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Children's Defense Fund and Florida A&M University Awarded National Endowment for The Humanities Grant

Grant will produce a new two-week, combined-format institute for K-12 educators on the history of youth activism in the civil rights movement.

August 19, 2022; Washington, D.C. — Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools® program and Florida A&M University (FAMU) have been awarded a \$175,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to conduct a two-week hybrid summer institute for educators entitled *Centering Youth Agency in the Civil Rights Movement*.

This first-time institute will serve 25 teachers in grades K-12 of all subject areas and will expose participants to new approaches to civil rights history that center the agency of young people, based on innovative scholarship and the culturally relevant pedagogical traditions of Freedom Schools past and present.

The new institute underscores CDF's belief that power lives in communities and CDF's work is grounded in deploying the power of community.

Project co-directors, Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons, National Director of the *CDF Freedom Schools* program, and Dr. Darius Young, Florida A&M University, will launch the two-week institute in June 2023 at the CDF Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee, the former home of Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Roots* and the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Alex Haley, and the current retreat center of Children's Defense Fund.

“This summer institute will create a safe space for educators to engage with preeminent scholars, archivists, civil rights movement veterans, exemplary K-12 educators, current student activists, and *CDF Freedom Schools* program staff,” said Dr. Moore Clemons. “Ultimately, the institute aims to give teachers the knowledge and tools to teach a richer, more representative version of civil rights history that also activates students’ power to become engaged citizens and positive change agents in their communities. We are thrilled to partner with one of the nation’s leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Florida A&M University.”

Treating the topic of youth activism, the institute will concentrate on two pivotal moments in the Civil Rights Movement to show how young people experience and make history: the desegregation battles that took place at Clinton High School in 1956 and the 1964 Freedom Schools.

“We are grateful to receive this award from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and FAMU is excited to be partnering with the team at the *CDF Freedom Schools* program, to continue both of our institutions’ legacy of educating the world about the contributions that young people made to the Black freedom struggle,” said Dr. Young. “I am looking forward to working with our educators and scholars to build a community of learning, sharing, and fellowship next summer. It is going to be an awesome experience and we are ready to get to work.”

Activities will reflect varied formats as such as lectures, large and small group discussions, primary source explorations, gallery walks, museum visits, panel sessions, pedagogy workshops, affinity groups by subject area, individual work time, and panel discussions.

A team of committed educators will ensure that the content is presented in an engaging and interactive manner and that teachers have ample time to digest, discuss, and apply their learning.

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About Children’s Defense Fund

Celebrating 50 years in 2023, [Children’s Defense Fund](#) envisions a nation where marginalized children flourish, leaders prioritize their well-being, and communities wield the power to ensure they thrive. The only national, multi-issue advocacy organization working at the intersection of child well-being and racial justice, CDF advances the well-being of America’s most diverse generation, the 74 million children and youth under the age of 18, and 30 million young adults under the age of 25. CDF’s grassroots movements in marginalized communities build power for child-centered public policy, informed by racial equity and the lived experience of children and youth. Its renowned CDF Freedom Schools® are conducted in nearly 100 cities and 30 states and territories.

About Florida A&M University

[Florida A&M University](#) (FAMU) is a public, historically Black university located in Tallahassee, Florida. What distinguishes FAMU from other universities is its legacy of providing access to a high-quality, affordable education with programs and services that guide students toward successfully achieving their dreams. FAMU is part of the State University System of Florida and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.