



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1606

1. Project Title McCormick Research Institute: Equine-assisted Therapy for Veterans with Mental Health Challenges

2. Senate Sponsor Kristen Arrington

3. Date of Request 11/20/2025

4. Project/Program Description

McCormick Research Institute enhances the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of veterans through equine-assisted therapy and horsemanship. Our programs—therapeutic riding, adaptive groundwork, and veteran retreats—use the unique bond between horse and human to foster healing, resilience, and confidence. Services address challenges such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, and mobility limitations. McCormick never charges veterans or their families for participation. Requested funding will sustain and expand access to these life-changing programs, ensuring continuity of care and the ability to serve more participants in the coming year.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Veterans' Affairs

State Agency contacted? Yes

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	348,825
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	348,825

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)	348,825	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	348,825	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? Yes

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year. 350,000

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

Private donations



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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	Staff salaries for veteran recruitment and engagement, equine management, therapeutic riding sessions, PATH accreditation, continued mental health research, volunteer management, veteran equestrian drill team practices and performances, mental health curriculum development, facilities management, digital content creation, and participation in community events.	348,825
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
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)		348,825

13. Program Performance

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



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Funds requested will support McCormick Research Institute's evidence-based equine-assisted therapy programs for veterans. Our ongoing research demonstrates significant reductions in PTSD symptoms among participants, validating the effectiveness of our model. Funding will sustain and expand these programs, providing free access to therapeutic riding and equine-assisted activities that improve emotional well-being, resilience, and quality of life for veterans coping with trauma and transition.

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

McCormick Research Institute will provide equine-assisted therapy and traditional counseling services specifically designed to support the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of veterans. Programs will include mounted and unmounted equine therapy sessions, guided by certified therapeutic riding instructors and licensed mental health professionals. These services help veterans reduce PTSD symptoms, build resilience, and improve overall quality of life at no cost to participants.

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

McCormick Research Institute will provide Central Florida veterans with a range of equine-assisted and traditional therapeutic services, including therapeutic horseback riding, equine-assisted psychotherapy, and adaptive horsemanship programs. Veterans will also have access to individualized counseling sessions and specialized retreats designed to promote healing, reduce PTSD symptoms, and support reintegration. All services are offered at no cost to participating veterans.

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

McCormick Research Institute's veteran programs serve Central Florida veterans coping with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, depression, anxiety, and other service-related challenges. The project also provides continued engagement opportunities through our veteran volunteer program and mounted drill team, fostering camaraderie, purpose, and peer support. With the requested funding, McCormick expects to serve approximately several hundred veterans annually through more than 1,000 equine-assisted activities, counseling services, and volunteer 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 outcome of McCormick Research Institute's veteran programs is measurable improvement in mental health and overall quality of life, including significant reductions in PTSD symptoms. In collaboration with the University of Central Florida and the local VA, McCormick conducts ongoing research to evaluate the effectiveness of equine-assisted therapy. Veterans complete pre- and post-program clinical assessments and validated surveys measuring PTSD, depression, anxiety, and well-being to document and quantify therapeutic impact.

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?

McCormick Research Institute is committed to meeting all deliverables and performance measures outlined in the contract. If unforeseen circumstances prevent serving the anticipated number of veterans or achieving projected outcomes, McCormick recommends that any unused funds be carried over to the following fiscal year to continue veteran therapy services. If program goals cannot be met within that timeframe, any remaining funds would be promptly returned to the state.

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):



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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	<input type="text" value="Ricky"/>	Last Name	<input type="text" value="Booth"/>
b. Organization	<input type="text" value="McCormick Research Institute"/>		
c. E-mail Address	<input type="text" value="ricky@mccormick.us"/>		
d. Phone Number	<input type="text" value="(407)908-9866"/>	Ext.	<input type="text"/>

18. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization	<input type="text" value="McCormick Research Institute"/>
b. Municipality and County	<input type="text" value="Osceola"/>
c. Organization Type	
<input type="checkbox"/> For Profit Entity	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non Profit 501(c)(3)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.