The Florida Senate
Local Funding Initiative Request
Fiscal Year 2024-2025

1. Project Title   Funding for Florida's FIRST robotics program

2. Senate Sponsor   Tom Wright

3. Date of Request   12/06/2023

4. Project/Program Description

FIRST® is driven by the mission: to inspire and cultivate the next generation of science and technology leaders and innovators. Using mentor-based programs, we engage young minds from ages 9-18 in science, engineering, and technology. Our aim is to nurture their technical skills but also spark innovation and foster soft skills like self-confidence, communication, and leadership. Teams can come from many different areas, school or district based or community based. Our students have the opportunity through FIRST to gain professional certifications while still in school that will qualify them for many jobs right out of high school. The results of a 15 year Brandis study show our programs have proven to be effective in kindling students' interest in STEM fields. FIRST creates one of the best workforce development pipelines for the high tech employers. Our goal is to have a team for every student and host enough local competitions that our Florida teams have a place to compete

5. State Agency to receive requested funds   Department of Education

State Agency contacted?   No

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	984,750
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	**984,750**

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	984,750	68%
Matching Funds		
Federal	164,510	11%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	103,000	7%
Other	205,174	14%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025	**1,457,434**	**100%**

8. Has this project previously received state funding?   Yes

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2019-20	0	200,000	113	Yes

9. Is future funding likely to be requested?   Yes

   a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.   984,750

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

Many Department of Defense, aerospace contractors, hospitality/theme park industry and entertainment companies have been a large source of funding for the past 15 years. Because of the change in private industry giving priorities, some have moved to climate change and more general education funding in lieu of STEM funding. There are some grants available for team registration fees and event funding by energy companies. There are also league fees for the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) and FIRST Lego

10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

No

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. 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?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. 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.

13. 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	Registration Fees for rookie and veteran FRC teams, League fees for FTC and FLL	735,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Coach and Mentor Training	25,000
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Event Support and Shipping to World Championships,	215,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Accounting and Administrative	9,750
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		**984,750**

14. Program Performance

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

The goal of the Florida FIRST State Operation Committee (SOC) is to grow FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC), FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) and FIRST Lego League Challenge (FLL) in Florida with a focus on rural and minority communities while also helping to sustain current veteran teams at each level. With more of our Florida students participating in this program, Florida will help create the workforce development pipeline with highly innovative skilled workers who know how to work as a team, problem solve and generate a vibrant economy

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

The SOC will provide pre-season hands-on training workshops for mentors and engage with monthly mentor chats to provide information and promote community among teams and connect new and veteran mentors The SOC will also organize and run a scrimmage, a qualifier and a regional championship FLL Challenge competition events in 5 Florida regions and a Florida State Championship. Three FTC meets and a league championship in 9 Florida regions and an FTC State Championship. 3 FRC Regionals; South Florida, Orlando, and Tallahassee. This will allow all our teams to have a local event to participate in North, South, and Central Florida.
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c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

Florida's students will gain hands-on engineering and programming experience, which increases enrollment in engineering at Florida's universities and state colleges, and increases the skilled technical workforce for Florida's growing industries. Students can also qualify for professional certifications allowing them to join the workforce upon high school graduation.
The SOC will provide a portion of team supplies and registration fees for teams at each level making FIRST available to more students of all economic levels. We will provide hands-on mentor training and support for all levels and a monthly FRC mentor call. We will provide our teams with a local place to compete while also bringing in teams from around the world for the FRC Regional competitions.

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

.Florida's students aged 9-18 can participate in FIRST programs. Individuals will be served at a lower cost with this funding by participating on hundreds of teams located in Florida, and by competing at events held across the state.
Number of Students served by participating on teams:
FIRST LEGO League had 727 teams registered in the 2019 Season, and 612 teams registered in the 2022 season. Each team has a maximum of 10 students, totaling an estimate of 6,120 students served by participating on FIRST LEGO League teams.
FIRST Tech Challenge had 195 teams registered in the 2019 Season, and 218 teams registered in the 2022 season. Each team has a maximum of 15 students, totaling an estimate of 3,270 students served by participating on FIRST Tech Challenge teams.
FIRST Robotics Competition had 89 teams registered in the 2019 Season, and 72 teams registered in the 2022 season. Each team has on average 40 students, totaling an estimate of 2880 students served by participating on

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

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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 the contract?

Penalties for registering a team, but not competing at events, no future funding

15. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name	Wendy	**Last Name**	Austin

b. Organization | FIRST Robotics

c. E-mail Address | waustin@firstinspires.org

d. Phone Number | (407)247-6776   **Ext.**

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization | Canveral Council of Technical Socities

b. Municipality and County | Brevard

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 | Nimisha   **Last Name** | Vyas

e. E-mail Address | capeccts@gmail.com

f. Phone Number | (407)758-3074

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name | None

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number