

Proposal Summary
Meeting Date: 8/21/2019

Gateway to Learning Special Education and Training Center Request # 115922

Project Title:	Baking Better Tomorrows
Duration:	12 months
Request Amount:	\$69,044
Recommended Amount:	\$69,044
Program Area:	Human Services\Jobs program (not E)
Population Served:	Developmentally Disabled
Type of Support:	Program Support
Location:	Chicago, IL

Organizational Background

Gateway to Learning (GTL) was founded in 1974 with the primary intention of providing specialized educational training for children and young adults from the Chicagoland area. Seven years later, the center expanded its base to include adults, and by 1986 GTL had established its current location in Chicago’s northside Lincoln Square neighborhood. In 2013, GTL opened Dorothy’s Can-Do Café. This recent addition serves to familiarize participants with common practices and regulations pertaining to employment in the private sector, while simultaneously developing their customer service skills. The café offers over 30 varieties of cookies and chocolates made by the participants in multiple commercial kitchens located at the GTL program site. Serving 97 adults from diverse backgrounds across the Chicagoland area, GTL designs an individualized program for each participant. Its programs advance active inclusion through hands-on, experiential learning in a multitude of enriching life-skills, including but not limited to pre-employment, functional skills, empowerment and advocacy, citizenship, and routine activities of daily living.

Finances

	Budget	Actual	Actual
	06/30/2019	06/30/2018	06/30/2017
Revenues	\$1,115,992	\$1,004,878	\$1,036,706
Expenses	1,103,751	1,015,736	1,111,069
Surplus (Deficit)	12,252	(10,858)	(74,363)
Net Assets		\$1,195,011	\$1,205,869

Annual Revenue Sources

Grants	1%
Fees	1%
Government	87%
Private Support	11%
Earned Income	%
Other	%

Program Description

For over 40 years, GTL has been using food as a training tool for life skills. GTL intends to offer more opportunities for culinary skills training and food sanitation credentialing for participants and, by partnering with students from local culinary institutes, to provide an experiential, integrated workforce in the food industry.

GTL would collaborate with the Kendall College of the National Louis University to create training situations that are reflective of the food service industry. Culinary institute students would model

expected workforce behaviors while also supporting participants' acquisition of skills for employment in the Chicagoland food and service industry. This partnership will also provide opportunities for aspiring culinary institute intern(s) from National Louis University to interface with adults with developmental disabilities while honing their craft, leadership, and teaching skills. The culinary institute interns will assist in expanding the line of café baked goods and chocolates and ensure recipe consistency for the launch of a product line of select cookies and cookie dough to be sold by GTL in retail establishments.

Through the revision of current bakery and cafe curricula, approximately 4 classes of 6 to 10 participants for 2 hours a day will have an opportunity to develop both hard and soft skills needed for future employment and greater independence. Curriculum will include 20 modules across four subject areas (Bakery, Café, ServSafe, Arts & Ceramics). Modules would include, among others: following specific recipes for the creation of dough used for retail sales; learning and implementing the steps needed to move product from the bakery to the store front café; ServSafe food handling credentialing; customer service; and general skills needed for any workplace such as time management, appearance, proper hygiene and team communication. That revision includes adding differentiated instruction for individualized learners whose skill levels could be classified as Novice, Apprentice or Master. This apprenticeship style program will allow for more individualized instruction for those participants who desire to participate in the culinary arts, regardless of ability, while also building indicators for success, job placement, and a sense of personal growth and accomplishment.

A related objective is to increase direct revenue to the social enterprise through the growth and marketing of retail and online sales, regulatory testing of products, and enhanced customer experience in the café. This will involve increasing operating hours for the café, industry-expert consultation, and expanded participant training. Grant funds would support a Social Enterprise Manager to focus on the chocolate, cookie, and cookie dough production and sales, as well as an update of inventory systems. Additionally, send six products would be sent for regulatory testing that would enable sales online and off-site. Regulatory testing provides nutritional facts required on packaging which generates stronger customer confidence in the product while also increasing revenue by expanding sales channels. New outlets such as local grocery stores, corporate offices, and catering companies could be activated.

Funding will be used to update the Dorothy's Can-Do Café customer experience and participant training program with the purchase of a commercial espresso machine, new tables and chairs, uniform branded apparel, an up-to-date paint scheme, and the introduction of ceramic cups and dishes crafted by participants of the Arts & Ceramics program. Funds will also be used to create a comprehensive marketing plan that includes branding and packaging to guide the direction of sales.

Strengths / Weaknesses

Strengths

- Good new organizational leadership, assets in the food sector and partnership with leading culinary program
- Search, Inc. and JCFS Chicago have agreed to collaborate with GTL, connecting job-seeking GTL participants with their organizations' employment services for screening and potential placement

Weaknesses

- Growth potential of bakery products and associated sales revenue is likely rather limited, and program will maintain a need for philanthropic support

Why Fund

CFI’s 2019 Disabilities Opportunity Statement is to support the transition of organizations to a future state of care. GTL has experienced a recent leadership transition when its longtime executive director died suddenly in December of 2017 after 32 years with the organization. To succeed her it hired in mid-2018 Kathy Lavin, who’s spouse leads the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. Lavin brings professional experience in the field of disabilities and personal experience as a mother of a child with disabilities. The efforts she is leading a GTL to grow its social enterprise for more revenue and increased employment training for participants are aligned with our goals and worthy of support.

Prior Grants

Last Grant Date: 1/8/2019	Number of Prior Grants: 6
Last Grant Amount: \$10,000	Total Amount Granted: \$100,000

Grants Budget (if not general operating)			
Expenditure Category	Recommendation	Other Sources	Total
Salaries/Benefits – GTL staff	\$18,280	\$9,690	\$27,970
Salaries/Benefits – Participants	15,972		15,972
Interns/Instructors/etc.	2,059	19,190	21,249
Bakery operating costs		7,210	7,210
Capital expenses	20,233	16,500	36,733
Marketing expenses	12,500		12,500
Totals	\$69,044	\$52,590	\$121,634