



DeKalb County Community Foundation

2600 DeKalb Ave., Suite J Sycamore, IL 60178

(815) 748-5383 (815) 748-5873 fax

www.dekalbcountyfoundation.org

Soft Skill Enhancement Grant

Dear Middle School Educators;

Thank you for your interest in partnering with the DeKalb County Community Foundation Communityworks Initiative to enhance soft skills in middle school youth. In 2007 the Community Foundation hosted a series of town meetings throughout DeKalb County giving community members an opportunity to voice their ideas for workforce development priorities. A recurring issue among community members attending the town meetings was the lack of “soft skills” in the emerging workforce. A Community Foundation Workforce Development advisory committee drilled deeper into the topic and determined the ripest opportunity existed in working with middle school educators to enhance soft skills in middle school youth.

To define “soft skills” the Community Foundation partnered with the NIU Center for Governmental Studies to research and report on the perceived definition. The “Report on Soft Skill Planning Process” is available on the Community Foundation website at:

<http://www.dekalbcountyfoundation.org/communityWorks.html>

Sixteen soft skills were identified as critical to success in the workplace. Please see the attached graphic for a visual of these skills. The Community Foundation recognizes that Middle School Educators work on and reinforce these skills daily (often referred to as life skills, social skills, character building, etc.) The Soft Skill Enhancement Grant (SSEG) is intended to support educators in this important work of enhancing any number of the identified soft skills.

The SSEGs financially assist educators in purchasing or developing curriculum, programs, and/or tools that enhance soft skills. The maximum request for this grant is \$1,500. A resource for reviewing existing programs and curriculum is available on the NIU-Center on Early Adolescence (NIU-CEA) website at:

<http://www.niu.edu/cea/audience/EBSESP.shtml>

An important goal of this initiative is to identify those curricula, programs and tools that have the greatest impact on soft skill enhancement locally and support implementation of such resources where they are desired throughout DeKalb County. To accomplish this goal, as a component of this grant, NIU-CEA will partner with grant recipients to measure outcomes related to soft skill enhancement.

If you would like additional information regarding the soft skill initiative or the Soft Skill Enhancement Grant please contact me at 815-748-5383 or deanna@dekalbccf.org

Thank you for all that you do to prepare DeKalb County youth for a positive future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deanna Cada'.

Deanna Cada, Program Manager