



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1289

1. Project Title Step Up Suncoast Community Services Facility for Low-to-Moderate Income Individuals

2. Senate Sponsor Jim Boyd

3. Date of Request 11/20/2025

4. Project/Program Description

The project will support Step Up Suncoast's acquisition of its leased facility, ensuring uninterrupted access to vital programs for low-to-moderate-income residents. Step Up Suncoast provides housing and utility assistance, early childhood education, family support, career attainment programs, and other essential services that strengthen local economic stability. Ownership redirects \$673,452 annually—previously spent on rent, taxes, and admin costs—into direct services and program growth, totaling nearly \$7 million over a decade. Securing the facility provides a permanent base, eliminating disruption risks and strengthening operational stability for Florida's working families, seniors, and at-risk populations. Step Up Suncoast will leverage \$6.15 million in matching federal, local, and private funds, demonstrating broad community support and ensuring long-term sustainability aligned with Florida's priorities for economic development, housing stabilization, and impactful local services.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Commerce

State Agency contacted? Yes

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	500,000
Total State Funds Requested	500,000

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)	500,000	7%
Matching Funds		
Federal	2,500,000	38%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	500,000	8%
Other	3,150,000	47%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	6,650,000	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)?

Yes

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

01/01/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

05/30/2027

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

A combination of Federal, and local funds 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.

Current owner/landlord - Parkland DBC LLC. Upon acquisition, the facility will be owned by Step Up Suncoast, Inc, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by a tripartite Board comprised of representatives from the private sector, local government, and low-income community, which ensures broad community input and oversight. There are no individual or outside entity owners; all ownership and governance reside with Step Up Suncoast, which is dedicated exclusively to its mission and delivery of vital services.

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	Acquisition of currently leased facility used to provide direct client services and related program and administrative oversight.	500,000
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		500,000

13. Program Performance

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



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The funds requested will be used to purchase Step Up Suncoast, Inc.'s primary facility. This acquisition will eliminate annual lease payments and redirect approximately \$673,452 per year into direct services for low- to moderate-income residents, including housing, education, and employment support. Facility ownership will provide long-term savings, ensure uninterrupted program delivery, and allow Step Up Suncoast to expand its impact and serve the community more efficiently.

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

Step Up Suncoast, Inc. provides education, individualized coaching, referrals, and financial assistance to individuals and families working to overcome crisis situations and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. The organization offers comprehensive services tailored to the needs of the entire household. Through the acquired facility, Step Up Suncoast will continue delivering a broad array of programs, including housing and utility assistance, early childhood education, family stabilization, career development, and income tax preparation services. These wraparound services empower low- to moderate-income residents by addressing immediate needs and supporting sustainable pathways out of poverty. The secure, permanent facility will enable Step Up Suncoast to expand its capacity, ensure uninterrupted service delivery, and maximize community impact with enhanced resource efficiency.

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

Direct services provided to citizens through this appropriation project will include housing and utility financial assistance, disaster recovery support, home weatherization, free tax preparation and filing, career attainment services, and parenting education and support. The project also anchors the delivery of year-round, center-based early childhood education—encompassing nutrition and developmental screenings—for children aged five and younger. These services are designed to address both immediate needs and longer-term self-sufficiency for individuals and families, ensuring holistic support for our community's most vulnerable residents.

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

The target population for this project is low- to moderate-income (LMI) residents across the Suncoast region, including households experiencing financial hardship, families with young children, seniors, and individuals seeking economic self-sufficiency. The project is expected to serve over 6,000 unduplicated individuals annually through direct services, with cumulative impact continuing to grow throughout and beyond the 20-year mortgage period. By anchoring core services in a permanent, community-based facility, Step Up Suncoast will effectively support thousands of vulnerable citizens each year and strengthen the region's economic resiliency for decades to come.

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

The primary benefit of this project is the redirection of approximately \$673,000 in annual facility costs into expanded direct services for low- to moderate-income citizens. Immediate, quantifiable cost savings will be realized through property tax exemptions, reduced rent payments, and minimized lease administration expenses. For clients, expected outcomes include improved wages and career prospects, increased financial and housing literacy, reduced home energy bills, enhanced health and safety, and better school readiness and age-appropriate development for young children.

Outcomes will be measured using a combination of client surveys, developmental screenings, home energy audits, home evaluations, and classroom performance scores. These tools will enable Step Up Suncoast to track and report client progress in line with established best practices for service delivery and impact evaluation.

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?



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In addition to standard penalties for failure to meet contract deliverables or performance measures, the contracting agency may consider enhanced penalties such as:

Progressive financial penalties for repeated non-compliance or missed deadlines.

Temporary suspension of payments until deliverable issues are resolved.

Requirement to develop and implement a corrective action plan at the contractor's expense.

Reduction or withholding of future funding allocation.

Mandatory increased reporting and quality audits at the contractor's expense.

Possible contract termination or debarment for persistent or severe underperformance.

These additional penalties promote timely, high-quality performance and offer strong safeguards to protect public resources and program outcomes.

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
- ☐ 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



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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)
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.