



501(c)(3) Non-profit

hds foundation

mentoring | achieving | living

B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant Application

2024-2025





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2024-2025 B.R.I.D.G.E.S. GRANT APPLICATION

The HDS Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit Organization founded to provide mentoring services and opportunities to Teens and Young Adults who have Autism-related disabilities. The primary focus of the Organization is to promote the development of work and daily living skills, build socio-educational transitional experiences via specific school-based partnerships, and support the post-secondary journeys for this growing population. Bridging the gap that can support young adults' diverse abilities and facilitating college-level and other post-secondary education will strengthen this population's chances for meaningful, long-term employment, and self-sufficiency. Teens and young adults can be better prepared to meet these demands when they are addressed, utilizing a spectrum of solutions.

The HDS Foundation supports and partners with community-based groups, aiming to enrich the lives of this special population by providing many social opportunities. These are designed to develop personal growth and independence further. The B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant is a funded partnership with High Schools that meet the requirements of this Program. The HDS Foundation is poised to help educate and provide information related to available, safe, and affordable housing options that can further the possibilities of attaining independent or semi-independent housing. These options may be available through Private, Federal, State, and Community-based Programs.

The HDS Foundation reserves the right to modify the requirements of this grant.

HDS Foundation Mission Statement

To facilitate Services and Resources for the Autism Community, including the families and organizations who Mentor, Teach, Develop and Support the mission of enriching the lives of individuals on the Autism Spectrum, and, to promote and support the initiatives that create Independence, Employment Skills, and the ability to access Safe, Affordable Housing opportunities as they reach maturity. This will be accomplished by the HDS Foundation's School and Post-Secondary based Programs, Community and Government Partnerships, and Business Enterprise Initiatives.

Vision Statement for HDSF B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant

To address the social and transitional needs of a niche group of A.S.D. Students, who are seeking to navigate through high school, and attend college or other post-secondary similarly to their non-ASD Peers who are looking to achieve the same. This will be done by creating a partnership with local high school's identifying these candidates who are typically underserved in these goals and providing certain financial and other resources and support to allow the teachers and students to engage in activities they would otherwise not have access to, separate and distinct from those provided by their school system



Purpose of the Grant

The purpose of the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Program is to offer students on the Autism Spectrum a specialized program of interactive community and school-based activities/lessons to help them transition through high school and into post-secondary.

The Grant award is (up to) \$5,000 per academic year, to a qualifying Florida-Based High School's E.S.E. class. Grant funds can only be used for the program activities based on the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant criteria. This will require the class to have a separate {bank} account.

Eligibility Requirements

- The High School Must Be located in Miami-Dade and/or Broward Counties.
- The School Administration, E.S.E. Department and Facilitators/Teachers must meet the requirements.
- Eligible students must be on the Diploma without Access/F.S.A. Track (or equivalent).
- The class population must have at least 8 students and not exceed 12 students. Even numbers are recommended for pairing and group activities, though not required.
- Many of these skills and experiences of the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Program are geared for the transition out of high school. For the experiences to be fresh and relevant, we request that class candidates be 11th and 12th graders.
- Students may only be part of the Program for two (2) academic years.
- To plan for the CBI's, the High School must create a special class designed to incorporate two periods of the student's daily school schedule (one academic period plus one lunch period) every other day during the block scheduling.
- The B.R.I.D.G.E.S. GRANT will provide the class facilitators/teachers with extra funds to engage in non-typical school activities, organize community-based trips, learn to budget, make purchases, and dine out and engage in typical social activities for individuals of their peerage. In addition, these funds will provide financial means for any typical school-based party, prom, and any other related activities that are not funded by the school that would benefit this specific population.

The HDS Foundation recognizes the diversity of each community and school, and as such has created a platform with in-person and virtual options for each applicant to propose their own unique Program that addresses the overall goals of the Grant.



The applicant must fill out the online application and provide a written plan of how their Program will work, including proposed class and community activities, timelines, goals, stakeholders involved, inter-school social plans, and a budget for carrying out these activities. Additionally, the school must identify the school team and administrative staff who will oversee the Program.

Program Goals

Applying schools must be familiar with the HDS Foundation and B.R.I.D.G.E.S. missions and use the GRANT funds accordingly to fulfill both. The following are the Program goals:

- **Budgeting**
- **Resources**
- **Independence**
- **Development**
- **Growth**
- **Empowerment**
- **Social Skills**

Budgeting

The skills of budgeting, expenditures, and managing money, in general, are important aspects for anyone but challenging at times for this population. Much focus of our Program is put on this component as these are crucial aspects of adulthood and everyday life. Through the Program, students should learn basic skills such as creating a budget, learning to save, opening a bank account, paying a bill, or calculating tips. These components can be taught with a mixture of different activities and Community Based Instruction (CBI) such as creating a shopping challenge, where students will form into groups with a set budget and attempt to buy the most items closest to that amount (i.e., the Office Depot challenge). Other activities that can be organized would be a Banking and Budgeting event for students, alongside parents, to open their own account. This could be followed by a visit to the local bank to get more acquainted with their branch, learn about the teller and different transactions such as withdrawing and depositing money, and learning how to use the A.T.M.

Resources

Many of us are unaware of the numerous local, state, and federal community resources available to those on the Autism Spectrum. Though some are, at times, limited, services such as Public Transit, Community Outreach, and Vocational Rehab, are some of the many resources that are there to assist in helping our students with everyday life as they transition into post-secondary education or training, and adulthood. Learning about things such as local bus routes, nearby medical centers, community outreach, and understanding what resources they have around them and how to get there are critical skills. Some



Resources/activities could include creating a map of your community and learning what bus routes are closest; learning to use transit apps on the phone to track where you need to go and what time to be there; visiting a community center and finding out about local events or programs they have available to the public. Another school/class-based activity that can include parents are visits by Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VocRehab) to explain what this resource can do for their students, and how they will need to plan for the available assistance as they transition to graduation. The HDS Foundation can assist with this event and work with other school resources to get the appropriate VocRehab representatives to come and speak to the parents and/or legal guardians.

Independent Functioning

Independent functioning is comprised of many different aspects of one's life and is something that many of us acquire slowly and take for granted. Students on the Autism Spectrum have different difficulties in learning independent living skills, as many young adults do, because of the lack of exposure and practice of these skills. An essential part of the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. program is helping students learn some of these skills to better prepare them for life after high school, whether in a post-secondary program or while away from family and on their own. Some activities to help teach these skills include going grocery shopping, doing laundry, and time management. Students will reap the benefits of learning how to live on their own and gain confidence by having the ability to do them independently.

Development

Personal development is a large part of the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. program and comes on its own as well as along with some of the other program components. Students will learn development skills on their own while also increasing these skills in many of the other activities such as independent functioning and social skills. Some important lessons in development include learning about health and nutrition, learning coping strategies and stress management skills, and creating an exercise routine. Activities learning coping strategies and stress management skills and creating an exercise routine. Activities such as creating a school garden or doing different exercise activities such as creating a full-body gym routine, going to a local park with a fitness trail, or organizing a yoga and meditation class, will help students create a healthier mind and body relationship for themselves which can help them live longer more mindful, and more fulfilling lives.

Growth and Empowerment

In addition to more pragmatic skills, it is imperative for students in the class to learn self-awareness and self-confidence. The Growth and Empowerment component should include activities that encourage the students to familiarize themselves with their own strengths and weaknesses. The lessons should motivate them about the future (through outlining personal goals) while teaching them to deal with the present, through coping with daily challenges.



Moreover, they must focus on understanding, managing, and communicating their emotions. Targeting non-ASD Peers within the school population from clubs or organizations (or individual students who want to volunteer) and engaging them to be mentors and role models to the students will significantly impact their personal growth and feeling of belonging while in high school and beyond. Any student who volunteers for these mentorship opportunities may be eligible for service hours from The HDS Foundation, Inc, a Non-Profit 501 © (3).

The B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant also aims to help students develop character and values through volunteering and community outreach to 'give back.' A greater understanding of themselves and others will help the students feel more confident in their abilities. The B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant requires at least one annual event aimed at giving back to the community. This can be done through visiting and serving at a soup kitchen, forming a beach or park cleanup, participating, and fundraising in a walk (i.e., during April, National Autism Acceptance Month) or other charitable activities. We want to instill philanthropic values and emphasize the importance of being involved in your community and "paying it forward."

Social Skills

The top component of the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant is learning and practicing social skills. Students on the Autism Spectrum struggle with social skills that many of us take for granted. One of the more significant tangible advantages that students have received in the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. program, especially in their second year, is the improvement of social skills and the ability to communicate and spend time with their peers. Teachers should organize activities to make sure the students in the class get to know each other and form friendships.

Teachers still need to focus also on inclusive activities that will help the students be more successful when dealing with their families and typical peers as well as those they will encounter in everyday life. To achieve this, lesson plans can include the difference between verbal and nonverbal communication, developing teamwork, and understanding how one's actions can affect how others feel. Activities should also promote and emphasize problem-solving in social situations: what is appropriate versus what is not, and how to communicate if there is a problem or how to deal with emotions in public.

Social skills are critical, together with the other daily living skill components targeted by the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Program, provide an excellent opportunity for the Autism Spectrum and other abilities student population. To fulfill these requirements, we encourage activities like holiday themed events, such as Halloween or a Winter party. School Activities such as Homecoming and Prom can bring an opportunity for the class to create an event and/or participate in peer- organizations like Best Buddies, The Friendship Journey, Social Cog, or social school clubs that actively work to make lasting friendships between special needs teens and their peers. Activities should also promote and emphasize problem-solving in



social situations: what is appropriate versus what is not, and how to communicate if there is a problem or how to deal with emotions in public.

Social skills are critical, together with the other daily living skill components targeted by the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Program, provide an excellent opportunity for the Autism Spectrum student population. Each month, the students should be participating in at least one field trip that works alongside the in-class lesson (like visiting a company), and one to two casual social outings (like going out to lunch). To fulfill these requirements, we encourage activities like holiday-themed events, such as Halloween or a Winter party. School Activities such as Homecoming and Prom can bring an opportunity for the class to create an event and/or participate in peer- organizations like Best Buddies, The Friendship Journey, Social Cog or social school clubs that actively work to make lasting friendships between special needs teens and their peers.

I. Curriculum Requirements

- Written Plan of Goals, Budget, Class Info, Social Activities, Community Based Instruction fieldtrips (eating at restaurants should be limited to 1-2 times a month).
- Pictures of CBIs and additional information as needed.
- Facilitators/Teachers are responsible for documenting Community-Based Instruction (CBI) activities and reflect the basis of each CBI. The teacher/facilitator is responsible for providing the HDS Foundation with at least 3-5 pictures and providing which CBI/BRIDGES Goals are connected to the pictures. This is a great task to delegate the responsibility to students in the class to engage them in and give extra credit.
- Social Activities - Students must be part of a social activities group outside of their classroom setting and show documentation. This requirement reinforces the ability to engage in a more inclusive and generalized environment which supports greater peer learning opportunities. Some examples of this can be a School Club, Drama, Chorus/Music Member, Sports Team, Religious groups, The Friendship Journey, Social Cog, etc.
- At least one Class Fundraiser, Community Outreach Activities, or Student Led Enterprise.
- 10-12 Community Based Instruction or social activities (see examples).

II. Program Requirements

- A quarterly and a mid-year assessment will be held with an HDS Staff Member to discuss any changes or enhancements that need to take place. Dates will be determined.



- Annual reporting includes demographics, what the students have accomplished so far, any challenges that have presented themselves, and other pertinent information that can aid the HDS Foundation in assisting the class and ensuring their success.
- Students are Required to have a Photo and Video Release signed by their parent/legal guardian. If the Photo Release is NOT signed, students WILL NOT be able to attend Community Based Instruction (CBI) and HDS Foundation Events outside of the school. The release will be used exclusively to promote the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Program. This will give the families an opportunity to see what their child is experiencing in the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. program. Photos/Videos will be posted on our social media platforms. School names and students' last names will not be posted on social media.
- Facilitators/Teachers are responsible for distributing and collecting a **COMPLETED Photo & Video Release Form** for each student before the first CBI activity. Program Manager will pick up Release Forms prior to this date.
- Facilitators/Teachers will submit an end of year financials and report by **June 30th**.

III. Timeline Requirements

- Final Proposed Plan/Requirements (Updated and/or complete, with all forms, waivers, etc.)
- The teachers must provide an email and phone number database of the parent(s) for all students attending the class by **September 15th**. The purpose of this list will be strictly to provide parents with additional resources and activities as they come up and not be shared with any third party. (Note: The HDS Foundation and the B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Grant program require a certain amount of parental involvement for specific activities, which should be discussed with school administration during the student selection process).

IV. End of School Year

- The school must create a final report, which can be an adaptation of the original plan, with added components, notes, and outcomes achieved from class goals. This report will allow us to evaluate the success of the Program, learn from the classroom experiences and teacher input, and enable HDS Foundation to improve future Grant Opportunities.
- The school must create a final budget report, including expenditures for the year. We expect that the Grant Funds will be used fully during the academic year. Once the budget ledger is provided, the HDS Foundation reserves the right to request a refund or apply left over funds towards next year's grant if the recipient applies and is awarded for the upcoming school year. No funds can go to the school at large for any purpose.



Program Testimonials

Kate Gilson-Miranda, B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Alumni: "As a B.R.I.D.G.E.S. Alumni, there are many things I would like to say about the Program, but this program has helped me with daily life skills such as opening a bank account and learning how to budget. Now as I get to see the current students in the BRIDGES Program, I get to see the tremendous growth they make throughout the year using the life skills that they are taught. "

Kathy Gorman-Gard, Speech Language Pathologist/Facilitator: "Most of the students showed tremendous progress with socializing within the classroom environment and on CBI activities. The highlight of the year was The Prom which 8 seniors and their guests attended. The parents were also pleased to see their children attending their Senior Prom. As their instructors, the planning and coordination took a lot of effort, but it was worth it to see their enjoyment. The students created Vision Boards again this year which opened discussions regarding future employment. This allowed for the students to speak with a wide variety of Guest speakers (in person and virtual) who discussed their career choices and what requirements were needed to reach their goals. These speakers were a big hit. We are so grateful that the grant gives us the ability to give these opportunities to our students."

Contacts and Other Information

General information: info@HDSFoundation.org

Program Manager: Liz Falk Email: liz@hdsfoundation.org

Program Facilitator & Educator: Kate Gilson-Miranda Email: kate@hdsfoundation.org

Board Member: Meagan Bouscher-Miranda Email: meagan@hdsoftware.com

Website: HDSFoundation.org

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Instagram: @HDS Foundation

TikTok: @Autismonthego

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Sample Community Based Instruction

Here we have provided a list of options for Community-Based Instruction and activities throughout the year to apply learned skills and offer positive social opportunities. We have also included virtual or web- based activities and resources that can be used as transitional methods to carry out CBI goals.

VIRTUAL RESOURCES

CBI in A Box

- Home Depot Kits:
 - Birdhouse - www.homedepot.com/p/Houseworks-Bird-House-WoodKit-94503/100659246
 - Soccer Game Kit - <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Soccer-Game-Kit-Pack-91134P/314022968>
 - Helicopter - <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Helicopter-WoodKit-94512/100686204>
- Gardening: Planting an Herb Garden
- Ice Cream Social
- Walmart-Pizza Box Kit
- US Post Office
- Color Me Mine
- Cooking-Blue Apron/Freshly

Virtual CBIs (can be adapted to In Person)

- Job Interview Tutorials – ViTA (Dan Marino Virtual Interviewing Software)
- Police Department
www.bing.com/videos/search?q=virtual+field+trip+police+station&docid=608049906106304299&mid=C2E1FD6D67C6D3457664C2E1FD6D67C6D3457664&view=detail&FORM=VIRE
- Fitness: 8 Minute Workout for Teens (No Equipment)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixjdNUtWN-Y
- Guided meditation for Autism www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1cbGCHuUe0
www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_bmCKMrLYs
- Shopping @ Target: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TtAsO_FQmE
- Shopping @ Walgreens: www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-E2Mt-4TEg
- Shopping @ Old Navy: <https://coachspiegel.weebly.com/virtual-cbi-sites.html>
- Shopping @Krogers Grocery Store: <https://coachspiegel.weebly.com/virtual-cbi-sites.html>

- Tropical Reef Aquarium: <https://explore.org/livecams/oceans/pacific-aquariumtropicalreef-camera>
- National Aquarium: <https://samuraivirtualtours.com/example/nab/index.html>
- Discovery Education: <https://www.discoveryeducation.com/community/virtual-field-trips/>
- San Diego Zoo: <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cameras>
- Magic Kingdom: www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4fVYfNrCM0
- Universal Studios: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXKo7z0A8QI
- Accessible Chef: <https://accessiblechef.com/recipes/>

Lunch Social (Order lunch online)

- Texas Roadhouse Grill
- Publix-Make your own sub
- Panera
- Wings in Weston
- Weston Diner
- Lucille's Diner

Guest Speakers Virtually/Face to Face

- HDS Software Tour/Special Guests
- Fire Department/BSO
- YMCA
- Painting with Meagan
- Mental Health Professional Support

Family Network on Disabilities Presentations

- Mad Job Skills Series
- Social Networking Dos and Don'ts
- Dating 101: Healthy and Safe Dating Practices
- Cyber Safety
- Personal Hygiene: Dental and Skin Care
- Personal Hygiene: How to Shower
- Choosing a Doctor as a Young Adult: Making your own appointments

Group Activities

- Kindness Rocks
- Tile Designs

Careers

- CareerOne Stop: <https://www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerVideos/career-videos.aspx>
- Ohio Means Jobs: jobseeker.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com/
- My Next Move: www.mynextmove.org/
- O*Net online: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Life Skill Videos

- Laundry Skills CYW Practice- Teaching Basic Laundry Skills - Bing video
- Personal Hygiene - (iDo app. Free) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk3JUR5IVPg>
- Time management Skills Time Management for High Schoolers - [Bing Videos](#)
- Making a bed - www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALAZWarDMMQ
- Washing Dishes- www.youtube.com/watch?v=4S6cYd8URAQ

Other (DADE/BROWARD COUNTY)

- The Friendship Journey-Virtual Hangouts/Camp Wings of Change
- Office Depot- teamwork, problem-solving, following a budget which includes tax.
- Homecoming Game Spirit party and luncheon- socialization with inclusion.
- Halloween Party- Luncheon or afternoon activity- socialization, budgeting, costume planning, and selection.
- Home Depot- Teamwork, budgeting, tax, planning.
- Publix- teamwork, problem-solving, budgeting, tax, and accessing store personnel.
- Holiday Party- location to be determined- budgeting, meal planning, tax, tip, and social skills.
- Miami Dade Bus- trip to park and ride or straight from school to U.S. Post Office.
- U.S. Post Office- putting together a package, addressing a package or envelope, time management (hours and bus/C.B.I. consideration) Interacting with personnel, and learning about the postal system and job opportunities.
- Texas Roadhouse- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving.
- Walmart- Budgeting challenge, teamwork, socializing, learning appropriate clothing wear for job interviews, learning about job opportunities at Walmart.

- Chilis Holiday Party- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem-solving, understanding tipping.
- Prom Party- Socialization, Planning, Interaction with like peers.
- Ice Cream Social with typical peers - Socializing, demonstrating appropriate body language.
- Bank of America – using deposit slips, A.T.M. machines, interacting with bank personnel, problem- solving.
- Panera - socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, and problem solving.
- Tarantella- Halloween Party- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, and understanding tipping.
- Wings in Weston- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, and understanding tipping.
- Cold Stone Creamery- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, and problem solving.
- Peace Mound Park- Scavenger hunt - socializing, teamwork, and problem solving.
- Publix- make your own Sundae's – Teamwork, interacting with store personnel, tax, budget, and problem solving.
- Paint Fiesta – following directions, interacting with instructor, and socializing.
- Vista View Park – team building – teamwork, socializing, and problem solving.
- City of Weston Fire Rescue – following directions, asking appropriate questions, and demonstrating appropriate body language.
- City of Weston B.S.O. - following directions, asking appropriate questions, and demonstrating appropriate body language.
- Weston Diner - socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, and understanding tipping.
- Weston Regional Park – team building - teamwork, socializing, problem solving, and following directions.
- City of Weston City Hall - following directions, asking appropriate questions, and demonstrating appropriate body language.
- Y.M.C.A. - following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language.
- Walgreens- interacting with store personnel, problem-solving, appropriately using A.T.M. card.
- Lucille's Diner - socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, and understanding tipping.



- Japan Inn- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, and understanding tipping.
- Scavenger Hunt at C.B.H.S. - socializing, teamwork, and problem solving.