



The Freedom Institute
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Freedom Institute Receives \$5,000 Grant from Collier Community Foundation

Naples, FL – The Freedom Institute of Collier County is proud to announce it has received a \$5,000 grant from the Collier Community Foundation. This funding will support the creation of a new College & Career Room, a tech-enabled, flexible learning space designed to help high school students in grades 9–12 prepare for success in college, career, and life after graduation.

The grant will fund the transformation of an underutilized gym into a dedicated student center focused on college and career readiness. Renovations will include flexible furnishings such as desks, seating, and storage, along with key technological upgrades to support college dual enrollment, virtual classes, job training, and individualized career coaching. The project reflects the Freedom Institute’s mission to provide personalized, real-world learning experiences that build life readiness and empower student achievement.

“This grant from the Collier Community Foundation helps us take a vital step forward in scaling our innovative, student-centered model,” said Christopher Marker, CEO of the Freedom Institute. “Our new College & Career Room will give students the space, tools, and guidance they need to pursue their goals with confidence and clarity. We’re grateful to the Foundation for recognizing the importance of investing in the future of Collier County’s youth.”

The Freedom Institute has grown rapidly from just 19 students in its first year to over 135 in its third year. The new College & Career Room will serve as a vital resource for this expanding student population, supporting academic performance, goal setting, and post-secondary planning. Additional support for the project has come from internal capacity-building efforts and in-kind contributions from community partners.

“Access to flexible, tech-enabled spaces is essential for modern education,” added Nathan Poteet, Executive Director of Programs & AI. “This investment not only supports college dual enrollment and career exploration but also strengthens our ability to integrate AI-driven coaching and learning tools that personalize the student experience.”

Principal Christy Vaill echoed on the importance of the new space, stating:

“This grant allows us to turn a vision into reality for our students. The new College & Career Room will give them a space that reflects our commitment to personalized, real-world learning and help them take confident steps toward their futures.”

The Collier Community Foundation awards annual grants through a competitive application and review process. Selected organizations receive grant dollars from the Foundation’s discretionary funds. These funds were gifted by donors who believe in the Community Foundation’s ability to mobilize resources to address the community’s greatest needs.

About The Freedom Institute of Collier County

The Freedom Institute is 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to develop students’ critical thinking skills, ensuring their financial freedom and patriotic American citizenship upon graduation. The Freedom Institute’s high school programs offer a flexible, personalized education model focused on preparing students for success in college, career, and civic life. With real-world learning, dual enrollment, internships, and individualized coaching, the Institute empowers students to graduate with purpose, skill, and no debt.

Learn more at www.freedominstitute.net or call 239-427-1776.

About the Collier Community Foundation:

Celebrating 40 years of empowering local philanthropy, the Collier Community Foundation® is a trusted, tax-exempt, public charitable organization dedicated to enhancing the community through impactful giving. Established in 1985, the Foundation manages over 900 donor funds, collaborates with hundreds of nonprofits, and has awarded over \$392 million in grants and scholarships to support vital programs and initiatives. By connecting generosity with community needs, the Collier Community Foundation drives informed giving and delivers powerful results. To learn more, visit collierccf.org or call 239-649-5000.