



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1543

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

The requested funding will support ongoing scientific research and public education initiatives designed to improve the health and sustainability of Wakulla Springs. Activities funded will include watershed tours, communication research, student internships, and educational outreach programs that engage the local community and promote conservation. Additionally, the funding will support the development of an educational video and statewide curriculum for Florida students in partnership with the Challenger Learning Center, providing science-based instructional content to the thousands of children who visit the center each year. The project will also address needs identified during its first year of implementation, ensuring that both research and educational programs continue to meet community and ecological goals while empowering citizens to participate in the long-term stewardship of this vital natural resource.

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	850,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	850,000

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)	850,000	100%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	850,000	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		
2025-26	0	850,000	147	Yes

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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Fiscal Year 2026-2027

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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.

Florida State University is a public state 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	The requested state funds will be used to sustain existing programs, including watershed tours, communication research, student internships, and educational outreach, while also supporting the creation of an educational video and statewide curriculum in partnership with the Challenger Learning Center. Additionally, the funds will address project needs identified during the first year of implementation to ensure continued effective research and public engagement.	850,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		850,000

13. Program Performance

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



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LFIR # 1543

The funds requested will help protect and sustain Wakulla Springs by supporting scientific research to identify groundwater sources, assess nutrient pollution, and improve understanding of the ecosystem. They will also promote public education and community engagement through watershed tours, internships, educational outreach, and the development of a statewide video and curriculum for students. Overall, the goal is to empower citizens and students to actively participate in conservation and long-term stewardship of this vital natural resource.

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

The funds will support activities such as watershed tours, communication research, student internships, and educational outreach to increase public awareness and engagement in conservation. They will also fund the creation of an educational video and statewide curriculum in partnership with the Challenger Learning Center to provide science-based instruction to students across Florida.

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

The appropriation will provide citizens with hands-on educational opportunities through watershed tours, internships, and community outreach programs. It will also offer students access to a statewide educational video and curriculum, delivering science-based information about Wakulla Springs and its conservation.

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

The target population includes students, local community members, and visitors to Wakulla Springs, with a particular focus on the thousands of children who participate in programs at the Challenger Learning Center. Overall, the project is expected to reach several thousand individuals each year through tours, educational programs, and outreach activities.

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

The expected benefit of this project is improved health and sustainability of Wakulla Springs, increased public awareness of conservation issues, and greater community and student engagement in environmental stewardship. Outcomes will be measured through participation metrics for tours, internships, and educational programs, feedback from students and community members, and assessment of educational materials' reach and effectiveness in conveying key scientific and conservation concepts.

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?

Revert state appropriation and withhold future funding towards this initiative.

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



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Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1543

☐ 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)

d. First Name Last Name



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Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1543

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.