



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 1826

1. Project Title
2. Senate Sponsor
3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

The Ben Franklin Project, created and run by the Step Up America Foundation, is a supplemental resource to help teach K-5 (or higher) students civics, government, and American history aligned to Florida standards. The focus is the country's founding principles, Constitution, Bill of Rights, culture, values, structure of government, and the importance of becoming responsible, engaged citizens. The Project uses virtual avatars depicting significant historical figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Frederick Douglas, who interact in real time with students in the classroom to impart what was most important in a particular period of American history and how events unfolded and shaped the nation we have today. It is a unique supplemental teaching aide that keeps the attention of children in a way they will remember. Over the past 3 years, at the invitation of teachers, the Project has made classroom presentations in 11 Florida counties.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds
- State Agency contacted? No

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	4,000,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	4,000,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	4,000,000	80%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	1,000,000	20%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2023-2024	5,000,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding? No

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future funding likely to be requested? Yes
- 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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In addition to private donations/grants, it is anticipated that in future years the Project will qualify for and receive a per student subscription fee from school districts for each classroom presentation, which will defray some of the costs and revenues from such fees and should increase as the Project grows and expands.

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

Yes

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

Two PPP loans were received totaling \$93,144.78. The funds were used to pay staff salaries. Both loans qualified and have been forgiven.

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

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?

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	Step Up America CEO/President who will oversee and manage the Project and the organization	156,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Office Manager and Director of Marketing	195,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Contingency	62,000
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits	Director of Operations; Program Development Officers (2); Scheduler; Avatar Trainer; Quality and Compliance Officer; Finance and Reporting Officer; Tech Support Staff (2); Avatar Actors (20)	2,418,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Office (furnished) Lease; Office Equipment; Computer Technology and Cloud; Office Supplies; Travel; Meeting Costs; Events and Accommodations; IP License	769,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Professionals: Legal and Accounting/Tax; Consultants	400,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		



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Construction/Renovation/Land/ Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		4,000,000

14. Program Performance

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

Elementary school students across Florida will learn civics, government, and American history aligned with Florida civics and government standards. The Project will be scaled with the recruitment, hiring, and training of additional actors to voice avatars; avatars depicting several more historical figures will be developed; lesson plans and scripts/curriculum will be developed for each avatar; and lesson plans and curriculum to meet the 2023-24 revised Florida civics standards will be developed to present in as many classrooms as possible in Florida's 1892 elementary schools that school year.

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

Step Up America Foundation will hire and train the personnel necessary; develop additional historical figures as avatars; recruit, hire, and train all avatar voice actors; do outreach to all Florida elementary schools, teachers, school superintendents, and school districts; work with the Florida Department of Education to develop integrated curriculum for several disciplines; and be responsible for all presentations.

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

All Florida citizens will benefit by having more elementary school students knowledgeable about civics, government, and American history and better prepared for the classes they will have in these subjects in later grades and college, as well as having the foundational tools to be good and responsible citizens as adults.

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

The roughly 1.5 million K-5 students in Florida schools.

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

Elementary school students across the state will learn civics, government, and American history to a degree never before seen in Florida schools. They will be better prepared for middle and high school when it comes to social studies, and they will be much better prepared to be citizens as adults. Outcomes will be measured by simple tests prepared by Step Up America Foundation that teachers will be asked to administer before and after each avatar presentation. The results will be compiled and used as reference points for success and for improvements to curriculum and presentations.

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?

N/A

15. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name **Last Name**

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number **Ext.**

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type



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- 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

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number