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CHARTER SCHOOLS GROUP GETS \$25,000 DONATION

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The Charter Foundation has received its first donation -- \$25,000 from a Tallahassee-based conservative think tank -- and is looking for more to help it get off the ground. Its goal is \$521,000.

A nonprofit organization, the foundation will serve as a clearinghouse for groups interested in starting charter schools in Florida. Approved by the Florida Legislature earlier this year, charter schools will be public and operate much like private schools with their own teachers, curriculum and rules.

Jonathan Hage, the foundation's president and chairman, said that with the \$25,000 from the James Madison Institute, the foundation hopes to attract other businesses and groups committed to the idea of charter schools.

The money raised will be used to provide technical assistance to groups interested in starting a charter school as well as start-up grants for the neediest organizers, Hage said Thursday.

For information on the foundation or to contribute, contact Hage or **Bob Finch** at the Charter Foundation, 761-1046.