

Proposal Summary
Meeting Date: 8/21/2019

Joseph Center Request # 115951

Project Title:	Joseph Business School Expansion
Duration:	12 months
Request Amount:	\$500,000
Recommended Amount:	\$500,000
Program Area:	Education\Continuing Education\Adult\Entrepreneurship
Population Served:	Economically Disadvantaged
Type of Support:	Salary Support\Program Staff
Location:	Forest Park, IL

Organizational Background

The Joseph Center[®] D/B/A The Joseph Business School (JBS) was founded in 1997 by Dr. William (“Bill”) S. Winston, pastor and founder of Living Word Christian Center (LWCC), a non-denominational church located in Forest Park, Illinois. As a businessman turned pastor and ordained minister, Dr. Winston has a vision to rebuild local communities through spiritual development and economic empowerment. He believes that through leadership, skill development and business ownership, the self-esteem of area residents will improve, and they will strive to become self-sufficient; and in turn, contribute to their own community’s economic recovery.

The School was launched in October of 1998 and its Business Incubator opened in 2003. It recently received its third three-year accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training. An Illinois Small Business Development Center opened in 2005 which was expanded in 2017 to include a Procurement Technical Assistance Center. The School has over 700 local alumni, and a recent survey revealed that 80% of its students come from low to moderate income areas and 70% open their businesses in those same low to moderate income areas. The school states that a large percentage of its graduates start businesses and experience growth that is 2.5 to 4 times the national sales average within two years.

Finances

	Budget	Actual	Actual
	12/31/2019	12/31/2018	12/31/2017
Revenues	\$2,750,054	\$2,646,643	\$2,214,419
Expenses	2,711,085	2,614,073	2,185,722
Surplus (Deficit)	38,969	32,570	28,697
Net Assets		\$348,097	\$315,527

Annual Revenue Sources

Grants	8%
Fees	20%
Government	0%
Private Support	67%
Earned Income	0%
Other	4%

Program Description

JBS operates a nine-month Business and Entrepreneurship Program which is offered at its Forest Park campus and online both in the spring and fall. Last year, 98 individuals graduated from both programs which target individuals who live in Chicago’s West Side and nearby suburbs. The program helps participants learn practical aspects of starting and running a business. Over 30 course offerings include

fundamental topics such as marketing & sales, legal, information technology, accounting & finance. Courses are taught by a large group of volunteers who are entrepreneurs, corporate executives and professionals who are part of the faith community. The campus program, for instance, is operated by one full-time and one part-time staff and 50 volunteers. Staff and advisors have at least seven years of entrepreneurial or management level corporate experience in the subject matter taught.

JBS was established by LWCC to advance a “Kings & Priests Model” articulated as “God calls business leaders and entrepreneurs, just like He calls pastors and preachers, and gives them the responsibility to drive the economy forward.” JBS’s goal is to provide not only a solution that creates economic development through the establishment of businesses, but also to restore self-esteem and a sense of hope and dignity to all participants by transforming their thinking. The premier social indicator that transformation has taken place is the elimination of systematic poverty.

JBS’s expansion plan contains five components:

- **Capacity Building:** JBS plans to hire additional staff to support increased enrollment for a more robust, more extensive diversity of training and access to tools and processes. Institutions have embraced technology changes over the past decade to the point where online courses have become the norm, and the proportion of students enrolled in online-only classes has exploded in the last five years. Planned curriculum development includes converting ten courses into online, on-demand programs; expanded online program in multiple languages to include French, Spanish, and Portuguese; and satellite-based training conferences (one stream, multiple locations)
- **Experiential Learning:** Develop a world-class experiential learning curriculum for entrepreneurs that integrates the use of technology such as artificial and virtual reality. JBS believes that its clients can create and experience realities that extend beyond their financial capacity or environment with the aid of advanced technology. The opportunity to stem the challenges of financial illiteracy and the system poverty through experiential learning will accelerate the eradication of poverty in many communities. Additional experiential learning opportunities include mentorship and career coaching.
- **Technology Program Development:** The absence of high-quality exposure to advanced technological training, along with other social, cultural and economic disparities, leaves too many low-income and underestimated youth marginalized; as a result, they are left out of the lucrative financial streams and wealth creation produced by technological innovation and entrepreneurship. JBS plans to launch a Technology Center to build awareness of commercially useful technology to up-skill the workforce and create more tech entrepreneurs within the underserved communities. The center will introduce topics such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, artificial reality, robotics, app-development, and more. The goal is to transition clients from technology consumers to producers and creators of innovative technology solutions.
- **Infrastructure Enhancement:** Scaling technology capability for this training requires investment in JBS’s infrastructure. It intends to convert its current Computer lab into the technology center that supports app development, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and augmented reality program training.
- **Increase Marketing Support to Increase Visibility and Communicate the Impact** The demand for the types of services the Joseph Business School offers is high. However, it is not at the point of decision making or purchase for many of these prospective clients. Most students or clients are shopping on the internet or conferences and exhibition for the education and entrepreneurship sector. The Joseph Business School will participate more heavily in conferences for individuals

are evaluating options for professional development and entrepreneurship as well as focusing on penetrating the education market, the JBS intends to become a stronger voice and have greater representation in the general education market.

The expansion would enable JBS to grow the number of students in its campus program by 100 as well as better serve those in its online program.

Strengths / Weaknesses

Strengths:

- JBS provides an impressive variety of supports for aspiring and emerging entrepreneurs, rooted in a trusted faith community which serves low income residents of the West Side and beyond
- Current staff is strong and vision for technology leadership is innovative
- Campus is inviting and benefits from the assets of LWCC

Weaknesses:

- To date, organization has been reliant upon charity from affiliated organizations (LWCC and the founder’s personal enterprise) for 45-50 of annual revenues

Why Fund

JBS is led by a seasoned corporate executive and Harvard MBA. The organization recently hired from Bethel New Life an educator we funded to attend Experiential Classroom last fall. This individual is overhauling the curriculum and incorporating approaches she learned at that workshop. The School’s intention to incorporate emerging technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality into pedagogical practices is worthy of exploration. The organization is affiliated with LWCC but has a distinct identity which would give us insight into the role that faith-based organizations play in low income African American communities. LWCC and the founder’s personal ministry organization are not non-profit organizations, and both appear to generate significant revenues which gives some perspective on JBS’s “Kings & Priests” model.

Prior Grants

Last Grant Date:	5/23/2005	Number of Prior Grants:	1
Last Grant Amount:	\$55,100	Total Amount Granted:	\$55,100

Grants Budget (if not general operating)

Expenditure Category	Recommendation	Other Sources	Total
Salaries & Benefits (including 3.5 FTE funded)	\$293,637	\$962,471	\$1,256,108
Equipment	132,950		132,950
Curriculum development	25,000	85,182	110,182
Advertising/marketing	22,228	83,783	106,011
Infrastructure/remodeling	26,185		26,185
Administration		1,079,649	1,079,649
Totals	\$500,000	\$2,211,085	\$2,711,085