

# LOI Form

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## *LOI*

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If you would like to complete this Letter of Intent in Word first and copy your answers over later, use the following link: [Download LOI](#)

The rubric that will be used to score your Letter of Intent can be found here: [Download LOI Rubric](#)

Please pay attention to character limits while working on your draft. These limits include spaces.

### Organization Name\*

Learning Empowered, Inc.

### Project Name\*

Create a brief name for this large capital project. This is how it will appear throughout the PCF grant portal.

Learning Empowered Campus Project

### EIN\*

591623437

### Incorporation Year\*

What year did your organization incorporate? This will be the year listed on your determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service.

1975

### Organizational Mission Statement\*

What is your organization's mission statement? This should be no longer than one or two sentences.

To empower families and build resiliency through educational programs and services across the lifespan.

### Unique Entity ID (SAM)

Please provide your organization's Unique Entity ID number. This is a specific number used by the federal government to identify your organization. **This is different from a DUNS number, which the federal government no longer uses.**

If you do not have a Unique Entity ID number, you can create an account on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) and apply for one here (it is free and may take 3-4 days for approval): <https://sam.gov/content/home>

This field is optional as to not stop a qualifying organization from applying. HOWEVER, a Unique Entity ID number will be required if your organization is approved for a grant. Your organization should apply for a number now if it does not yet have one.

Character Limit: 12

KFHQRLSMTZ7

### Annual Operating Budget Size\*

Please provide the amount of your annual operating budget (expenditures only) for your entire organization.

\$3,772,311.52

### Amount Requested\*

The maximum grant amount is \$5 million. You may request up to 5% for grant administration, project management, and other indirect costs. Please be sure your indirect cost rate is represented in the figure you put below.

**Note: You will be required to upload a more detailed budget if you are approved for the full application stage. You will need to also attach any bids, estimates, and agreements with contractors or other vendors in relation to the proposed project.**

\$500,000.00

### Does the total project cost exceed the amount your organization is requesting?\*

Please note: Answering "Yes" will cause additional questions to load later in this application.

#### Examples

ABC Childcare is seeking funding for a new playground. ABC Childcare is asking PCF to fund \$150,000 for certain equipment, and will seek other funding and donations for the remaining \$20,000 of the playground. ABC Childcare would select "Yes" for this question.

Better Tomorrow, a mental health provider, is looking to expand their counseling center by two rooms to meet increased service demand arising from the pandemic. Better Tomorrow has secured \$25,000 in private contributions, and wants to request the remaining \$125,000 in this grant. Better Tomorrow would select "Yes" for this question.

DBE Food Pantry is seeking funding for a new HVAC unit for their pantry, and is requesting \$40,000 from PCF to cover the entire cost. DBE Food Pantry would select "No" for this question.

No

### Parent Non-Profit/Subsidiaries\*

If your organization has a parent non-profit that has multiple subsidiaries, will multiple subsidiaries be applying in this process?

**Example**

Better Tomorrow is the parent non-profit of three organizations. Two of those organizations want to apply in this process. Both would select "Yes" on this question.

No

## *Request Specifics*

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### **Organization Programming Background\***

Please describe the programming your organization offers to the community and the length of time it has been doing so. That is, what does your organization **do** and **how long** has it been doing it?

Since 1975, Learning Empowered has been empowering families and building resiliency through equitable access to educational programs and services across the lifespan. Our family-centered, intergenerational approach to providing opportunities to family members across the generational boundary allows families to meet their educational goals by providing services and programming that promotes life-long learning.

From the very beginning of life, Learning Empowered provides supports for new families including quality early learning environments for children ages 2 mths to 5 yrs, this includes parenting skills education, and wrap around services including infant/early childhood mental health consultation to meet the needs of families with infants and young children. Closing the education gap begins before birth and continues with intentional supports for parents and families. The foundations we build and the attention we pay to the early years allows us to prepare our children for success. For this reason we are in the planning phase for after-school and summer camps programs for school aged children.

Our adult focused programming supports immigrating families with naturalization programs including citizenship classes, legal supports and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. We provide an array of services to help families coming into our community from around the globe. In addition to naturalization services we also provide stable housing solutions classes for families including a Financial Literacy program, Electric bill support, and Ready to Rent classes to offer opportunities for community members to strengthen their capacities to find and maintain affordable housing during difficult economic circumstances.

Our family-centered service spectrum is designed to provide a continuum of program offerings to support and strengthen families. Our goal is to build family resiliency and help to prepare families for a strong and positive future.

### **Community Need\***

Please describe the community need that exists for your programming. If you are able to cite quantitative, local data, that will strengthen your proposal.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the US Census Bureau, there were already a staggering number of children living in poverty in Pinellas County, 29,342 or 19% prior to COVID-19. Pinellas County has 38% of children living in households below the ALICE (Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed) threshold where families earn less than the basic cost of living or earn below the

Federal Poverty Level. These numbers have continued to elevate during the pandemic and in the face of the current economic stressors of inflation, affordable housing shortages, food insecurity, lack of concrete and supportive social services. The pandemic has created more need in Pinellas County to support families in a plethora of ways that address each families individual needs and requests as they face the serious economic challenges brought on by pandemic.

Working parents across our community are scrambling to figure out how they will keep working and return to work as the child care industry struggles to stay afloat amid the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Children's Movement of Florida, a vast majority of Florida parents relying on child care centers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a tremendous strain on working families. Many of these child care slots are at risk of disappearing permanently, particularly infant and toddler spots. Parents are often unable to return to work because they do not have access to child care. Not only does a lack of child care impact a parent's ability to return to work, it also affects early childhood development, limiting critical learning opportunities in their early years. COVID-19 has created lasting impacts on child development and on learning throughout the course of the lifespan. There is tremendous inequity in access to educational programming across the age span in our community. We can meet the responsibility of reducing the substantial inequities experienced by our children and families.

### Negative Economic Impact\*

**The following question is the keystone of a strong application in this process. If your organization cannot demonstrate a negative economic impact from the pandemic, your application will not qualify for committee review. If you are uncertain about what constitutes negative economic impact or how to demonstrate it, please contact PCF staff for technical assistance.**

Describe your organization's negative economic impact arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples could include:

- A reduction in revenue from 2019 to 2020
- Inflationary pressures
- Increases in demand for services that have not been compensated for through new revenue
- The use of reserves for unbudgeted expenses since the onset of the pandemic, and such use of reserves has prevented the purchase of capital assets
- A need for capital assets to offset community need for which your organization does not have the resources to purchase due to the negative economic harm from the pandemic
- A need for additional capital assets to adapt operations to accommodate health and safety guidelines by the CDC
- Growth in restricted pandemic-related revenue that does not permit capital asset acquisition

**Note: If you are applying for both a Small Purchase and Large Project, you may reuse the answer for this question PROVIDED THAT the negative economic impact is relevant to both requests.**

Learning Empowered has had an uncorrected financial impact due to the COVID pandemic. We have had a significant reduction in revenue that has created ongoing challenges for our organization. Our losses have been significant in several categories including fundraising revenue, event revenue, grant revenue, and private donor revenue. This drastic reduction in our revenue has required us to reduce our administrative capacity, reduce service delivery and lay off employees. This creates a profound cascade of problems including a reduction in our ability to keep classrooms open for both early learning, citizenship, and ESOL programming.

The staffing shortages that have arisen since the pandemic have greatly influenced our organizations ability to function. Both our early learning and Citizenship and ESOL classrooms have suffered losses. Without adequate teaching staff we cannot enroll students and therefore we do not achieve revenue from the programs. This creates problems across the organization and throughout the community as families seek out services and parents struggle to find supports. Child care centers are strained in hiring staff and opening classrooms due to staffing shortages, COVID illnesses, quarantining, and lack of funding to meet basic organizational needs. These issues are further complicated by inflationary pressures that reduce critical organizational capacities around food and nutrition programming, infant mental health services, family engagement and support services and referrals for families needing community resources. In addition to this crisis, which was exacerbated by COVID, the profound learning losses that are occurring for children of all ages will have long term effects on this generation and our community. There is a strong call to action to create access to programs and services that will supplement children's educational needs and to provide supports to bring children back to grade level proficiencies. Learning Empowered is prepared to do this across age groups. With additional space and funding, LE will be able to make a marked difference in preparing children to be successful in school and in life. The pandemic has prevented Learning Empowered from making necessary repairs and maintenance on our property. The fiscal uncertainty of the current market and the uncertainty about what direction the pandemic will turn to next, has prevented us from being able to safely use organizational dollars to do a renovation on a much needed building in order to provide much needed expanded services to the community. COVID has knocked our organization and our community off-track, together we can rescue our children from an entire lifetime of struggling to catch up this lost time.

## Proposal Description\*

The American Rescue Plan Act requires a request that is reasonable and proportional to the level of economic impact your organization experienced. This means the request you describe below should not be greater than the economic harm your organization has suffered.

Please describe your project proposal and address the following:

- What project will be undertaken with these funds?
- What is the estimated lifespan of the project/property improvement?
- How does it address the negative economic harm you described in the previous question?

The funds from the grant will be used to renovate an owned building on the newly purchased Learning Empowered Campus at 6801 38th Avenue North in St. Petersburg. This will allow for the expansion of services for families including: early learning for children ages 2 mths to 5 yrs; family support programs including mental health, parenting and resource referral; and Citizenship, Immigration, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services for families integrating into Pinellas County. In addition to these primary services, the Learning Empowered Campus holds the family service programs of; Ready To Rent, preparing families in housing transition for preparation for successful long term housing rentals; Empowering Babies and Families, supporting parents in the social-emotional and behavioral health of their young children; and, family wrap around services that provide referrals, linkages and supports to families struggling to emerge out of poverty and triumph over the social stressors brought on by COVID.

Learning Empowered's additional service components will center around the introduction of trauma-informed arts programming including music, fine arts, dance, drama, yoga and mindfulness, into creative opportunities across generations. These family level services will include: an arts centered preschool; an arts focused after-school program and summer camp program; a parent education center; parent and family centered creative arts classes; and a parenting library with family resources. This family-centered space will be an asset to the community indefinitely.

The vision for the LE Campus is to create a bustling campus of human services specifically for families in the surrounding St. Petersburg community. These services will include currently offered services and an expansion and enhancement of the services the community has asked for after 2 long years of COVID isolation. Learning with the creative arts enhances communities in a variety of ways, stimulating the development of youth and family culture. The creative arts promotes families in stressed communities in building strong community connections and allows the opportunity to work through trauma and toxic stress that has been exacerbated by COVID and other community level stressors. We intend to provide opportunities to create strong developmental and learning opportunities that promote the healthy educational, social-emotional and developmental health of children and families.

### Number Served\*

How many people will directly benefit from this capital project annually?

925

### Unduplicated vs. Duplicated\*

Is the number indicated above duplicated or unduplicated?

**Duplicated:** A client is counted each time they access services

**Unduplicated:** A client is counted once, regardless of the number of times they access services

**Example:** ABC Food Bank operates two mobile food pantries, one in Clearwater and one in St. Petersburg. Taylor, a Pinellas County resident, goes to both food pantries. If ABC Food Bank counts Taylor's visit TWICE, it is duplicated. If ABC Food Bank counts Taylor's visit ONCE, it is unduplicated.

Unduplicated

### Other (Explanation Required)

If you selected "Other" in the previous question, please explain how your organization determined the number of clients that will benefit from the proposed capital project.

### Rent vs. Own\*

Does your organization rent or own the property for which you are proposing modifications?

**Note: Selecting "Rent" will cause more questions to load below.**

Own

### Guiding Principles - Client Impact\*

The American Rescue Plan Act, which provides the funding for this grant program, aims to ensure an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The term "equity" is defined as:

The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with

disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

One of the guiding principles of this fund is that it will apply a lens of equity to ensure the needs of specified priority populations are met.

**Will this project benefit the community members defined above that have experienced disproportionate negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how?**

This project will be centered around and framed through an equity lens. The population that Learning Empowered serves includes disproportionately impacted communities including low-income households and neighborhoods; households that qualify for federal assistance programs, and families in the ALICE threshold (ALICE = Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, represents the increasing number of individuals and families who work, but are unable to meet their basic needs, including food, child care, housing, health care and transportation). Learning Empowered currently serves historically marginalized communities, Black, Indigenous and people of color, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+, religious minorities and other communities to be supported from a strong equity position.

Learning Empowered's programs and services focus has always been on children and families that have been challenged by intergenerational trauma and toxic stressors. Our emphasis on addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the generational impacts of ACEs and trauma has allowed us to provide trauma-informed services to populations who have not had equal opportunities in education, housing, employment, or the workforce. We endeavor to provide concentrated services for these families and to eliminate the stigma often associated with families seeking services to meet their needs. We reduce barriers to services to families by normalizing the family experience within a "Village" framework. All children and families deserve to be wrapped in the support and care of their communities with equal access to opportunities that help families be as strong as they can be. Our trauma-responsive programming supports the healing of families and community. The number of children and families in our community that are suffering from signs of trauma and toxic stress has increased exponentially during COVID. Unfortunately, COVID became one more toxic stressor for families to face.

## *Community Connection*

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The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) prioritizes organizations that either have headquarters or carry out the majority of their operations inside Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs). QCTs are a standard method of identifying communities with a large proportion of low-income residents. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determines what areas qualify as QCT.

To assess if your organization serves or is headquartered in a QCT, use the following link:

[https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda\\_qct.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html)

In the top right-hand corner, choose the state of Florida and Pinellas County. Then on the left-hand side of the screen, click the box next to "Color QCT Qualified Tracts." The QCT zones are denoted in purple. You can also map your address by adding it into the address box at the top to see if your location is inside the zones.

Below, please provide the location of your operations and the location of your headquarters, if different.

### Headquarters Location\*

Please provide your organization's headquarters address as it appears on your Sunbiz account. To check your Sunbiz registration, you may search here: <https://dos.myflorida.com/sunbiz/search/>

6801 38th Ave. N. St. Petersburg, FL 33710

### QCT Determination - Headquarters\*

Is this organization headquartered in a QCT?



No

### Project Location\*

Please provide the address or intersection where the property being modified is.

6801 38th Ave. N. St. Petersburg, FL 33710

### QCT Determination - Project\*

Is this organization's project in a QCT?

No

### QCT Impact\*

PCF understands that just because a project may not be located in a Qualified Census Tract, those who reside in one may access your services and may come to the location where your organization's project will take place.

- If applicable, please describe if you have clients that reside in a QCT as indicated on the map linked above, and the proportion of your clients that come from these areas.
- If your organization does not serve clients from a QCT, you can write "Not Applicable" below.

The Learning Empowered Campus lies just blocks away from the QCT areas of Lealman and Lake Rich Village areas. Although not directly in the QTC areas, the LE Campus provides services to children and families residing in QTC areas across our county. Our other early learning and social service locations are also placed in close proximity to QCT areas allowing us to serve the population that is most in need of our services.

### QCT Determination - Clients\*

Does this organization's project benefit residents of QCTs?

No

This section aims to capture general demographic data about your organization and to see how you engage with and represent the community you serve. PCF has generalized the demographic data questions more than it has in other processes because of the public nature of this process. PCF understands that identity disclosure can be a sensitive matter and wants to respect your organization's board and staff. If your organization feels comfortable sharing more detailed demographic information, it may do so in the "Community Representation and Connection" section.

### Community Representation and Connection\*

Describe how your organization is representative of, or has authentic connections to, the community your proposal seeks to serve. You can list other community-based organizations that work on programming with you and/or list examples of your work within this community.

Learning Empowered has a long history of developing community partnerships and collaborations. We acknowledge that no organization can meet the broad and complex needs of every family. In order to ensure that our children's and families needs are met, we have developed excellent collaborations with many social service providers across Pinellas County. Each provider addresses a specific area of need for children and/or families and works with us to ensure that every family has a positive experience in seeking services to meet their needs. We have had strong referral partnerships with Lutheran Services Florida, R' Club, Early Learning Coalition, Early Steps, Healthy Start, USF's Infant Family Center, Healthy Families, Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA), Hope Villages of America, Alpha House, Operation PAR, Family Enrichment Services, and many other entities that meet the complex needs for families for child developmental as well as mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence for families.

Learning Empowered has strong internal cross-program referrals to ensure that families needs are broadly met. This includes family wrap around services with referrals across programming including: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Immigration and Citizenship, Housing Stability/Ready to Rent, and Energy Bill Support.

Learning Empowered has been an active partner within the community in broad areas for the last several decades. We have been involved in and continue to support the following community wide efforts: Concerned Organization for the Quality Education of Black Students (COQEBS), COQEBS School Readiness Committee, Annual Baby Talk event and USFSP's Listening to Babies, The Pinellas County Urban League's community initiatives, Homelessness Leadership Alliance, Circles USA, Building Community to End Poverty, Juvenile Welfare Board's Children's Mental Health Initiative, Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH), JWB- Mid and South County Community Council's, St. Petersburg College-Ready to Rent program, Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)- offering partnership on legal supports for immigrating families, Pinellas Early Educators United Association, The Children's Forum, United Way Advisory Council, National Association for the Education of the Young Child, Pinellas Technical School-School Age and Directors Board, and other place based and community centered organizations and initiatives.

### Leadership Demographics - CEO/Executive Director\*

Does your CEO/Executive Director consider themselves a member of one or more of the following populations? Check all that apply.

- BIPOC defined as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+)
- Neurodiverse/physically disabled

None of the above

### Leadership Demographics - Executive Level Leadership Team\*

Does your executive leadership team consider themselves a member of one or more of the following populations? Check all that apply.

- BIPOC defined as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+)
- Neurodiverse/physically disabled

BIPOC  
LGBTQ+  
Neurodiverse/physically disabled

## Leadership Demographics - Board Membership\*

Do your board members consider themselves a member of one or more of the following populations? Check all that apply.

- BIPOC defined as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+)
- Neurodiverse/physically disabled

BIPOC  
LGBTQ+  
Neurodiverse/physically disabled

## Financial Overview

### Budget Summary\*

Please provide a brief sketch of the categories of expenses and the costs needed for your project. If your organization is requesting compensation for indirect costs, be sure to note the percentage (up to 5%) and dollar amount below.

**If you are invited to complete the full application, you will be asked to upload current verifiable bids, proposals, price lists [from your potential vendor(s)] from the past 60 days. If a contractor has already been selected for a construction project for which you are requesting funding, you will need to upload their bid. You are strongly encouraged to collect any remaining bids, proposals, and price lists shortly after submitting this LOI.**

Learning Empowered requests the following funding to make repairs and renovations to the Learning Empowered Campus (Education Building where current operations exist, Campus Center Building where new and expanded services will be implemented). The Education Building requires some deferred maintenance and roof repairs as well as some renovations to support efficiencies in programming. The Campus Center building needs several important facilities improvements to be opened to provide the above services. These repairs, renovations and improvements include:

1. Architectural Design and Plans are bid/estimated at \$33,000.
2. The roofs on the Learning Empowered Campus buildings, Education Building and Campus center Building, have deteriorated over the years and are currently leaking in multiple spots. The estimates/quotes for a new roof for the Campus Center Building and a mansard and roof repair on the Education Building are bid/estimated at \$176,941.
3. Campus Center Air Conditioning is long past its useful life and is no longer functioning. The estimates/quotes for new air conditioning for the Campus Center Building are bid/estimated at \$39,700.
4. Parking lot estimate- Resurfacing of 6700 block parking lot, this is the primary parking lot for the buildings on the 6800 block- \$53,100.
5. Parking lot estimate- Resurfacing of the Campus Center Parking lot and driveways, this is supplemental parking and parent drop off circle- considering the playground expansion in this estimate which will involve some paved play space for older children- \$24,462.

6. Playground Expansion estimate- New gate, fence, turf repair, and equipment, add on a school age play space- \$40,000
7. Campus Center 4 (four) interior classrooms build out to include wall framing, sheetrock, finishing and painting, electrical update and new flooring- \$65,000
8. Campus Center kitchen area including basic appliances, cupboards, flooring and a remodel of a single handicap bathroom- \$25,000
9. Campus Center Ladies room, ensure code and update multiple stalls and sinks including flooring- \$30,000
10. Campus Center Men's room, ensure code and update multiple stalls and sinks including flooring- \$30,000
11. Educational Building Repairs- renovate and bring children's 4 stall bathroom to code including install new bathroom door, electrical work, plumbing work, flooring, installation of toilets and sink/vanity tops- \$24,822.
12. New Fire Door to replace rusted out door for West entrance to Education building- \$2,904.
13. Education Building infant room remodel with removal of wall and new flooring- \$9,000.
14. Repair to elevated walkway between buildings- \$5,000.

Note: Some of the estimates are from the bid process that has already begun. Others are estimates based on reasonable expectations of cost. The bid process has begun for all of the above project components.

With and added Indirect cost of 5%= \$27,946.

Total Estimated- \$586,875.

## Project Preparedness\*

If your letter of intent is approved, you will have 30 days to submit a full proposal. This will require multiple estimates/bids for your project that detail the costs you've sketched out above from potential contractors that would do the actual work.

Where are you in the planning process for the implementation of this project? Please describe your organization's readiness for this project including your ability to collect bids and select contractors and/or vendors. **If you have already selected a contractor for the project, you will need to describe how that contractor was chosen.**

### Example

Better Tomorrow has spoken with contractors about their counseling center expansion project, but has only sought one proposal from a contractor. Better Tomorrow would describe so below, having sketched out the costs in the previous question. Better Tomorrow would indicate its plan to obtain more quotes/bids upon submitting this LOI.

Community Arts 'R Us has begun construction on its new arts center, as it had secured 75% of the funding for it before the pandemic. Therefore, a contractor has already been selected, and is looking to obtain the funding necessary to complete the project. Below, Community Arts 'R Us would explain it has a cost proposal ready to upload from their selected contractor, and is ready to carry out the rest of the project if funding is awarded.

Learning Empowered has been planning for a renovation of the Learning Empowered Campus building since prior to the purchase of the property in May 2022. There have been many steps taken by the LE Board of Directors and Executive Leadership in planning for the expansion of space that aligns with our mission. In addition, we have had strategic planning sessions to plan for this opportunity to serve more families in the surrounding communities. Part of our process was attending community meetings and conducting community surveys and focus groups to better understand the needs within the community for additional services.

In order to ensure project completion, we have secured a construction credit line with our mortgage broker in preparation to ensure we have adequate funds to complete the renovation project. We have also completed a project budget estimate. We have begun the preparation for a Capital Campaign to raise partial funding for the project from our current donors and supporters and to raise programming dollars for the operational components to be implemented after the renovations are completed.

In preparation for the project to begin, we have met with several architectural firms for bids and several general contractors, subcontractors and roof, air-conditioning and pavement companies for bids. We have a multiple bid process started and are working quickly to ensure an optimum number of bids to make the best choice to move forward with construction. Our facilities staff and leadership team are actively engaged in the project already. We are confident that our preparation and this funding opportunity are excellently aligned to ensure that a valuable asset to the community is created through this process.

## Other Funding Sources\*

Please describe any other funding not already mentioned that your organization has applied for or obtained for this project. This includes but is not limited to Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), local government grants (including Tourist Development Council funding), foundation grants, and donors (you do not need to disclose donor identities, simply amount raised that is allocated to this project). This includes any matching grants or in-kind contributions you may have obtained.

If none, please write N/A.

Learning Empowered has taken some preliminary steps to ensure adequate funding for this project. As part of our mortgaging process for the property, we were able to secure a construction credit line with our mortgage company in preparation for renovations to ensure we have adequate funds to complete any projects that we begin. We consider this an in-kind support for assurance of project completion. We have actively started planning for the launch of a Capital Campaign to raise partial funding for the project from donors, friends and supporters. We have already had a "friendraising" event in the community to seek interest from community members in supporting this project and the programming associated with it. We have also written several grants to seek funding for renovation and programming dollars for this project. We are anticipating approval of some of our submitted grant proposals. We continue to actively pursue opportunities to bring in foundation dollars and grants at the local, state and national level. We believe that this project will allow us to make an impactful post-pandemic difference in our community for decades to come.

Last November we launched a signature event, Swing of Hope Golf Tournament. This was a fiscally successful first time event and we have our second annual event planned for November 2022. The proceeds from this fundraising event will be earmarked for capital expenses and programming connected with the LE Campus Center.

Learning Empowered has long had in-kind support from the community, our active Board of Directors, our sponsors and friends. We have invited and anticipate strong in-kind supports for this project. We have begun actively recruiting volunteers for programming throughout our organization and have begun rebuilding our volunteer base after it was devastated by COVID.

## Changes in Operating Costs\*

Please answer this question based on the descriptions below:

- If this project **increases** ongoing operational costs (programmatic, operating maintenance or other costs), how will you compensate for the difference?
- If this project **decreases** ongoing operating costs, how will it do so?
- If this project **does not affect** operating costs, please note so below.

This project will increase ongoing operational costs; programmatic, operating maintenance or other costs. The intended expense for additional and enhanced programming will come from multiple revenue streams.

These revenue streams are a combination of existing revenue streams that will increase as well as the pursuit of further diversification of our current revenue. Revenue that will contribute to the ongoing expense of additional programming space include: organizational fundraising events, partnering on events, individual private donations, corporate donations and sponsorships, foundation grants for services, local children's services council funding, local and state level service reimbursement, state and federal grant dollars, and sliding scale parent and family co-payments for some services.

Although we anticipate an increase in operating costs, we believe that we have a solid management structure and the capacity to increase revenue alongside new programming and expansions.

## Fund Management Capacity\*

Please describe your organization's capacity to manage these potential ARPA funds in terms of fiscal management and financial infrastructure.

**This includes, but is not limited to, the use of accounting software that can track a general ledger and multiple accounts and the ability to work on a reimbursement-basis.**

The inability to handle a reimbursement-basis grant does not disqualify your organization from applying.

Learning Empowered has a solid administrative team for fiscal and financial management which consists of a Finance Manager, Director of Development, Director of Administration and Executive Director. These staff positions are in addition to an active and engaged Board of Directors with solid finance expertise and experience.

Our current active software for finance is QuickBooks and cloud based, PNC Pinacle. We also use the ProCare data base for early learning, PayCor and PayCor Recruiting for payroll and recruiting, and Donor Perfect, to track donations, events, grants and other non-programmatic income and expense.

Learning Empowered is financially solid and could work on a reimbursement-basis.

## *Additional Information*

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### Additional Upload

If you have something else to share, you can upload it here in PDF format.

**Please note: Due to limitation of this grants system, the upload field will not carry over to the full application if you are moved forward to the full application phase. You will need to upload this file again if you are moved forward in the process.**

Learning Empowered Campus.pdf

### Anything else to share?

If you have any details to share regarding this grant request, you may do so below.

In May 2022, Learning Empowered Inc., purchased a large piece of property on the 6800 block of 38th Avenue North in St. Petersburg, previously St. Mark's UMC. This was made possible by selling our previous administrative buildings in Largo. LE admin is now on site at the new Learning Empowered Campus

alongside our Early Learning and Citizenship programming. LE decided to purchase the St. Mark's property after the first 2 years of COVID as an opportunity to expand services to the community during a time of tremendous community need. Our intention from the beginning was to maximize our resources by expanding our already existing services for families and bring additional needed services to the St. Petersburg community that we serve.

## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- Learning Empowered Campus.pdf





*Empowering families and building resiliency through educational programs and services across the lifespan.*

In May 2022, Learning Empowered Inc., purchased a large piece of property on the 6800 block of 38th Avenue North in St. Petersburg, the new Learning Empowered Campus. This was made possible by selling our previous administrative buildings in Largo. Learning Empowered Administration is now on site at the new Learning Empowered Campus alongside our Early Learning and Citizenship programming. The property at 6801 38th Ave. N. had previously functioned as St. Mark's United Methodist Church with an active congregation until 2016. Through a lease agreement, Learning Empowered opened the Center for Early Learning at St. Mark's in 2013 under Learning Empowered's previous name, United Methodist Cooperative Ministry Suncoast (UMCM Suncoast). Learning Empowered decided to purchase the St. Mark's property after the first 2 years of COVID as an opportunity to expand services to the community during a time of tremendous community need. Our intention from the beginning was to maximize our resources by expanding our already existing services for families and bring additional needed services to the St. Petersburg community that we serve.

The Learning Empowered Campus currently holds 4 buildings and a parking lot with an additional adjacent parking lot located on the 6700 block of 38th Avenue North. The primary building currently utilized is a 2 floor Education Building housing one of Learning Empowered's Centers for Early Learning, the administrative offices, our Citizenship and Immigration programs and our Infant Mental Health Program. The LE Center for Early Learning at St. Mark's currently provides early care and education to children 2 months to 5 years old. In addition to infant care through VPK, St. Mark's houses 2 Head Start Classrooms in partnership with Lutheran Services Florida Head Start. The Education Building has been undergoing some renovations and addressing some deferred maintenance issues since our purchase in May this year. There is still work to be done on this building and we continue to make property improvements slowly, as costs allow, during times that the early learning center is closed.

The premier building on the new Learning Empowered Campus is the old sanctuary building. Built in 1967, the sanctuary building was a house of worship until 2016. With its majestic cathedral ceiling with cedar beams, the sanctuary is a piece of art that was built to stand the test of time. The stone and cement block foundation is as sturdy today as it was 50 years ago. Its beauty is timeless and should be restored to serve the community that it was built to hold. Not only is this landmark worth preserving, the architects and contractors that have recently viewed this building have all stated not only the importance of keeping it but the practicality of

preserving the solid building structure and the tremendous cost savings associated with a repair and remodel versus a tear down and rebuild.

The services and supports available at the current Learning Empowered Campus include; early learning for children ages 2 months to 5 years, Citizenship, Immigration and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services for families integrating into Pinellas County from other countries and learning to develop knowledge and skills to fully integrate into life in our community. In addition to these primary services, the Learning Empowered Campus currently holds the family service programs of; Ready To Rent, preparing families in housing transition for preparation for successful long term housing rentals; Empowering Babies and Families, supporting parents in the social-emotional and behavioral health of their young children; and, family wrap around services that provide referrals, linkages and supports to families struggling to emerge out of poverty and triumph over the social stressors brought on by COVID.

The vision for the Learning Empowered Campus is to create a bustling campus of human services specifically for families in the St. Petersburg community that surrounds the campus. These services will include our currently offered services and an expansion and enhancement of the services the community has asked for and has the need for after 2 long years of COVID. The expansion of quality infant and toddler care is a grave need in our community and has been out at the top of the list by families in our community. We are therefore making efforts to enhance our infant/toddler programming and expanding our capacity in this area.

Through community surveying and focus groups, the families in the surrounding area have asked for specialty programming in STEAM and the creative arts for elementary aged children. Research shows us that the creative arts enhance communities in a variety of ways, enhancing the development of youth and family culture. The creative arts allow families in stressed communities to build strong community connections, work through trauma and toxic stress present in communities negatively impacted by COVID and other community level stressors, and provides opportunities to create strong developmental and learning opportunities to promote the healthy educational, social-emotional and developmental health of children.

Learning Empowered plans an expansion of the age groups that we currently serve to include kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. We are developing afterschool and summer camp curriculum that will focus on immersion into STEAM and the creative arts to enhance opportunities for higher level thinking, problem solving, creative expression and social-emotional development. We are creating space to offer additional service components to both our preschool aged children and elementary aged children that will center around cognitively stimulating experiences in STEM, literacy, and the introduction of the arts including music, fine arts, dance, drama, and yoga and mindfulness. These creative opportunities will be offered across generations with family level programming available to the community. These services include: an arts centered preschool; a STEM and arts focused after-school program and summer camp program; a parent education center; parent and family centered creative arts opportunities; family literacy programming, and family wrap around services that endeavor to support families

in meeting their needs with community referrals and linkages to social service programming with our community partners. Our goal is to make a difference in the educational opportunities of children and families across the lifespan.