

# Commission's Grant Application Form

Shelby County Board of Commissioners

## **GRANT APPLICATION**

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Legal Name of the Organization: BRIDGES USA, Inc.

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EIN: 23-7081488

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Street Address of Organization 477 North 5th Street

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Office Phone: 901-260-3760

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E-mail [Mwhitby@bridgesusa.org](mailto:Mwhitby@bridgesusa.org)

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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First Name Cynthia

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Last Name Ham

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## GENERAL CONTACT FOR THIS REQUEST(if other than Executive Director)

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First Name Melissa

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Last Name Whitby

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Title: Vice President Development

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## DESCRIPTION OF GRANT REQUEST

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Program/Project Area: Youth Leadership and Development

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Amount Requested 50,000

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Total Organizational budget (for current year): 3,015,882

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Total Project/Program Budget: 1,446,814

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Dates covered by this budget: July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

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Project/Program Name: Bridge Builders

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF ORGANIZATION

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Please summarize in a short paragraph the purpose of your agency. Briefly explain why your agency is requesting this grant, what outcomes you hope to achieve, and how you will spend the funds if a grant is made.

BRIDGES' mission is to unite and inspire diverse young people to become confident and courageous leaders committed to community transformation. Our work is creating a pipeline of community minded and culturally competent youth prepared to enter our workforce and lift up Memphis through their actions. BRIDGES requests a \$50,000 grant from the Shelby County Board of Commissioners to support low-income youth in Shelby County to engage in the year-long Bridge Builders® program. The cost to operate this program is \$750 per student and includes the following activities:

- Week-Long Summer Leadership Conference (50 hours of programming for grades 7-10; 72 hours for grades 11-12)
- Six 2-3-hour trainings during the school year (14-18 hours of programming), focused on diversity appreciation, leadership and civic engagement. These experiences include hands-on experiential learning activities that develop leadership skills, help students work within a diverse team, and apply their new knowledge and skills through community action projects.
- Various events and large program opportunities designed for community building and fun. Over the year-long experience, students will gain:
- Effective leadership concepts and practices and opportunities to develop leadership skills, including critical thinking, conflict resolution, effective communication, and decision making.
- Understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity by exposing students to cultures which differ significantly from their own and allowing them to share their life experiences with one another.
- Self-reliance, teamwork, and trust by giving students opportunities to participate in adventure education and other challenging activities.
- Opportunities to make tangible change in their own lives and in their communities through service-learning projects.
- 6 hours of college and/or high school credit through the TN Dual Enrollment program. (11th and 12th grades)

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## Narrative - Organization

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Current programs and accomplishments. Please emphasize the achievements of the recent past.

In 2015 Bridge Builders served over 6,000 diverse youth representing 144 schools and 57 zip codes. There are three levels of engagement to meet each student's interest and commitment level. CONNECT involves a series of hands-on workshops focused on community-building/diversity appreciation, leadership and civic engagement. COLLABORATE consists of a year-long program experience, including the CONNECT trainings, a week-long summer conference, and participation in a youth-led civic action initiative. CHANGE is the most intensive level of programming that allows a smaller group to engage as after-school interns who research, design, implement and evaluate a community-wide civic action initiative that will have a long-lasting impact on the city. As Bridge Builders seeks to deepen the impact of the work through the commitment to youth voice and youth-led social change, we find issues of violence, racial profiling, disproportionate minority arrests and youths tried as adults, and lack of trust between youth and the criminal justice system increasingly important to youth in Memphis. In response, BRIDGES has implemented a unique initiative to improve relations and outcomes between youth and law enforcement. In addition to ongoing dialogue workshops between youth and City of Memphis Police, we have a successful partnership with the Shelby County Sheriff's department where Bridge Builders facilitators train incarcerated youth. These youth have responded by reducing violent behavior in the jail, producing a list of recommendations to reform the disciplinary policies in the school system, and building restorative justice competencies. BRIDGES was awarded a 2016 Innovation Award from the Inside Memphis Business publication. Recent accomplishments by our youth include: proposal to the Shelby County School Board for the creation of a Student Congress (passed in 2013), creation of a youth voice blog (The Memphis Youth), creation of an annual Youth Ignite city-wide event showcasing and funding students' social innovation ideas, and creation and implementation of teacher-student workshops to improve student-teacher partnerships.

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Numbers of paid full-time staff: 25

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Number of paid part-time staff: 32

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Number of volunteers: 250

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### **Narrative - Funding Request**

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Please describe the program/project for which you seek funding and include how it will benefit the general welfare of residents in Shelby County, TN.

The Bridge Builders program, created in 1988, assists youth in becoming college ready, helps them learn essential skills to meet the demands of the 21st century workplace and deepens their commitment to our city. Youth in grades 6-12 are recruited from the greater Memphis area, with an intentional effort to engage low-income students from low-performing schools. The year-long curriculum leads youth through a highly structured sequence of adventure-based activities and community action projects to build leadership experience, cultural competence, and civic engagement. For students in Shelby County, many of whom live in poverty, opportunities to develop these essential outcomes in a safe and diverse context are rare. During the summer conferences, participants are intentionally assigned into small, diverse groups with youth from different schools and backgrounds. For the residential conference, youth are paired with roommates from different backgrounds. The activities are designed so that youth will learn about the unique strengths/contributions of their peers and how diversity of talents and backgrounds serves as an asset for solving problems and creating positive community change. These outcomes are reinforced through year-round programming so they can practice the skills needed for college and employment such as the ability to think critically, solve problems creatively, communicate effectively and collaborate with others. BRIDGES fosters important conversations in order that authentic youth voice can emerge within our city and speak to community leaders and stakeholders on issues that are critical to the well-being of young people. Through Bridge Builders, our students' voices are being heard, and they are actively leading projects to improve their schools and neighborhoods such as the creation of the student congress, successful workshops to improve youth relations with law enforcement, and to improve teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

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### **General Operating Support**

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If applying for general operating support, briefly describe how this grant will be used.

BRIDGES requests a \$50,000 grant from the Shelby County Board of Commissioners to support low-income youth to engage in the year-long Bridge Builders program. The cost to operate this program is \$750 per student. Youth grades 6-12 are recruited with intentional effort to engage low-income students from low-performing schools. Our students are 60% Female, 40% Male; 5% Asian, 75% Black, 5% Hispanic and Latino, 15% White; 1% Formerly Incarcerated/Court Involved, 1% Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender. Fees contribute to the cost of the program, but do not cover the full cost. Approximately 34% of participants come from families whose income is at or below Shelby County's median income. Many participants cannot afford program fees; nearly half of our students are eligible for a fee waiver based on their family income.

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### Project Support

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Please explain the specific project including a statement of its primary purpose and the need or problem that you are seeking to address.

Bridge Builders offers opportunities for youth to build skills in order to achieve post-secondary success in career, college or vocational training. We have developed a unique learning experience that is adventurous, relational and transformative, and ultimately contributes to building the pool of talented and courageous leaders our city demands and desperately needs. There are three compelling reasons for our approach to youth development: 1. The majority of our community's youth live and go to school in racially and socioeconomically segregated environments. 2. More than 70 percent of our country's youth lack the critical skills they need to lead and be successful in the 21st century. 3. 73% of Shelby County youth feel that adults do not value their contributions and three out of four do not believe they can play a useful role in the community.

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How does the project contribute to your organization's overall mission?

BRIDGES' mission is to unite and inspire diverse young people to become confident and courageous leaders committed to community transformation. The Bridge Builders program is creating a pipeline of community minded and culturally competent youth prepared to enter our workforce and lift up Memphis through their actions. Bridge Builders is unique and unduplicated in Memphis, building in our youth three essential competencies: (1) Cultural (bridging the gaps stemming from school segregation and socio-economic polarization); (2) Leadership Skills (enabling youth to identify problems, analyze possible solutions and then act on them); and (3) Civic

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Engagement (empowering youth to make Memphis a better place to live, work and play).

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### **Narrative - Evaluation**

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Please explain how you will measure the effectiveness of your activities. Describe your criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved by the end of the funding period.

BRIDGES' criteria for success is the positive increase in knowledge, attitudes and values reflecting three outcome areas : Leadership, Diversity and Civic Engagement. All programs are designed to meet researched standards and are assessed through multi-dimensional evaluation processes including pre and posttests, teacher and adult observational surveys, program observations, focus groups, and on-going youth and parent feedback surveys. Bridge Builders survey tools go beyond proving or disproving that our program achieves the desired outcomes, but also provides nuanced data to continually improve curriculum and program design. Youth participants are tracked through Salesforce which allows for long term data collection and management. Bridge Builders is conducting a longitudinal study to determine and understand long-term impact of our programs on young adults (ages 21 and 25) in areas such as educational and career opportunities, civic engagement, community leadership, charitable giving and commitment to the Memphis community. We anticipate the following outcomes during the program year: 85% of Bridge Builders develop lasting friendships that cross racial and socio-economic divides. They are able to:

- Confidently communicate with individuals from different backgrounds
- Positively address discrimination
- Seek out diverse perspectives in school, at work, and in life

85% of Bridge Builder graduates have the skills and character to lead. They are able to:

- Apply advanced critical-thinking skills to complex situations
- Leverage team members' unique contributions through effective collaboration
- Set aside self-interest for the benefit of others

85% of Bridge Builders are actively engaged in local service projects in their school and community. They are able to:

- Assess community needs, identify issues and organize action
- Ensure minority voices are present in decision making
- Commit to improving themselves and our city

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Attachments:

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If your request is under \$25,000 please attach the following:

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1. Copy of the entity's 501 (c) 3 certificate for charitable organizations or 501 (c) 4 certificate for civic organizations

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2. Most recent IRS Form 990 or Financial Statements (balance sheet and income statement) as of the most recent fiscal year end certified by Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer of the entity.

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3. Complete Budget for grant request

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If your request is \$25,000 or more please attach the following:

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1. Copy of the entity's 501 (c) 3 certificate for charitable organizations or 501 (c) 4 certificate for civic organizations

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2. Copy of an annual audit as of a date within 18 months of the start of the current fiscal year.

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3. Complete Budget for grant request

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File 1 [501c3 document.pdf](#)

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File 2 [Bridges FS - Final 11.02.2015.pdf](#)

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File 3 [Bridge Builders Program Budget 7.21.16.pdf](#)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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Read, and if you agree to the provisions, sign the following:

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The information provided has been submitted in good faith and as completely as our records and recollections permit.

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I understand that the information provided in this application shall be open to inspection upon filing with the office of the Shelby County Board of Commissioners.

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Signature: Melissa Whitby

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Printed Name: Melissa Whitby

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Date 10/18/2016

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