



8745 Highlands Drive
Trussville, AL 35173
205-492-1810
www.thedouglassinitiative.org

NEED STATEMENT: New Urban Community STEM Center

SITUATION APPRAISAL: Rigorous science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs are nonexistent for disadvantaged youth living in or around public housing. According to established research, disadvantaged students can lose up to half a grade due to the unavailability of adequate summer academic programs in urban communities. The AESI STEM program, in Huntsville, Alabama, is in its eighth year of operation—having established robotics focused STEM curriculums at six Title 1 schools: **(1)** Mae Jemison High School, **(2)** Ronald E. McNair Junior High School, **(3)** James I. Dawson Elementary, **(4)** Lakewood Elementary, **(5)** Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary, and **(6)** Rolling Hills Elementary School. AESI-Huntsville operates from a building located in the Butler Terrace Public Housing neighborhood—a 1,000 square foot office. The lack of space is a major issue due to rising student interest and increasing community and school support. AESI has an average of 200 disadvantaged youth participating in its STEM programs. More space is needed to expand—having the capacity to accommodate a long waiting list of more than 100 students—hoping to secure one of the sought-after spots.

BENEFIT: A new Urban Community STEM Center will help AESI to: **(1)** Build a cutting-edge robotics lab; **(2)** Construct an aquaponics STEM greenhouse; and **(3)** Close the technical skills and academic achievement gaps of disadvantaged youth through robotics competition. A new Huntsville Urban Community STEM Center will serve as a prototype for additional Urban Community STEM Centers in Alabama's three other major metropolitan areas—Birmingham, Montgomery and Mobile. AESI is eliminating poverty. For the past two years, the AESI Program has gainfully employed four people by partnering with AmeriCorps Vista. An approximately 25 more individuals from AmeriCorps Vista will be working with AESI once a new Urban Community STEM Center is constructed in Huntsville.

ESTIMATED COSTS: Detailed budget information is available upon request.

RECOGNITION: Naming and recognition opportunities are available.

CONTACT: Dr. CyDale Smith, AESI Program Director (Founder and CEO, 4Sight, Inc.)
256-797-0394, cydale@TheDouglassInitiative.org

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION: EIN#: 81-2060488 The Douglass Initiative operates as an educational organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to The Douglass Initiative are deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.