



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2021-2022

LFIR # 2103

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

**4. Project/Program Description**

HOPE (Helping Older-teens Powerfully Engage) court targets youth ages 17 and up who are aging out of the foster care system and entering society independently as young adults. This pilot project enhances the current dependency system process for older teens to help establish the youth's relationship with social workers, service providers, and the legal system through restorative practices and community building, rather than in an adversarial manner. Youth who age out of foster care have the opportunity to receive state benefits after their 18th birthday through state-funded programs such as EFC and PESS. Unfortunately, many youth do not maintain their EFC/PESS status, and may become homeless or enter the criminal justice system. This initiative is aimed at helping the youth succeed in adulthood by infusing restorative practices into the child dependency system.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**

**State Agency contacted?**

**6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2021-2022**

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	61,725
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>61,725</b>

**7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (including matching funds available for this project)**

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	61,725	29%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	153,125	71%
Other	0	0%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2021-2022</b>	<b>214,850</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.**



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

Yes

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

FLITE Center received \$193,739 in PPP Loan funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic which was used to secure the employment of existing staff who, in turn, provided COVID relief services throughout 2020 to present.

**11. 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	Project Coordinator 1 FTE - \$93,750 (including benefits) at 50% (remaining 50% in organization's match).	46,875
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Independent living skills trainings and incentives, to include trauma-informed health classes, financial literacy program, transitional independent living planning, health education, and access to benefits education.	8,850
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Non-violent Communication, Restorative Justice and Circles, Motivational Interviewing, Racial Equity and Implicit Bias, etc. - \$4,000; Training of staff teams - \$2,000.	6,000
<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>61,725</b>

**12. Program Performance**

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

Recent developments have occurred in the use of "problem solving courts" for dependency cases (Early Childhood Courts, the national 0-3 initiative, and most recently, RISE court). At the same time, there has been an increase in restorative practices in juvenile and criminal justice courts, as well as in schools, organizations, neighborhoods and families around the world. The combination of a therapeutic problem solving court project and a restorative practices based approach provides an unchartered offering of support for our system's older teens, those graduating from foster care and celebrating their independence. A restorative practices-based approach in the dependency legal system for these teens, one with its heart centered on building relationships, social capital, and community, would shine a light on these youth, and offer a ray of HOPE. HOPE court is the first step in building relationships and improving our current system.

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



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Program consists of 2 parts: restorative legal processes & supportive youth circles.

1. Restorative Legal Processes: Special HOPE court docket conducted every 6 weeks. Court proceedings held on one level with Judge, chairs placed in a circular arrangement. Court proceeding begins with a relationship building circle go-around, and will be youth led, more interactive; and less led by testimony of IL advocate. Court orders modified to indicate communal agreements. Pre-court listening circles conducted with youth and adult support team prior to each hearing. Hearing closest to 18th birthday is a birthday party circle, post 18 circles available.
2. Supportive Youth Circle Services: Transitional IL plans completed in supportive youth circles adapted from EPIC OHANA. IL Skills supportive circle services/trainings provided throughout the year prior to the youth's 18th birthday. Topics include LEO peace building, financial literacy, health education, coping skills, cooking, and communications

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

The EFC and PESS programs provide significant financial support, housing, and supportive services. Nevertheless, a large percentage of youth do not fully take advantage of the programs as currently offered. A review of data from the Department's Florida Safe Families Network database covering youth who aged out between 2014 and 2018 shows that between 60% to 70% of youth who were potentially eligible for the program either did not participate, opted out before their eligibility period ended, or were terminated and did not return. The qualitative significance and research design of this new process and mindset (specifically redefining success to create value in the human experience) will translate into more successful quantitative outcomes for our youth. Our services will improve connection, compassion, build community and create a space where our youth are co-creators in their new life. Working WITH our youth will empower them to make positive behavioral choices.

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

The pilot project consists of 12 youth. The youth have a permanency goal of APPLA or are similarly situated. An additional 60 youth aging out of care will create vision boards. Youth begin HOPE Court at just about 17 years of age, and are assigned an IL (independent living) advocate, life coach, and AAL from the very start. Most already have a GAL, if not one may be assigned. Agencies involved include ChildNet(CBC)/DCF advocates and their counsel, Legal Aid, Guardian Ad Litem Program, Life Coaching Agency(ies), and peer support mentor. Adult support team members (over 20 staff) will be trained in restorative practices and facilitating circles. Ongoing trainings provided. Advisory Group creation/maintenance (Key players communicate on a regular schedule, provide feedback, modifications as necessary). Problems and tensions arising during course of the case are addressed via circles. Restorative Conferencing is used to address major problems arising during course of case.

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

Nova Southeastern University is our research partner for HOPE Court. The research team will gather data utilizing different instruments as they relate to specific outcomes, including, but not limited to: (1) Increased youth engagement in legal processes, development of TIL plan and IL skills trainings; (2) Increased participation of adult support team in transitional independent living process ("like family" members); (3) Improved relationship with social worker and "like family" members. (4) Increased feelings of hopefulness.

**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?**

Repayment of unused funding.

**13. 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.**

N/A



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#### 14. Requestor Contact Information

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

b. **Organization**

c. **E-mail Address**

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

#### 15. Recipient Contact Information

a. **Organization**

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**

#### 16. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. **Name**

b. **Firm Name**

c. **E-mail Address**

d. **Phone Number**