

**FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING
DISASTER RELIEF FUND**



PROPOSAL

Purpose: To establish an interagency fund, with oversight from participating organizations, for the purpose of assisting child care and early learning programs with financial needs to become operational post Hurricane Michael. The fund would remain active for other potential future hurricanes / disasters.

Background: Many organizations have expressed a desire to do something to help the areas affected by Hurricane Michael. We know that children affected by trauma and disaster fare better when normalcy and routine are re-established. The child care and early learning infrastructure is central to rebuilding efforts in the damaged communities. While there is a desire to contribute resources to assist, many don't know how to go about it in a coordinated fashion to ensure that the funds are accessible to the intended recipients.

Building on the experience in 2004, when five hurricanes hit our state, the Forum launched a similar initiative for rebuilding the child care infrastructure with contributions by individuals, organizations, and a Florida foundation. Local programs affected by hurricanes applied for small grants (up to \$5,000). An application process was developed with financial accountability put into place for the use of funds. The initiative was successful and helped many programs where no other resources were available to meet those needs.

Believing that we share similar interests and goals, and are stronger together, we are proposing to establish the *Florida Early Learning Disaster Relief Fund (FELDRF)* for this purpose supported by contributions from partner organizations, individuals, and associations. This fund would be advertised as a collaborative joint initiative with partner recognition (not a Children's Forum project).

Fund Management: A separate Children's Forum bank account has been established that is linked to a PayPal account where contributions may be made. The PayPal account has the capability of indicating where the contribution is to be applied (e.g. general purposes, faith-based programs, family child care homes, Head Start programs, or child care centers). The funds would be accounted separately and not co-mingled with Forum funds. Separate financial reports would be generated for this account. The Forum's CFO is a CPA and is willing to undertake the separate accounting for this initiative.

Oversight: A Steering Committee comprised of contributing partners and soliciting funds on behalf of the FELDRF (and willing) would be invited to serve. The purpose of the Steering Committee would be to review applications, processes, procedures, policies, etc. to ensure the intended purposes for the funds are achieved.

Solicitations: The Forum will create an active link-embedded graphic that can be shared widely on partner websites, social media outlets, and through email distribution. Further, the Forum would create a "landing page" for the Fund that would outline the purpose, provide photographs, show collaborating organization logos, and provide links to forms for potential recipients to apply. The goal is to create the collateral materials as quickly as possible. The Forum's communications team is committed to getting this accomplished quickly.

Decision Points:

1. Is there agreement to participate in the *FELDRF*? (We would develop a memorandum of understanding for this purpose – simple).
2. Is there a willingness to participate on the Steering Committee?
3. Are there funds to contribute? The Forum is contributing an initial \$1,500 in the account that we had previously earmarked for a Forum CARES Project (Crisis Assistance & Responsive, Emergency Services).
4. Questions / other considerations?