Requester Information

Legislator Name: Escamilla, Luz

Created Date: January 21st 2026 **Submitted Date:** January 21st 2026

Section 1: Requester Details

Description:

This request seeks TANF funding for an evidence-based program that provides 12 years of intensive, trauma-informed professional mentoring to youth 5-17, and their families, experiencing intergenerational poverty, multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and other risk factors associated with family instability, child welfare involvement and teen parenting. Each youth is paired with a full-time, paid, professional mentor ("Friend") who provides individualized support for four hours weekly throughout childhood – kindergarten through high school graduation. Friends build strong, consistent relationships with youth and families, supporting their emotional, social, and academic development. This long-term commitment has been proven to help youth overcome adversity, break cycles of poverty, and achieve positive outcomes such as high school graduation, reducing teen parenting, avoiding criminal justice involvement, creating pathways for youth to enter adulthood with a solid foundation for future success.

Legislative designee contact information:

Name: Kelsey Lewis

Organization: Friends of the Children-Utah

Position: Executive Director

Section 2: Funding Information

How will the appropriation be used?

Category	One-time		Ongoing
Personnel Services	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $1,020,000.00	$0.00

Category	One-time		Ongoing
In-State Travel	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $0.00	$0.00
Out-of-State Travel	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $0.00	$0.00
Supplies and Equipment	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $30,000.00	$0.00
Technology Purchases	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $0.00	$0.00
Infrastructure/Capital Investments	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $0.00	$0.00
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $450,000.00	$0.00

Expenditure Total

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
$0.00	**$1,500,000.00**	**$0.00**

Funding Sources:

TANF

Amount Requested:

2026 (One-time)	$0.00
2027 (One-time)	$1,500,000.00
2027 (Ongoing)	$0.00

Revenue Total

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
$0.00	**$1,500,000.00**	**$0.00**

Is this a multi-year project?

Yes

Is this project scalable if the Legislature does not fund the full requested amount?

Yes

A short explanation describing how the project might be scaled?

The request seeks one-time TANF funding of $1.5M distributed as $500K per year for three years. If full request is not funded, services to currently enrolled youth and families could be jeopardized and it will take longer for the proven, positive impact of a dedicated professional mentor to benefit more Utah youth and their families statewide. Friends - Utah has received an annual legislative appropriation of TANF funding since SFY22 and currently leverages a diversified funding portfolio, with the majority of revenue coming from the private sector; foundations, corporations, and personal gifts. An additional 3 years of TANF funding is essential to fulfill our commitment to currently enrolled youth and expand to serve additional children and families.

Section 3: Agency Information

Subjects:

Health and Wellbeing

01938

Agency:

600 / Workforce Services

Type of entity to receive pass-through funding:

Private for Profit

Grant recipient

Yes

Requested Direct Award Grant Recipient

Friends of the Children-Utah

Section 4: Performance Outcome Measurement

Who would benefit the most from this request (who is the target audience)?

Youth ages 5-17 who are facing significant barriers to lifelong positive outcomes. The population of children and families served are experiencing cycles of intergenerational poverty, multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and are at-risk of entering or have been in foster care.

What is this project or program intended to accomplish?

Full-time, trained professional mentors provide 1:1 support to youth from kindergarten through HS graduation (12+yrs). This proven, long-term approach promotes safe/stable families, mitigates trauma and prevents child welfare involvement. By disrupting cycles of poverty, professional mentoring reduces juvenile justice involvement, prevents teen parenting, & promotes positive lifelong outcomes.

How will the Legislature know whether the project or program achieved its intended purpose?

Youth and families receive 12–16 hours of 1:1 mentorship monthly. Quarterly assessments track progress in 4 intermediate areas: Social/Emotional Development, Learning/Education, Health/Well-Being, & Community Belonging/Involvement. Achieving these outcomes leads to long-term goals: ensuring graduation/GED, avoiding juvenile justice involvement & teen parenting.

Section 5: Other Supporting Documents

Intent Language Documents

Previous Funding Documents

Full Time Employees

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