



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1471

1. Project Title Nathan Benderson Park Secondary-Post Storm Shelter and Support Facility

2. Senate Sponsor Joe Gruters

3. Date of Request 11/25/2025

#### 4. Project/Program Description

Nathan Benderson Park is strategically located central to the North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton Metro Area to provide continuity of the operation of essential school, local government services, and intergovernmental coordination during and after major storm events. The building will be built to Threshold Building standards that provide increased wind load capacity in a centrally located area for the regional and in an area outside of designated evacuation zones or mapped flood zones. The facility will serve as a regional evacuation, shelter, recovery facility, staging lineman and food services, mobile hospital setup, etc. In addition to the evacuation functions, the facility will be a county-owned property that offers a number of benefits to the surrounding counties including providing a new 100,000 square foot Indoor Multi-Sports Complex, including, but not be limited to basketball, pickleball, tennis, volleyball, wrestling mats, a museum, and event space

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Division of Emergency Management

State Agency contacted? No

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	10,000,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>

#### 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)	10,000,000	23%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	20,000,000	44%
Other	15,000,000	33%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027</b>	<b>45,000,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

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)?

No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

12/01/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12/31/2028

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

Local funds

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.

Sarasota County and Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy, Inc.

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

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	All funds will be directed toward construction of the emergency storm preparation and recovery efforts facility. Construction will be in compliance with the definition of "threshold building" standards as defined in s. 553.71, F.S., specifically including structural components (shell, core, and roof) and FF&E necessary to support the State supported portion of the facility.	10,000,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>10,000,000</b>

### 13. Program Performance

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



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To provide centrally located facility that can be utilized by the region as an emergency shelter that is adjacent to I-75 and primary evacuation routes. Nathan Benderson Park is an ideal location to invest in to serve as a regional evacuation, shelter, and recovery facility and centralized. It will also serve as a centralized community facility with activities and event spaces accessible to residents and visitors to the region.

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

The facility will become available during emergency response and post storm events.

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

The facility will be available for government agency emergency response and post storm recovery staging.

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

All residents and visitors of the region. The North Port Sarasota-Bradenton MSA 2022 census tract population is 891,411 people.

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

The 2025 Hurricane Season has highlighted the need that Sarasota County has identified for critical hardened infrastructure support space during storm preparation and recovery periods. Nathan Benderson Park is strategically located central to the North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton Metro Area to provide continuity of the operation of essential school, local government services, and intergovernmental coordination during and after major storm events.

**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?**

The appropriation request is tied specifically to construction of a threshold building which will be owned by Sarasota County, and made available to Sarasota County, the State of Florida and other governmental agencies during future year emergency response and post-storm recovery events. Disbursement of State agency funding as a reimbursement for actual costs incurred to construct the facility will provide an appropriate performance measure.

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

**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):**

Hurricanes Helene and Milton

**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#:**



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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)

d. First Name  Last Name

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number  Ext.

19. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name



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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.*