



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1308

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

We will modernize and expand Florida International University's Aquarius Reef Base, (ARB) the only underwater saturation research laboratory and habitat available globally to scientists, private industry, environmental educators and federal civilian agencies.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds

State Agency contacted?

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	5,000,000
Total State Funds Requested	5,000,000

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)	5,000,000	50%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	5,000,000	50%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	10,000,000	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.

Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects



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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?

07/1/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

1/1/2028

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

Funding from current operations.

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.

Florida International University

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	Construction of new life support buoy, renovation of the underwater habitat, renovation of major support vessels, adding space to the shore base building for a laboratory and scientist accommodations, planning for construction of a new habitat and for expanding the shore base land area and buildings.	5,000,000
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		5,000,000

13. Program Performance

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

We will modernize and expand Florida International University's Aquarius Reef Base, (ARB) the only underwater saturation research laboratory and habitat available globally to scientists, private industry, environmental educators and federal civilian agencies. Funds will be used to upgrade the underwater components of the ARB, upgrade the support vessels, add a research laboratory and support spaces on land and implement a web portal for real-time water quality data visualization.

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



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Scientific research (both pure and applied); human performance training from NASA and DoD; serving as an underwater test bed for marine technologies, water quality data collection, publication and visualization; K-12, university and postgraduate education.

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

Better environmental management of outstanding Florida Waters; more efficient management of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; real-time information on water quality, boating and diving conditions in support of Florida's water-based economy; and environmental health; class room and experiential learning opportunities, cutting edge science support.

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

Operators of water-based businesses in the Keys, fishers, scuba divers, environmental managers.

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

Better understanding of the links between human modification of the water cycle and degradation of the water quality of the nearshore marine habitat of the Florida Keys. Fewer and less intense harmful algae blooms and increases in seagrass and coral cover.

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?

Return of funds to the State of Florida

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)?



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- ☐ 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):

Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.

17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?

- ☐ Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- ☐ Resilient Florida Grant Program
- ☐ Wastewater Revolving Loan
- ☐ Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- ☐ Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- ☐ Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants)
- ☒ N/A

18. What is the population economic status?

- ☐ Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- ☐ Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- ☐ Rural Area of Economic Concern
- ☐ Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)
- ☒ N/A

19. What is the status of construction?

Planning

20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

Planning

21. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

07/07/2026

22. Requester Contact Information



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a. First Name Last Name
b. Organization
c. E-mail Address
d. Phone Number Ext.

23. 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.

24. 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.