Consortium of Florida Education Foundations  
Summary of Local Education Foundation COVID-19 Response Efforts  
May 15, 2020 Update

We believe that strong local education foundations (LEFs) are essential for communities to close opportunity gaps and ensure educational success for all students. Our mission is to work with our members and partners to connect individuals, organizations, and financial resources, building the capacity and effectiveness of LEFs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of education in the world. Amid the crisis, Florida’s local education foundations are adapting current programs, responding to immediate student and teacher needs and thinking ahead to what’s next to innovate teaching and learning with a focus on equity and addressing the needs of our most vulnerable students. To date, we know that LEFs have raised $2.8 million for response and relief efforts.

Florida’s LEFs Response Highlights

Adapting Existing Programs, Refocusing Support and Responding to New Needs

- Distance learning still generally requires students have basic school supplies at home. Several LEFs with free teacher resource stores are developing new systems to reach teachers and families with basic school supply and hygiene items as well as hands-on science or literacy activities for students. Stores have gone virtual by coordinating with school nutrition sites and homeless student liaisons, neighborhood distribution and accommodating drive-by shopping while meeting safety and social distancing guidelines.

- Others are also helping families with basic needs – surveying parents and mentors to identify specific needs and augmenting district food efforts. Futures Foundation for Volusia County Schools is providing online Walmart cards for struggling families (with stipulations on allowable purchases). The Education Fund of Miami-Dade is distributing fresh produce from their school-based Food Forest program. To date, LEFs have raised $687,500 to support meals for students and families.

- Since many LEFs have needed to move Take Stock in Children (TSIC) mentoring sessions and college coaching online, some are using that knowledge and those systems to help more students. Champions for Learning (Collier County) shifted FAFSA support to online and webinar-based resources that are available to all students in the state: Step-by-Step FAFSA Instructional Video. The Education Foundation of Alachua
The Education Foundation of Sarasota County re-invented their TSIC Mental Health Initiative to support all students in weekly virtual sessions to help students connect, de-stress and build resilience: This QuaranTEEN Life

- **Broward Education Foundation** is repurposing remaining funds for this year’s classroom grant recipients to allow teachers to purchase what they need in their new “classrooms” – headsets, green boards, etc. Office Depot helped them develop a system for online purchasing for home delivery with a deep discount, as well as a tracking system, and other foundations are starting to work with them in similar fashion.

- Some LEFs have identified teacher leaders or community providers who can help other teachers adapt to distance learning through sharing their best practices and tech support.

- **Hendry Public Schools Foundation** is repurposing remaining funds for this year’s classroom grant recipients to allow teachers to purchase what they need in their new “classrooms” – headsets, green boards, etc. Office Depot helped them develop a system for online purchasing for home delivery with a deep discount, as well as a tracking system, and other foundations are starting to work with them in similar fashion.

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- **LEFs support school and district efforts to recognize seniors through scholarship programs and virtual graduation ceremonies.**

  - **Hendry Public Schools Foundation** - Scholarship Ceremony
  - **Public Education Foundation of Marion County** - drive in graduation ceremony
  - **Pinellas Education Foundation** - Virtual Awards Ceremony

Digital Devices and Internet Connectivity

- As Districts and schools identified digital device shortfalls in the goal of having one adequate device in each household for students, several LEFs stepped up raising hundreds of thousands in a matter of days. They
are working through software and distribution issues. Some are providing additional devices in households with multiple students. More than $729,000 has been raised by LEFs for digital devices for students.

- Internet Connectivity – There have been lots of requests to pay for “Hot Spots” being deployed in low income neighborhoods on school buses or in targeted locations. Some are helping with individual family internet connectivity, focusing on specific schools or student populations such as transitional grades, seniors, etc. Nearly $386,000 has been raised by LEFs for internet access for students.

- With a focus on digital equity, local and statewide advocacy has resulted in some movement on the issue of families with past due balances or bad credit not being able to obtain internet service. Some providers have waived debt owed and are allowing more families to access their low-cost services. Click here for summary of internet service providers we have learned have adapted policies.

Thinking Ahead and Addressing Opportunity Gaps

- Some foundations are working with their district partners now to plan summer academic programs to stave off an even bigger “summer slide” with vulnerable students losing significant academic gains from the transition to distance learning combined with regular summer break.

- Other LEFs are proactively working with students in scholarship programs to avoid a “summer melt” with students who have been planning to go to college in the fall but may now be distracted and/or have more challenging family circumstances.