



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 1713

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

The Applied Mental Health Certificate for First Responders is an innovative program at St. Petersburg College (SPC) in Pinellas County, designed to address a critical and often overlooked issue—mental health among first responders. The proposed framework will provide a starting point towards the primary initiative of assisting and training public safety officers, current and retired, who are experiencing social and mental health challenges in the workforce. This proposed academic framework will also promote growth in the areas of recruitment/enrollment and faculty development at St. Petersburg College with streamlined post credit course offerings for a set cohort.

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	501,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	501,000

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)	501,000	85%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	90,000	15%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	591,000	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		
2023-24	0	386,940	123	No

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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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	Project Coordinator will be responsible for managing program services aimed at supporting first responder professionals, including firefighters, law enforcement, paramedics, and EMS. This individual will oversee the logistics of program delivery, build partnerships and ensure the success of initiatives designed to improve the health and mental well-being of first responders.	76,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Administrative Assistant will provide administrative and clerical support to ensure efficient grant operation . The administrative assistant will be proactive, professional, and capable of managing a wide range of administrative tasks.	40,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Textbooks, Instructional Material & Supplies, and Instructional Technology; Marketing & Printing Costs for program expansion and recruitment	105,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Evaluation services: Data Collection, Reports & Evaluative Program Services will provide the tools and insights needed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the Applied Mental Health Certificate for First Responders.	35,000
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits	Curriculum Development & Additional Faculty Teaching Support for the expansion of the Applied Mental Health Certificate Program for First Responders. This support is designed to supplement core instruction and curriculum development to ensure that first responders are equipped with the necessary tools to address mental health challenges within their work.	150,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Attend conference & workshop presentations to blueprint program success model for teaching and learning strategies; Promote program expansion and recruitment through mental symposiums and seminars	20,000



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Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Consultative services will include highly specialized consultants that leverage the expertise of first responder professionals and subject matter experts to enhance training, policy development, and community engagement initiatives to support faculty, staff, and first responders.	75,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		501,000

13. Program Performance

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

By recognizing the emotional complexities inherent in police work and developing resources to offer genuine support, SPC is delivering a compelling message: the health and safety of our communities are intrinsically linked to the mental and emotional well-being of our police officers and other first responders, such as fire and rescue as well as dispatchers. This is achieved by equipping them with the resilience tools they need to foster a safer environment for everyone. Creating and implementing a new model for wellness will allow leaders in law enforcement and among first responders to tackle the stigma associated with seeking mental health support.

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

Since the program's inception, the attention of the program has garnered state and national interest from other agencies who would like to refer their first responders to the program. With cohort #2 in full swing, the demographic make-up of these 12 first responders represent St. Pete PD, Tampa PD, Bradenton PD, and Tampa Airport. The program is currently recruiting for cohort #3 to deploy in Fall 2025 with a concurrent cohort #1 of Fire & Rescue, EMS, and dispatchers to start in Summer 2026.

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

First responder programs in Florida benefit the community by providing crucial support to those who serve and by improving the overall well-being of the first responders themselves. These programs offer mental health resources, financial assistance, and other forms of support, ultimately leading to a healthier and stronger first responder workforce. By supporting the well-being of first responders, programs ensure they can provide efficient and effective emergency response services, leading to better outcomes for individuals and communities they serve.

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

Expanding to all EMS, Fire, 911 and Police in the State of Florida. When compared to the general population, first responders are more at risk for mental illness. In a 2018 report published by the Ruderman Family Foundation, emergency medical services professionals, firefighters and law enforcement officers experienced heightened levels of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal thoughts, and they were more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. According to data gathered by First H.E.L.P., an organization seeking to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health for first responders, there were 252 reported suicides by first responders.

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

The launch of the Mental Health Certificate program at St. Petersburg College marks a significant advancement in our community, showcasing a forward-thinking approach to prioritizing the mental health of police officers. We hope that this initiative will serve as a blueprint for other jurisdictions, encouraging them to collaborate with educational institutions to address this vital need. By recognizing the emotional complexities inherent in police work and developing resources to offer genuine support, SPC is delivering a compelling message: the health and safety of our communities are intrinsically linked to the mental and emotional well-being of our police officers and other first responders, such as fire and rescue as well as dispatchers.

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?

There are performance standards within each agency that must be met as part of their current contractual obligations.



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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

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



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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.