



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 1368

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

Construction of a new Youth Education Center to include a Pre-K through Grade 2 school for blind and visually impaired students to help provide the level of skills and competencies through intensive braille and technology instruction in academic areas to allow them to be mainstreamed in public or charter school from grades 3 through 12. We also have additional youth (younger than 3 1/2 and in grades 3-12) who will also be served afterschool, on weekends, and in the summer.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds

State Agency contacted?

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	6,000,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	6,000,000	89%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	525,000	8%
Other	175,000	3%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025</b>	<b>6,700,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. Has this project previously received state funding?

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future funding likely to be requested?

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?



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If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Payroll Protection Plan - received \$92,500 in May 2020. Forgiven in June 2021. Used for payroll to protect jobs.

## Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

### 11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning    
  Design    
  Construction    
  N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

9/1/2024

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

5/1/2026

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

Florida Center for the Blind is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. As such, there are no owners. Florida Center for the Blind is requesting the funding to build a new Youth Education Center and it is also the entity that will own and operate the school. The agency is overseen by a Board of Directors who have the duty of fiduciary oversight.

### 13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs: Other</b>		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	Construction of a new Youth Education Center. The land was purchased in 2021. The preliminary design has already been completed and includes future planning. Final design documents (shovel ready) are currently underway as of November 2023 and are expected to be completed by June 30, 2023. It is anticipated that construction would begin by September 2024.	6,000,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>6,000,000</b>

### 14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?



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Construction of a new Youth Education Center to include a preschool through Grade 2 school for blind and visually impaired students. This school will assist these students to successfully learn the academic core curriculum requirements through intensive braille training to successfully mainstream to public schools in 3rd grade. This school will serve students throughout our 8-county region and possibly visually impaired students from throughout the state. We also have additional youth (younger than 3 1/2 and in grades 3-12) who will also be served afterschool, on weekends, and in the summer. This will also provide a safe space, segregated from our adult clients.

**b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?**

Construction of the School facilities to allow for specialized instruction for students who are blind or visually impaired ages preschool through Grade 2. This will allow for critical early intervention and intensive, specialized, integrated instruction in braille to prepare students to succeed in public, mainstream schools, and allow for greater success in transitioning to college and/or work force. This will be a one-of-a-kind unique learning environment for visually impaired young students that will provide them the skills for success in mainstream schools and life.

**c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?**

Instruction will include a fully integrated curriculum meeting the state educational standards while also providing specialized training in braille, assistive technology, low vision devices, safe travel skills and independence. This will reduce the barriers to both their education and communication with their teachers. With the skills needed, they should be able to keep pace with their peers.

**d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?**

The primary target population will be 3.5 years through age 10 (or completion of 2nd grade). Other individuals who will also benefit are students who are part of our afterschool and summer programs who are not enrolled in the school (ages birth through graduation of high school up to 22 years of age). The students enrolled in the school are estimated to be up to 25 students. There is also an estimated additional 25 students not enrolled in the school. The total population could be 50-100 students.

**e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?**

Successful early intervention and intensive, integrated instruction to remove barriers to students' education, reduce the need for paraprofessional services, allow for direct communication from student to teacher and have student's ready for public school integration by the third grade with the skills needed to keep pace with their peers. Pre and post assessments will be used to measure skills obtained and students will be tracked to provide continued support as needed throughout their education. Graduation rates and post-secondary/workforce placement upon high school graduation will also be tracked to measure overall success of early intervention services.

**f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?**

This project is for construction of facility. All efforts will be made to spend money during fiscal year. Total construction time expected to be 18 months. We expect "shovel ready" drawings completed by June 30, 2023. Permitting is expected to take a few months with construction beginning in the fall of 2024. Failure to comply with funding requirements would trigger return of unexpended funds.

**15. Requester Contact Information**

**a. First Name**  **Last Name**

**b. Organization**

**c. E-mail Address**

**d. Phone Number**  **Ext.**

**16. Recipient Contact Information**

**a. Organization**



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**b. Municipality and County**

**c. Organization Type**

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College
- Other (please specify)

**d. First Name**  **Last Name**

**e. E-mail Address**

**f. Phone Number**

**17. Lobbyist Contact Information**

**a. Name**

**b. Firm Name**

**c. E-mail Address**

**d. Phone Number**