



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 3277

1. Project Title
2. Senate Sponsor
3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

Westonwood Ranch is a comprehensive training program in Walton County designed to prepare individuals with developmental disorders to live independent, productive lives by focusing on life skills training, hands on learning and job skills training. The core of Westonwood Ranch Workforce Development is rooted in the operation of viable social enterprises in the field of Aquaculture that provide functional job skills training, employment opportunities and serve as a bridge for higher wage pay opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities in our region. Revenue generated from these operations not only serves to pay employee wages but serve to grow these business models and expand business models to provide diverse employment opportunities that for many, may be the first step to employment. The goal of the program is to provide this transitional work experience, which opens the door to further employment opportunities in our community.

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	515,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	515,000

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)	515,000	80%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	125,000	20%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025	640,000	100%

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.

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan - 119,500. This loan helped support payroll operations through the pandemic.

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
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Transition to Work Program Director -1/2 FTE	30,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Aquaponics Greenhouse instructor (55K), 3 job coaches cross trained as Registered Behavioral/ Therapists @ 50K, 1 delivery driver (40K) and 12 part time positions at or above minimum wage in social enterprises at Westonwood Ranch for program participants with varying developmental disabilities (40K)	285,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/ Other	Aquaponics Farm Supplies and Landscape Nursery Supplies - seeds, grow floats, fish stocking, packaging, compost station, grow lights, delivery van for produce, outside greenhouse hoop for ornamental landscape plants.	200,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/ Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/ Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		515,000



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14. Program Performance

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

The specific goal of requested funds is to provide individuals with developmental disabilities 1) supportive life skills and job skills training in landscape/nursery, aquaponics farming, aquaculture and other related ag fields 2) to increase supported and independent employment job opportunities in Walton County through expanding our ag based enterprises in the field of aquaponics farming and Florida Native Ornamental Plant Nursey Operations and Sales 3) To expand gainful employment opportunities and assist with/facilitate community based employment opportunities in related fields of agriculture.
Walton/Okaloosa Counties

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

Program participants move through three levels of the transition to work aquaponics/ornamental nursery program specific to the industry certification skill sets in aquaculture and agriculture: Fish Stocking, Fish Acclimation, Sample Fish Weight, Fish Feeding Ratios, Seed Propagation, Seed Transplantation, Standard Agricultural/Aquaculture Operating Procedures, Data Logging, Integrated Greenhouse Pest Management, Harvesting, and Packaging.

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

Program participants will be provided specific job skills training in the field of aquaponics farming and native to Florida ornamental nursery operations using evidenced based Applied Behavioral Analytics to teach skill acquisition. This approach to vocational rehabilitation is unique to our program and is demonstrating positive outcomes -sustained employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. Individuals are transitioned into paid supportive employment roles, independent roles or community based employers in the field of agriculture.

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

Target Demographic: Economically disadvantaged persons, Developmentally Disabled . Target Population to be served 51-100.

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

1) Westonwood Ranch will provide education and specific skill acquisition to individuals with developmental disabilities in the field of aquaculture and agriculture providing a certificate of completion based on industry certs 2) Expansion of current aquaponics farm production which immediately creates job opportunities for individuals with developmental disorders reducing unemployment rates 3) Enhance economic self sufficiency and maximize their contributions as citizens. Outcome methodology includes skill acquisition tracking, skills competency assessment of 75% to progress through training levels, data, tracking for number of individuals employed, tracking number of new jobs created within social enterprises.

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?

We look forward to collaborating with the assigned agency in development of performance metrics, outcomes/deliverables tracking.

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