



Impact 100 Metro Detroit 2018 Grant Summary

Grant Finalist: **Alternatives for Girls**

Project: **Asset Building Program**

Background: AFG emerged in the mid-1980's when a group of southwest Detroit residents, clergy, and business people began to share concerns about the alarming increase in drug use, homelessness, prostitution, and street activity by girls and young women. We originated as a small, volunteer-run program, opening a five-bed emergency shelter in a neighborhood church. Our organization remains one of the only agencies in southeastern Michigan with the organizational capacity or mission to work exclusively with girls and young women who have fallen through the cracks because they are not being served by the foster care or judicial system. Thirty years after our founding, Alternatives For Girls was named the "Crain's Detroit 2017 Best Managed Nonprofit". Through our core programs (Shelter, Prevention and Outreach), AFG has a three decade history of providing girls and women pathways out of poverty and opportunities to transform their lives.

Unmet Need: Detroit young women, especially Latinas and African Americans, often face greater challenges in finishing high school and graduating from college than their counterparts. According to the State of Michigan, the city has only half the number of college graduates per capita compared to the state as a whole. Additionally in the last year reported, 649 of 1,499 (43.3%) of DPS' female graduates attended college in 2015. This compares to the 71% national share of young women enrolled in college based on statistics from the Pew Research Center. While many young women in Detroit may receive financial aid, scholarship awards or access to new "Promise" free tuition opportunities to attend one of the selected Michigan-based colleges or universities, this often does not cover the full cost of school, fees, room and board, and text books. In Detroit, with such a distressed K-12 school ecosystem, youth are often overwhelmed, and ultimately fail, in college because they are not fully prepared.

Project Summary: AFG seeks Impact100 funding to expand our college pathways program for girls in Detroit to: provide tuition matching dollars for newly enrolled high school students (expanding from initial cohort of only middle schoolers); implement a volunteer recruitment campaign to provide a trained and committed mentor to each girl; and offer a ChromeBook to all participants to support academic learning outcomes. The Asset Building program reduces academic, social and financial barriers to college in Detroit by affording long-term opportunities for higher education readiness, access and completion. AFG intensively engages each girl with year-round programming through at least high school graduation, and supports the whole family through case management and parent workshops. All participants open a higher-education savings account (MESP Plan - 529 tax-advantaged) and a savings account at a local bank; and families are encouraged to make deposits with incentive matching dollars.

Outcome: AFG will maintain a relationship with the mentor, the girl and her parents to assess the impact of the mentoring relationship. The girls' savings will be tracked through monthly case planning meetings and twice a month AFG will take the girls to the bank to deposit money. AFG will receive each girl's report card and will track their GPA. Through parental activities, AFG will document engagement of families and parents to measure support of their children.

Sustainability: The proposed project to Impact100 was designed in a way to be sustainable after a one year grant from 2018 to 2019. First, the matching dollars for educational and savings accounts will be dedicated to one time costs for new high school students being served. Second, the mentor coordinator will implement a volunteer recruitment campaign to create a pool of role models to continue serving after the end of the grant. Last, the proposed ChromeBook laptop members for each participant will give them a lasting modern tool to succeed at their current grade level while preparing for college. AFG has garnered new grant funding from General Motors, Wayne Metro Services and Jacob Family Foundation to implement the level of services proposed in last year's application to Impact100 (not funded in 2017) as well as to expand the program to serve high school students. We anticipate we will continue to be able to attract new funders to continue to sustain and grow this program in the future.