

Holy Trinity First Stage Questionnaire  
For Large Grant 2017

Organization: Bright Beginnings, Inc.  
128 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Executive Director: Marla M. Dean, Ed.D.  
[mdean@brightbeginningsinc.org](mailto:mdean@brightbeginningsinc.org)  
(202) 842-9090

**Project title: 10 Words** Workforce Development for Homeless Parents

**Summary: 50 words**

Bright Beginnings (BB) is dedicated to homeless parents with young children in Washington, DC. The Workforce Development Program provides 200 parents of enrolled children an individual education and career plan, which is their road map toward self-sufficiency. Reliable childcare, transportation assistance, and ongoing support lead to program success.

**Nature and Significance of the Problem: 100 words**

Families make up the fastest growing segment of DC's homeless population. The cost of raising a child takes a toll on the family economy at all income levels. For poor families, it can lead to economic disaster—loss of job, strained relationships, dropping out of school and, ultimately, homelessness. BB's families have exhausted all resources and reached rock bottom. They see no way out. This program prepares parents to complete their education and secure career-progressive, family-supporting jobs that will lead to self-sufficiency. Guaranteed twice-daily interaction with the parents - dropping off and picking up their children - ensures success in recruitment.

**What/Where/How – What is the project, how will it address the root causes, where does it take place, how does it work? 250 words**

The program occurs on the third floor of the BB Child Development Center. Parents drop off their children and go upstairs for Workforce Development. Each parent develops an Education/Career Plan with staff. This process includes identifying employment goals, determining education needed for the jobs, ensuring that the jobs will pay enough to support the families, and addressing participants' obstacles to achieving their goals. Participants create resumes and attend classes in job training, workforce readiness, financial literacy, time management, and life-skills. They create household budgets, conduct job searches, pursue new skills, or complete certifications. They talk to professionals in their fields of interest, go on interviews with prospective employers, and obtain employment. Job retention averages nearly one year because BB stays in close touch with the parents.

This approach to hard-to-employ job-seekers works. Parents perceive themselves as members of the workforce and become increasingly resourceful in identifying jobs, acquiring skills for better jobs, and staying employed. Results include: 1) developing household budgets; 2) evaluating what jobs have potential to produce sufficient income; 3) determining what jobs coincide with their talents and interests, 4) determining the demand for workers in identified fields, 5) preparing to qualify for those jobs. Most impressive is that parents are becoming increasingly resourceful supporting each other in identifying jobs, acquiring skills to get better jobs, and finding work. Working successfully toward employment and financial control of their lives is new for many BB parents.

### **Results: 200 words**

BB succeeds in reaching the District's most vulnerable families: those with young children and without permanent housing. All BB families are in the bottom quartile of income. Both parents and children benefit directly from the Workforce Development Program. As the most important adults in the lives of a young child, parents aim to give their children a new image of a successful parent upon whom the children can model their own futures. The local economy also benefits with the entry of new skilled workers ready to take high demand jobs.

BB measures results as parents progress along the continuum toward work. Last year, 102 parents entered employment, job training, or education programs and steadily built skills, developed self-esteem, and progressed toward self-sufficiency and family stabilization. Thanks to their determination, 69 parents got job interviews; 27 parents pursued education programs, enrolled in a GED program, or entered a vocational program; and 59 parents got jobs, 14 of whom had never been employed before. Job retention averages 12 months. Increased economic stability allowed 22 families to move into more stable homes.

### **Sustainability: 100 words**

BB understands that this grant is a one-time opportunity. Workforce Development is a core BB service and will continue. During 2017, BB needs to replace two funders taking a planned break and another one-time grant. HT support will help BB close that gap and help expand Workforce Development to the parents of 64 additional children who are part of a special home-based project. A time-tested fund raising team at BB includes the executive director, development specialist, grant writer, and the 26-member board of directors. They continually seek support to ensure the client families have the full range of services.

### **Operations and Timeframes: 100 words**

**Outline Operational Plan and list operational milestones achieved in the next 1-2 years?**

The program operates on a continuum toward education completion, job readiness, and employment. BB recognizes and celebrates each step forward for parents. Anticipated achievements for 2017 are: 1) 145 parents develop/update Individual Education/Employment Plans; 2) 80 parents participate in job-readiness workshops/events or job training programs to prepare for the workforce; 3) 75 get interviews; 4) 35 pursue education programs; and 5) 50 work in new jobs and 35 will retain or change jobs. Increased economic stability allowed 22

families to move into more stable homes. The program collects quantitative and qualitative data to measure success.

### **Risk Management 150 words Risk factors or potential barriers and plan to mitigate them?**

Homelessness takes a mental and physical toll on the parents and children. They live in cramped quarters full of air borne allergens and germs. They have easiest access to high fat, high salt food. BB has a part-time nurse and nutritionist who will stave off many illnesses, prevent others, and generally lead to improved health among the children and their families. The presence of these health care professionals has increased attendance by 50%. When sick, children recover more quickly. Parents will be able to go to work as long as their children are at BB. Mental health is also a risk factor for homeless families. Many parents operate at a level of toxic stress that can impeded their ability to make positive change in their lives. BB's trauma therapist (available 10 hours a month) supports families through crises and through the ongoing anxiety of the food insecurity and homelessness.

### **Management Capability and Structure – 250 words**

BB is the only child development center in the District devoted exclusively to homeless parents with young children. BB pursues a multi-generational approach to child development with a mission to prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to read and to learn and support homeless parents so they can stabilize their home lives and become self-sufficient.

Executive Director, Marla Dean Ed.D, is an accomplished education leader who was executive director of schools at Washington's Cesar Chavez Schools for Public Policy. Her career began as a public high school teacher in Detroit and was a turn-around principal at a school where 50% of the students were homeless.

Tamara Perez, MSW, Family/Community Engagement Manager, on staff since 2005, has devoted her career to serving families in crisis. She maintains family service plans and coordinates parent involvement. Jeanay Bullock is Workforce Development Manager and has taken the program to new heights since she arrived in 2016. Prior to BB, she specialized in workforce development and job placement at Goodwi ll Industries. Program Associate Alex Schneider MSW candidate at American University and has devoted the last three years to supporting parents through the continuum of workforce development services.

In addition to the 40 volunteers who connect parents to employers or training programs, the program collaborates with DC Central Kitchen, So Others Might Eat (SOME), Training Source, Neighborhood Legal Services, and DC Department of Employment Services. Employer Partners include: Forman Mills, TJ Maxx, UPS, Washington Convention Center, Howard University. Verizon Center, and Center City Inc.

### **Project Size: 10 words**

\$50,000 over two years to serve 250 homeless parents.