



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 2073

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

There has always been a shortage of recruited, trained and vetted foster parents and the number of children in foster care continues to increase. The Heart Gallery of Florida is requesting funding for a digital transformation of the foster and adoption recruitment and licensing process. Using Family Finder, a digital technology platform created and managed by the Heart Gallery of Florida, the number of foster parent licensing requests in 2020 to 2022 increased by more than 300% above the Community Based Care lead agency's traditional recruitment methods. Increases in the number of children in foster care, high cost of group homes and increases in annual recruiting costs of CBC's reported to the state will be decreased with the implementation of Family Finder.

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                         | 250,000        |
| Fixed Capital Outlay               | 0              |
| <b>Total State Funds Requested</b> | <b>250,000</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)       | 250,000        | 100%        |
| <b>Matching Funds</b>                                |                |             |
| Federal  | 0              | 0%          |
| State (excluding the amount of this request)         | 0              | 0%          |
| Local  | 0              | 0%          |
| Other  | 0              | 0%          |
| <b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025</b> | <b>250,000</b> | <b>100%</b> |

8. Has this project previously received state funding?

| Fiscal Year<br>(YYYY-YY) | Amount    |              | Specific<br>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.

Private funding from philanthropies has supported the technology that has been in place in Judicial Circuit 12 since 2020. In order to expand into all areas of Florida, state funding is needed.

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.

## 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)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

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.

### 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                    | Director to scale the program and technology integrations for seamless handover to DCF.   | 60,000         |
| Other Salary and Benefits  | Project Manager to coordinate data retrieval and reporting outcomes for one year in order to handover to DCF.   | 30,000         |
| Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other                                | Marketing and webinar training for each of the Community Based Care lead agencies and corresponding Heart Galleries to manage the inquiries.  | 60,000         |
| Consultants/Contracted Services/Study                                  | Recruitment costs, technology implementation, support and administration of technology. Fees to developers and cloud platform migration. Finalization of the technology software development for daily use and support. | 100,000        |
| <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                      |   | 0              |
| <b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b> |   | <b>250,000</b> |

### 14. Program Performance

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



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Traditional foster family recruitment practices are not filling the gap for increased number of foster children. To overcome the shortage of recruited, trained & licensed foster parents and the increase in the number of children in foster care caused by the opioid crisis. Additionally, COV-19 isolation has placed foster children in more danger from neglect & abuse that will go unnoticed. Using Family Finder, a targeted hyper-reach digital technology platform, created & managed by the Heart Gallery, the number of foster parents registered for licensing increased by 300% in 2021, above CBC traditional recruitment methods.

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

Family Finder creates efficiency, provides quantitative data of matches, and exposes areas of opportunities in the current system of care. Services provided to child welfare organizations include:  
 -Implementation of single website page for conversions in each Judicial Circuit;  
 Optimization of ad reach and conversions with Google and Facebook;  
 Wraparound service support for foster and adoptive parents, decreasing wait time for licensing;  
 Set up client portal;  
 Implementation of Florida Foster Family dedicated website;  
 Implementation of chat feature on website.

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

Wraparound service support for foster and adoptive parents, decreasing wait time for licensing and home studies;  
 Decreased wait time in foster care for children involved in the termination of parental rights (TPR) from 2.5 years to 1.4 years. CBC's will save 20% of their annual recruiting costs and will reduce expenditures for children under their care.

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

Family Finder has the ability to find and match families for the 19,000 children in foster care in Florida using algorithmic prioritization and category/item weighting for characteristics of foster families, including: Race; Health; Academic; Behavioral; and Developmental.

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

Family Finder will create efficiency, provide a quantitative data of matches, and expose areas of opportunities in the current system of care. - A 6-month pilot for a Central Florida child welfare organization yielded 8,000 new families vs. 200 candidates using traditional methods. A 6-month pilot in Judicial Circuit 12 yielded 1,926 families seeking foster parent licensing or adopting from foster care vs. 100 candidates using traditional methods, proving a 321% increase. The cost for a child in a group home is \$3,000 per month vs. \$650 for a child placed in an adoptive or foster home.

**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?**

The Heart Gallery's Family Finder technology initiative will meet any requirements to avoid penalties and will adhere to standard practices that insure deliverables.

**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

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type



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- 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**