

# **2021 COVID-19 Recovery Grant** **Request Summary**

## **COVID-19 Recovery Grant Application**

In response to the strain the COVID-19 virus pandemic is placing on the local healthcare system and community-based organizations, the Desert Healthcare District and the Regional Access Project have made available grant funds to provide additional support and resources to our local healthcare and service providers.

## **Academic Solutions Usa, Grant #1245**

### **About the Organization**

Academic Solutions Usa  
PO Box 10681  
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Tel:

### **Organization Type:**

501(c)(3)

### **Contact:**

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### **Proposal**

**Project Title:** Trajector Learning Conception project (TLC)

**Total Project Budget:** \$166,337.00

**Requested Amount:** \$10,000.00

**Start Date:** 9/1/2020

**End Date:** 5/31/2023

### **Project/Program Description**

**Community Need:** *Define a specific need(s) for the project and describe the alignment to ongoing COVID-19 relief, recovery, and assistance efforts.*

When COVID-19 spread, shutting schools down, students were forced to stay home and either complete worksheets provided by the schools or attend virtual classrooms. Parents were left with the care and education of their children in addition to their usual financial responsibilities despite many adults losing their jobs. This strain trickled down to our nation's children. Not only has the pandemic caused academic challenges, including loss of critical skill acquisition, it has also created emotional and mental challenges for young learners.

Although it was recognized that learners with special needs needed immediate assistance and provided with funding, those with giftedness were overlooked. Worse, those with both gifts and disabilities (twice-exceptional) were potentially affected the worst of all. Twice-exceptional (2e) learners are difficult to identify, first because of lack of awareness in the educational and psychological community and second because of a masking effect. Masking occurs when students have pronounced giftedness which compensates for their disabilities, making them unrecognized and therefore unserved. Conversely, if the disability is easily recognized, these students are rarely considered for gifted programs. Finally, the disability and giftedness can mask each other, neither exceptionality is served. These students are often called dumb or lazy and develop low self-esteem and self-efficacy.

In addition, unidentified gifted learners can be misdiagnosed as troublemakers and referred to special education because of low achievement. Through customer discovery, we have discovered that during online classes these students have become greatly angered because they complete their work much faster than their peers and are forced to sit still and watch online while being lectured about patiently waiting for their classmates. Academic Solutions USA can potentially serve 6,383 in the Coachella Valley. Their homes have had to become schools, creating negative dynamics between parent and child. Some even require counseling and some cannot afford it.

**Project Description:** *What program/service are you performing or providing that is vital to your target population during the current COVID-19 public health crisis and describe its importance.*

At the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, Academic Solutions USA began tutoring homeschool students who had started failing school after the onset of COVID-19. One student had attended a private school and was forced to sit in front of his computer for eight hours per day. His mom said if she did not receive help with his education, she would consider pulling him out of school for a year, if needed. With us, his grades and emotional well-being immediately improved. During one conversation his mother cried, saying he is a different boy now; he looks forward to learning.

We soon learned that this boy is mechanically and potentially leadership gifted. He could be called 2e because he has Irlen Syndrome. When we first started working with him, he had been held back one year in school, and his teacher was considering holding him back again. We screened him and found that his reading challenges were due to this disorder. However, because we recognized his incredible talent with building and systems, including anatomical, we initiated the Trajectory Learning Conception (TLC).

The TLC was designed from the foundations of Dr. Albert Bandura's theory of social agency and self-efficacy, Dr. Susan Baum's Talent Centered Model for 2e learners, and the Autonomous Learner Model, developed by high school gifted learners who were disenchanting with school. A great deal of empirical research supports the success of these foundations. The TLC includes both personalized academic curriculum, geared to

the students gifts in their fields of interest, as well as customized social/emotional curriculum to improve the learners' mental health and self-regulatory skills.

This highly specialized project is critical to advancing these children toward their career trajectories because they are the World changers. 2e learners include Beethoven, Einstein, and Steven Spielberg.

**Is this a new project or an expansion of a preexisting project? Please describe if the proposed project has been developed recently or if a preexisting program has been modified to address the impact of the COVID-19 virus**

This project was originally designed to be implemented in public schools, where CEO/Gifted Specialist, Holly Armstrong first saw the underserved gifted children.

After earning her Bachelor of Special Education degree, Holly earned her Master of Gifted Education degree. During that time, she discovered there is a lack of funding for gifted education. Through her research she learned that many districts in our area will only test second grade students (excluding those with special needs) but have no other funds to serve them. It is well documented that if gifts are not developed while children are young, they often lose the efficacy of their inborn talents.

Directly prior to the pandemic, Academic Solutions USA found a principal in Coachella who wished to work with us. She showed us the IQ score of one of her students who was referred for evaluation for special education since he was academically failing and always in trouble. He was in the top 10% nation-wide. The principal and his mother did not know what to do with him, and before we could get full board approval, schools shut down, and we had no way to help these students.

Academic Solutions USA strategically pivoted. We began to develop curriculum that we can now use online. Additionally, we are reaching out to parents directly and receiving far more support because they are desperate for help with their disenchanting, gifted children. We assess nominated students with the WISC-V, Raven's Progressive matrices, and TTCT. For the arts, we will employ experts to review portfolios and artistic pieces/presentations. After acceptance, we begin the dynamic process of academic and social/emotional alignment and advancement which is unique to each individual's needs.

**How will the grant funds be used? Please describe specifically how the grant funds will be used towards operational and/or programmatic support?**

First, the impact for these students is extremely significant. They have the potential to change the World; we know geniuses like Martin Luther King as well as Hitler. We are prioritizing our grant request as follows: Student needs, education (to keep business growing), insurance (Liability & D&O), staff, website, & office equipment. Student startup kits include the listed items needed for emotional exercises, meta-cognitive regulation, and academic exercises. Thanks to Caravanserai SEED Lab at UCR, we

have been able to develop our business plan, funding opportunities, and customer discovery. We have the opportunity to continue receiving their business mentoring and believe it will build out our business to help up to the conservative estimate of 6,448 students in the Coachella Valley who are potentially unidentified gifted learners. Insurance is necessary to protect our board members and business; likewise staff needs to receive income to run the business. Thereafter, we need a functional website with SEO, security, and analytics to manage the direction of marketing, host webinars, podcasts, and email marketing. Finally, our office computer crashed, so we need a desktop compatible with our iPad for student movies.

### **Geographical Area Served**

Cathedral City; Coachella; Desert Hot Springs; Indio; Indian Wells; La Quinta; Palm Desert; Palm Springs; Rancho Mirage; Bermuda Dunes

### **Population Served**

Children (6-17 years old); Disabled and/or special needs; Other; Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions; Homebound individuals

**How many residents will be served?** *Please provide the number of unduplicated number of individuals and/or number of services provided*

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**Evaluation** *Please describe how the success and/or impact of on-going operations or the proposed project will be evaluated*

Evaluations:

5 modules/calendar year (4 during school & 1 in summer):

1. For parent/guardian and children –
  - a. Behavior Assessment for Children 3rd Ed. (BASC-3) at beginning and end of module 1 and end of each module thereafter
  - b. Parent surveys after each module
2. Observation notes
3. Reports from mentors & field experts
4. Awards/scholarships earned by students