



2021 Grant Finalist Summary

Vita Nova, Inc. | Transportation for Success

The Organization

Vita Nova, founded in 1998, assists homeless youth aged 18-25. Their mission and vision is to provide former foster care, LGBTQ and other homeless youth comprehensive support including housing, education, employment, and life skills training.

The Program

Homeless foster youth ages 18-24 face barriers to education and employment. The McKinney-Vento Report to Congress cited a lack of transportation as the #1 barrier that homeless youth face when attempting to enroll in school and attend regularly. The state transportation program for homeless youth lacks proper funding, preventing adequate implementation. Staff driven transport vans will allow youth to attain their education and career goals and provide a supportive adult in their daily routine to school and work.

Transportation for Success reduces barriers to education for youth experiencing homelessness. Often, these youth are years behind in their education and the absence of a stable living arrangement has had devastating impact on educational outcomes. Their goal of completing high school/GED or attending trade-school/college are further barred by lack of transport. These youth rarely have a car or even a driver's license, and often, public transport schedules do not align with education/job schedules, and extensive use of drive services such as Uber/Lyft are simply unaffordable.

At Vita Nova, 15 youth need transportation daily to complete high school/GED courses: 12 to trade classes; and 40 for an Entrepreneurship Program, which transports to several locations. This equates to 67 youth in need of transportation services. The purchase of two 12-passenger vans will help address this need.

How will this program impact Palm Beach County?

On their 18th birthday, foster youth do not receive presents and a party. In many cases, this is the day they leave their foster homes with no car, nowhere to go, no money to rent an apartment, and often without even a high school diploma. The youth served by Vita Nova have a real desire to better themselves. Having come through the foster system, moving from family to family, or from abusive/neglectful parents, these youth have severe gaps in their education, so owning a motor vehicle and having a driver's license is not in their reach. This program will create positive change for their futures.

Measurable Outcomes

- 85% of youth served will graduate high school or obtain a GED
- 92% of youth served will go on to post-secondary education
- 89 % of youth served will obtain employment
- 100% of youth served will have main transportation barriers eliminated

How will Impact Palm Beaches grant be used?

The grant will be used to purchase two 12-passenger vans (\$90,000); insurance for one year for two 12-passenger vans (\$9,000); and registration, tax title for two 12-passenger vans (\$1,000). The total program cost is \$105,000. Additional funding for the program will come from fundraising.