that they can choose if they decide. We attend to address this by working more closely with leadership within the division to increase education around financially aligned colleges and universities. Nationally, mental health continues to be one of the leading concerns for youth. Our students have reported a greater concern and need for support regarding their mental health. We have embedded mental health support and coaching into both our high school and college programs in addition to financial literacy. Students in our program have expressed that building a community of other like-minded, college-bound students with similar lived experiences has been a game changer. The addition of collegiate ambassadors allows us to extend this community to college and will give us the ability to respond to our students more quickly and personally.
20. Program/Project: Will you collaborate with any other organizations? If so, who will be your partners, and what will they contribute?	The main partners for this program are: Richmond Public Schools: We are working to establish an MOU with the RPS Superintendent's office, which will outline our pilot program for the 2026-27 year. Colleges and Universities: We will pilot Chapters at colleges where we currently have the most students, which are VCU, ODU, JMU, UVA, Virginia Tech and VSU. While we most often work with the Admission Departments at colleges, for this program we will establish strong relationships with the Office of Student Affairs. Corporate Internship Partners – We work closely with many companies in central Virginia to place both high school and college students in paid internships. Our largest partners are Bank of America, Capital One, Altria, and Harris Williams. We also partner with these companies on networking opportunities so that students can learn more about the education and career path of executive at these companies. Most recently, we have been working directly with employee resource groups to connect students with executives with similar backgrounds and identities.

21. Program/Project: Using metrics appropriate for your program/project, describe your goals, indicators of success, and plan for achieving success (i.e., people served, dollars raised, community outcomes, etc.).	Goals for PFF/RPS Partnership Pilot 1. Increase the number of RPS applicants to our year-round program by 10% 2. Increase the number of students and families served each year from 651 to 1,000 3. Host 4-6 Keys to College events annually Goals for Collegiate Chapters 1. Establish 5 collegiate chapters. 2. Each chapter will host at least two activities on campus for current students. 3. At least 90% of RPS collegiate freshmen in our year-round program will return to school in their sophomore year. Long Term Goal: 80% of PFF collegiate students will graduate from college within six years. Currently, this is at 77% (we anticipate a decline due to the students who entered college during COVID). The national rate for low-income and first-generation students is 11%. Plan to achieve success PFF will recruit and train current collegiate students to run chapters. These students will attend a summer event where they can meet incoming freshmen and establish a relationship with these new students before their freshman year begins.
22. Program/Project: Is there a specific timeline for your program/project, or will it be ongoing? If ongoing, describe the metrics used to evaluate it in the long term.	January – June 2026: Planning with RPS, hiring a staff person, recruitment of PFF collegiate student chapter leaders, and connections with the Office of Student Affairs. July – August 2026: PFF staff member creates work plan and begins working directly with high school and middle school administration, Chapter leaders meet with incoming freshman September – December 2026: Staff person starts in RPS high schools. Chapters launch at colleges and hold their first event January – April 2027: PFF application period for the 2027-28 year-round program and internship recruitment. June – August 2027: High school and Collegiate Summer work experience programs and PFF Institute.

23. Funding: Describe your organization's financial position, including current financial state, cash flow, endowments, annual fundraising, and goals related to revenue.	PFF has cultivated a diverse and reliable funding base through strong relationship-driven fundraising, highlighting our student success stories, and being committed to providing life-changing outcomes that are data-driven and data-informed. This year marks our 31st year of operation. PFF is fiscally strong, with nearly \$1 million dollars in assets, no debt, and an endowment of \$122,216. We maintain 4-6 months of operating cash and serve as the fiduciary agent for over \$100,000 in scholarships. Although we do not receive federal funding, we have already seen some decreases in funding due to the disinvestment in DEI. In areas where we have seen a decrease in funding, our partners have shared that did not signify any concerns with our work or the importance of our mission but rather a change in focus/priorities. We continue to design our program with fierce intentionality to ensure our work is moving the needle and producing life-changing results. But the reality is that we are anticipating a retreat in corporate giving over the next couple of years. To date this year, we have seen a decrease of over \$60,000 in corporate giving. The Board of Directors is launching a new strategic plan focusing on increasing individual giving and new revenue streams to combat this decrease in one of our revenue sources. New revenue sources include innovative new partnership with colleges and universities and new investment from Henrico County.
24. Funding: What is the total program/project budget request? Have you raised any other funds to date to support the program/project? If awarded, how will a \$100,000 grant from Impact 100 Richmond be used?	Full time staff person: \$60,000 Collegiate Chapters Staff Time: \$20,000 Collegiate Ambassador Stipends: \$5,000 Materials/Supplies/Food for events: \$2,500 Travel: \$2,500 Internship Match: \$10,000 Total: \$100,000 We have raised funds to support our collegiate program and summer work experience program but the school-based model an ambassador program will be newly created programs.
25. Funding: How will you fund ongoing expenses associated with the program/project if awarded the Impact 100 Richmond grant? If funding is for a capital project, what are the anticipated ongoing expenses (maintenance, utilities, etc.), and how will you sustain these expenses?	The Impact 100 grant will provide the seed funds to launch this program. Once we complete one year of the PFF/RPS partnership and collegiate chapters, we will have a framework and baseline outcomes we need to secure future, ongoing funding for the program. We will build it into our annual operating budget and track outcomes so that we can report to funders on the impact of the chapters and write specific grant requests for program expansion.

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OPTIONAL Upload
PDF Format Only:
Partner Budget for
Current Fiscal Year
(showing annual
budget of \$250K or
greater), if applicable

Upload PDF Format Only: Detailed Program/Project Budget in a template of your choice (limit one page)

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OPTIONAL Upload PDF Format Only: Letter of Commitment or MOU from Partner Organizations (if applicable)

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Thank you for taking
the time to apply for
the Impact 100
Richmond grant!
Once you submit you
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