Title

The Friends of Foster Care

07/17/2026

by **Danielle Phillips** in **Impact 100 Richmond Grant Application (2026)**

id. 54670735

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Original Submission

07/17/2026

Score	n/a
1. Name of Organization	The Friends of Foster Care
2. 501C3 Number	81-2887214
3. Geographic Area(s) Served:	City of Richmond Henrico Chesterfield County
4. Application Contact Name:	Danielle Phillips
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7. Organization Website (if applicable):	friendsoffostercare.org
8. Organization Executive Director/CEO Contact:	Autumn Young

9. Organization Executive Director/CEO Phone Number:	+18552071160
10. Organization Executive Director/CEO Email:	autumn.young@friendsoffostercare.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.	
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?	The Friends of Foster Care (TFFC) wants to provide academic support to Richmond area foster youth to set them up for self-sufficient adulthoods.

15. Organization: Briefly describe the history and mission of the organization.	The Friends of Foster Care (TFFC) is a charitable organization making a meaningful impact in the lives of foster children across Virginia. Founded by foster parents Richard Litton and Audra Bullock in June of 2016, The Friends of Foster Care (TFFC) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, funded exclusively by private donations and foundation grants. Annually, we serve approximately 2500 foster and at-risk children who are referred to us by social services. Our services span foster homes throughout Richmond and Tidewater, with the goal of enriching the lives of as many foster children as possible. Our staff consists of 6 full-time and 3 part-time employees, along with 1 part-time volunteer. We partner with local businesses and non-profits to facilitate access and improve outcomes for foster youth in the areas we serve. Our mission is to create opportunities and environments for foster youth and their families to thrive.
16. Community Need: Describe the community need(s) that the program/project will address.	TFFC is committed to helping the foster youth of our community overcome the burdens of their circumstances. Education is an area where foster youth struggle and as a group they have the poorest educational outcomes in the nation. Of all children entering the foster care system in the US, only a little over 60% will graduate from high school (that compares to an 85% national average) and worse, only about 25% of the youth turning 18 years old in foster care will get their high school degree or GED. By third grade 80% of foster youth are behind at least one grade level and by 11th grade only 20% are proficient in English and Math. Being in the foster care system year after year, the educational gap grows for these students, and ultimately, many give up on their education. Consequently, two-thirds of youth aging out of foster care end up homeless, incarcerated, on welfare or deceased within 4 years of exiting the system. The educational barriers contribute to long-term economic instability, limiting access to employment and self-sufficiency. The Pathways Program was created to address these challenges by providing consistent support during the critical high school years to help shepherd foster youth into career paths that can ensure future stability.

17. Community Need: Describe how a $100,000 Impact 100 Richmond grant for this program/project would be transformational for your organization and/or the community.	Our tutoring program is one of only a handful in the nation to provide academic tutoring to foster care by professional educators. We serve youth through all of the cities in the Tidewater Region, Richmond and Henrico. We also provide services to youth referred to us by Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Virginia Home for Boys and Girls, Children's Home Society of Virginia and Fostering Acadia. TFFC has supported over 650 Greater Richmond Area foster youth. We invested over $500,000 in programs for these youth, not including any staff or organizational overhead. A grant from Impact 100 Richmond would be transformational not only as our first major contribution from the Greater Richmond area but would also allow us to serve more foster youth through our academic program. The Impact 100 Richmond grant will allow us to provide 2,250 hours of academic tutoring to Richmond area youth. On average this equates to providing 70 youth with tutoring for the year, including those in our Pathways Program. This program does not only transform the lives of the children who participate, but it also helps move the needle for their communities. The reality is that the foster care to despair pipeline is real, with those who were in the foster care system repeating cycles of generational trauma and learned helplessness. This program empowers foster youth to not only succeed academically, but to gain confidence and practical life skills necessary to achieve long-term success.

18. Program/Project: Provide a high-level description of the program/project for which you are seeking funding.	Our pledge is to improve long-term outcomes for foster youth by bridging the educational gap. Through our educational programs, we provide support to youth. We provide tutoring to youth on a weekly basis while in care and up to two years after exiting care. Our goal is to help ensure foster youth's successful transition to productive adulthoods, as well as to support the overarching child welfare goal of permanency. The tutoring program provides tutoring, free of charge, to foster youth through partnership with the city Social Service Departments. We provide services to foster youth referred by DHS agencies in: Richmond, Henrico, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Suffolk, and Newport News, Hampton, Isle of Wight, Franklin, Gloucester, York/Poquoson, Matthews, Petersburg, Southampton, and Sussex. In the Richmond area, we also provide services to youth referred to us by Commonwealth Catholic Charities, VA Home for Boys and Girls, Children's Home Society of Virginia, Impact Living Services, Fostering Acadia and Stepstone Family & Youth Services. Our tutors are trauma-informed, professional educators, hired to provide individualized instruction, 1 to 4 hours per week in any area of academic need. Since 2016, we have served over 1200 foster and at-risk youth, ranging in age from 4 to 24 years old, providing over 85,000 hours of one-on-one academic instruction and investing over $2M in improving educational outcomes for children involved in the foster care system across Hampton Roads. Our primary focus is helping these students overcome educational gaps caused by family disruption, working to get them back on grade level and continuing to engage in school. We tutor foster youth from Pre-K to High School (including GED) and through College in any subject area of need. It is unfortunate, but our students are frequently moved from home to home within the foster care system. One of the unique benefits of our program structure is that our tutors follow the child from placement to placement and continue to advocate for the child. The Pathways Program (formerly the ODU First Star Academy) serves foster youth in 9th-12th grade. Pathways provides comprehensive academic, social-emotional, financial, and wellness supports that help young people overcome barriers associated with foster care involvement, graduate from high school, and successfully pursue post-secondary education and career pathways. Participants attend monthly Saturday Academies and a residential summer college immersion experience (Dorm Days), which also includes college tours. During our inaugural 2025-26 program year, Pathways served 55 youth, including 12 seniors. The 2026 Dorm Days program will have 60 participants, including rising 9th graders and we anticipate serving 90 youth in the 2026-27 school year. TFFC collaborates with community partners, such as Langley Federal Credit Union, Junior Achievement and YMCA to provide comprehensive workshops.

19. Program/Project: What challenges are you likely to encounter? How will your organization address them?	From our experience moving into new localities, we have discovered a common challenge when implementing our program in a new location. The largest challenge is that we are not yet well-known, or known at all, to the local social workers and the foster parents. When we initially sign an MOU with the local DSS agency, referral rates start fairly low until we have had time to meet with the local social workers and advertise our services to local foster parents. There is a period of time in which the local caregivers need to learn our referral system and grow familiar with the requirements and implementation of our programs. We address this challenge by being very forward in introducing ourselves and our programs. We receive a roster of local foster parents that we call, and we attend the local DSS office's all-hands meeting and social worker appreciation events to familiarize the workers with the services we offer to youth in care. TFFC also participates in Chamber meetings, networking events and hosts an annual May Day luncheon on the Shineforth campus. We have an office in Richmond which will allow us to have a greater presence in the Richmond area. TFFC is committed to building relationships with new community partners in Richmond and strengthening our existing relationships.
20. Program/Project: Will you collaborate with any other organizations? If so, who will be your partners, and what will they contribute?	Through individual Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) with each city's social service office, TFFC establishes a formal partnership to serve the foster youth in their guardianship. Services are provided free of charge to all youth and families referred to TFFC by the guardian social worker. TFFC offers programming to 100% of children in foster care within the partnership cities and receives the active foster care roster twice monthly from each city to be able to deploy services effectively. TFFC also partners with local non-profits including, ODU, the YMCAs of South Hampton Roads, Virginia Peninsulas, and Greater Richmond, REACH, Everheld (formerly Connect With A Wish), Entrusted Network, Access Foundation, and First Star, to leverage and maximize resources to ensure the greatest impact for the foster youth we serve. TFFC also has partnered with Children's Hospital of Richmond and Shineforth (formally UMFS). We are committed to forging new partnerships in the Richmond area to best serve youth in care.

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.).	Our goal for the tutoring program in Richmond is to maintain our academic outcomes for youth enrolled in the tutoring program, while increasing the number of youths served to be comparable to our other social service agency partners. Our outcomes for youth with four or more tutoring sessions is as follows: ● 95% promoted ● 88% passed all tutored classes ● 98% of seniors graduated on time or early In the cities we serve with similar demographics to Richmond we provide tutoring services to 33-40% of eligible foster youth and foster youth alum. While this is not attainable during the first couple of years we serve a new location; our goal would be to serve between 20-25% of eligible youth from Richmond and Henrico DSS in the grant year. It would be considered successful to serve 150 foster youth referred to us by Richmond DSS, Henrico DSS and our other Richmond partners. In order to achieve this, we work closely with our agency partners to make foster parents and case workers aware of our services. We also contract with local educators, primarily K-12 teachers, as tutors so that the children can be taught based on the local curriculum and have a staunch educational advocate who can follow them from placement to placement.
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.	Our academic programs are ongoing. In order to evaluate long-term efficacy we monitor grades, as well as individual tutoring session outcomes, including performance relative to goals, attitude towards education and preparedness for learning, as assessment metrics on the program's impact. We also track academic promotion and persistence for students in our program, because staying on track is a monumental accomplishment for foster youth. Based on our current program success, we expect to continue to promote at least 90% of students and graduate 95% or more of all seniors enrolled. At the end of each academic year, we assess and report overall program efficacy, measured by grades and reading progress, to the social service agencies we serve. And while these metrics are important, the confidence and self-esteem students gain through this service is as important as the academic improvement itself. To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, TFFC uses quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate program effectiveness. Academic progress is monitored through GPA tracking, report cards, credit accumulation, tutoring records, high school graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment and persistence. Social-emotional growth is measured using validated assessment tools, including the Youth Hope Scale, Future Expectations Scale, and Social Connectedness Scale. Program engagement is tracked through attendance, participation records, goal progression, and mentor contacts.

23. Funding: Describe your organization's financial position, including current financial state, cash flow, endowments, annual fundraising, and goals related to revenue.	The Friends of Foster Care operates on a one-year full cash reserve basis, meaning we make our fiscal year budget based on the money we have in our accounts at the end of our prior fiscal year. This allows us to keep all of the commitments we make to the youth we serve. Our current financial position is as follows: Assets totaling $3,718,000 with the following distribution: Investment Accounts: $1,500,000 Endowment Fund: $1,289,000 Cash & Cash Equivalent Accounts: $144,000 Pledges: $733,000 Prepaid Expenses: $4,400 Fixed Assets: $7,300 Liabilities totaling: $92,000 primarily in pending invoices for our Pathways 2026 Program Our 2026 fundraising goal is $2.5M, including $750,000 in grant funding and $1.75M in donations from organizations and individuals. To date we have raised $700,000 of that goal. As for many non-profits, the last quarter of the year is when we typically see the most revenue come in. We expect that trend to continue this year. Our cash expenditures average $150,000/month.
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?	In 2026 our academic services budget is $1.2M of our $2.5M budget. This includes $182,700 for the Pathways Program (indicated as Independent Living Academy).. We operate on a full year cash reserve, ie the money raised last year is being used to fund this year's programs. We have raised a nominal amount of direct support for the tutoring program this year to date, including $106,870 for contracted tutoring services and we received $177,000 VDOE NAP credits. Also, in December 2025 (for the 2025-26 school year), we received $150,000 of grant funding designated for the 2026 tutoring program. TFFC has received $90,000 of grant funding for Pathways and $60,000 from a private donation to cover salary and overhead. If we are awarded the $100,000 from the Impact 100 Richmond we will utilize the funds to offer academic support to foster youth in the Richmond area during the 26/27 academic year. 90% of funding will go directly to contracted tutoring, and 10% will go towards tutoring program staff.

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?	TFFC implements an annual fundraising plan to support all programs at our current rate of projected growth (~15% per year). This plan involves individual, corporate and community donations, as well as grant seeking. We are also exploring the inclusion of a commercial business line that will generate an additional revenue stream to accommodate growth of the tutoring program for foster youth across the state. Below are some of the grants we have received for these programs and those we are planning to apply for: Tutoring Program: VDOE NAP Credits $177,000 awarded in 2026, Academic Tutoring Support 26/27 United Way, South Hampton Roads $50,000 funded in 2026 The Martin Charitable Trust $50,000 awarded in December 2025, Academic Tutoring Support 25/26 The Anne Mullen Orrell Foundation $100,000 awarded in December 2025, Academic Tutoring Support 25/26 Pathways Program: Anonymous Foundation $75,000 awarded July 2026 Rivers Casino, Rivers Gives Proposal submitted in June 2026, $20,000, pending grant approval Blocker Foundation $15,000 awarded December 2025 for 2026 Planned submission August 2026, $75,000 ACA Character at Camp Program, Implementation Grant Planned submission October 2026, $300,000

Upload PDF Format Only: Organizations 501c3 Letter

TFFC_Tax_Exempt_Letter_7-17-25.pdf

Upload PDF Format Only: Organization Budget for this Current Fiscal Year (showing annual budget of $250K or greater)

2026_Approved_Budget.pdf

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

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

2026_Educational_Budget.pdf

Upload PDF or JPEG Format Only: List of Organization's Board of Directors

TFFC_Board_Directors_Officers_Jan_2026.pdf

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

Thank you for taking the time to apply for the Impact 100 Richmond grant! Once you submit you will receive a confirmation email.
