



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3041

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

Mobility Training Studio - Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center intends to build a new, state of the art facility to house a Mobility Training Studio to provide Orientation & Mobility (O&M) and White Cane training to blind and visually impaired residents of all ages. The new Mobility Studio will serve as a statewide model as there is no other facility providing comprehensive services in Florida. With a new Mobility Studio built next to our existing Independent Living and Technology Training Center, the campus creates a one stop model for integrated vision rehabilitation services. Lighthouse currently provides O&M training to about 200 clients annually. A new Mobility Studio will allow Lighthouse to provide this vital training to more people in an indoor, comfortable and safe environment. With our current expansion initiatives and the new studio we anticipate growing our program to 800 - 1,000 clients annually.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds

State Agency contacted?

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	2,000,000
Total State Funds Requested	2,000,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	2,000,000	50%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	2,000,000	50%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	4,000,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding?

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

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

9. Is future-year 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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Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

10. 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?

01/01/2027

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12/30/2027

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

Lighthouse is funded 60% by the Department of Education for Blind Services. The remaining 40% comes from community philanthropic support throughout the five counties. This is primarily from private donors, Foundations and civic organizations.

11. 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.

Manasota Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. dba Lighthouse Vision Loss Center.

12. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
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	The new 6,000 sq ft, state of the art facility to house a Mobility Training Studio to provide Orientation & Mobility (O&M) and White Cane training to blind and visually impaired residents of all ages residing in Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, DeSoto and Highlands Counties. The Studio will serve as a statewide model as there is no other facility of its kind providing these comprehensive services in Florida. The balance of needed funds will come from local philanthropic support for construction.	2,000,000
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		2,000,000

13. Program Performance

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



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Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center intends to build a new, state of the art facility to house a Mobility Training Studio to provide Orientation & Mobility (O&M) and White Cane training to blind and visually impaired residents of all ages. The new Mobility Studio will serve as a statewide model as there is no other facility providing these comprehensive services in Florida. With a new Mobility Studio built next to our existing Independent Living and Technology Training Center, the campus creates a one stop model for integrated vision rehabilitation services.

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

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) is training specific to blindness and low vision that teaches safe, efficient, and effective travel skills to people of all ages with vision loss. "Orientation" refers to knowing where you are and where you want to go, and "Mobility" refers to the ability to move safely from one place to another, such as crossing streets or using public transportation. Orientation & Mobility Specialists are certified instructors who have received specialized training in teaching people who are blind or visually impaired to travel safely and to navigate their environments independently.

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

Lighthouse is the only source for these special services in our area. Lighthouse serves people of all ages who are blind or have low vision, which is vision loss that cannot be corrected with glasses, medications or surgery. Our services are available to residents of Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, DeSoto and Highlands Counties, as well as the state of Florida. We provide Counseling and Family Engagement, Adjustment to Vision Loss - daily skills, Job Training, Youth programming 12-21 to prepare for college or employment, Assistive Technology and this year are launching a children's program.

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

Residents of DeSoto, Charlotte, Hardee, Sarasota and Manatee with Vision Loss, an estimated population of 50,000 potential people with varying degrees of vision loss which impacts high numbers of our elderly.

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

All of our programs and initiatives track clients demographic information, measurable achievements and service usage through the use of the "Sales Force" CRM. This project will benefit thousands of individuals of all ages throughout our region in the coming years. Further, we anticipate this first of its kind Mobility Studio to serve others traveling for training from around the State. It will serve as a demonstration project for other Vision Loss Centers to model in their own local regions.

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 in the contract?

We will request extensions if necessary and in the unlikely event we were unable to complete the project, return the funds.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?

a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?

- ☐ Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)
- ☐ Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- ☐ Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):

15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?

- ☐ Yes, Applied
- ☐ Yes, Received



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☐ No

☐ No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:

b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:

16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?

☐ Yes, Applied

☐ Yes, Received

☐ No

☐ No, but intends to apply

a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):

17. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name Last Name

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number Ext.

18. 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)



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d. First Name Last Name

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number Ext.

19. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number

The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.