



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1039

1. Project Title Boca School for Autism: Bridge to Success (B2S) Micro-Enterprise Vocational Job Training Program

2. Senate Sponsor Tina Polsky

3. Date of Request 10/30/2025

4. Project/Program Description

Autism is affecting more of Florida's families than ever before: Today, 1 in 31 children in the U.S. is diagnosed, up from 1 in 150 in 2000. Meanwhile, 85% of autistic adults are unemployed or underemployed. The Bridge to Success (B2S) Program, created by the Boca School for Autism (BSA), provides year-round vocational training and workshops for young adults with autism, through the creation of micro-enterprises. Participants gain skills in product design, customer service, sales, money management, workplace behavior, and self-advocacy, all bolstered by instructors, job coaches, and autism therapy supports. Program funds will also be utilized for transportation to and from on-site job training in the community, with measurable data-driven outcomes that advance independence and employability. BSA is an award winning institution, co-located in the FAU Research Park, where educators and clinicians work side by side to deliver life-changing outcomes for students.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Education

State Agency contacted? Yes

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	200,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	200,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	200,000	49%
Matching Funds		
Federal	5,000	1%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	60,000	14%
Local	5,000	1%
Other	145,000	35%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	415,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding? No

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? No

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)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

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

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.

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	Funding will support salaries and benefits for the Program Coordinator, vocational instructors, job coaches, and other staff as needed to ensure program compliance, daily operations, and direct participant support.	110,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Program supplies and small equipment for vocational spaces, technology for entrepreneurship training, and participant resources. Transportation to on-site job training, minor fuel costs, and other related expenses to support vocational readiness.	34,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Specialized trainers (business/entrepreneurship), speech and occupational therapy supports for workplace readiness, external evaluation, and other contracted services essential to program delivery.	56,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		200,000



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13. Program Performance

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

If awarded, this appropriation will expand the Bridge to Success (B2S) Program at the Boca School for Autism, following a successful pilot. The goal of B2S is to provide year-round vocational training, workshops, entrepreneurship opportunities, and employment pathways for young adults with autism; increase independence; reduce reliance on state services; strengthen Florida's workforce.

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

The B2S Program will provide vocational training through the creation micro-enterprises in sectors such as food & beverage and hospitality, where participants learn product development, customer service, sales, and financial literacy. The program will also support transportation to job sites, on-the-job training with local employers, workplace coaching, self-advocacy instruction, and specialized entrepreneurship training; program evaluation will track skills gained, employment outcomes, and independence measures.

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

The B2S Program will provide autistic young adults with direct vocational instruction, workshops, job coaching, and workplace readiness training through micro-enterprises and community job placements. Participants will receive hands-on experience, daily coaching, and supported employment opportunities that build independence and prepare them for competitive work.

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

Autism is effecting more of Florida's families than ever before: Today, 1 in 31 children in the United States is diagnosed, up from 1 in 150 in 2000. Meanwhile, 85% of autistic adults are unemployed or underemployed. The target population of the B2S program at the Boca School for Autism is young adults with autism in Palm Beach County and the surrounding areas. Following a successful pilot, the expanded B2S program, if funded, will initially serve 35+ students/year, with the capacity and expectation to scale and expand rapidly in future years. Boca School for Autism and the B2S program is incredibly well-supported in the community. Beyond receiving direct financial support from the City of Boca Raton and the Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, there are letters of support for BSA from multiple Palm Beach County School Board members and other elected officials, and community leaders.

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

The project will increase employment and independence for autistic young adults by providing year-round vocational training and on-site experience. At least 80% of participants will show measurable gains in workplace readiness, and 50% or more will obtain employment, self-employment, or paid work experience within their first year of program participation. Outcomes will be measured through skill assessments, employment tracking, micro-enterprise revenue, and annual reporting on independence gains.

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?

Failure to meet deliverables without notification of good reasoning will result in financial penalties as described in contract.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster? ☐ No

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):



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

- ☐ Yes, Applied
- ☐ Yes, Received
- ☐ 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)



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☐ Local Entity

☐ University or College

☐ Other (please specify)

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.