



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 2833

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

4. Project/Program Description

Small businesses make up 99.8 percent of all businesses in Florida, 250,000+ (9.7%) are Black-owned, representing an annual payroll of \$2.63 billion, employing 77,136. Due to their size and resources many lack access to the digital market space and the 268 million (70%) digital buyers in the U.S.

The "Online Mall of Small Shops" is a project targeting Black-owned small retail businesses, providing a digital platform and collective market space to access a year-round revenue stream tapping into the online/digital shopper market.

The project's goal is to enable Black-owned small businesses to enter/expand their presence in the online/digital market sector.

Online shoppers benefit from an easy to find collective market space and small businesses from leveraged resources, heightened visibility, shared customer base and collective marketing, similar to that of traditional malls.

As a non-profit, our retailers keep 100% of their profits, unlike that of our for-profit competitors.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**

State Agency contacted?

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	2,715,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	2,715,000

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)	2,715,000	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 2023-2024	2,715,000	100%

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**

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

9. **Is future funding likely to be requested?**

a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 2833

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

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

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

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	The Executive Director responsibilities include recruiting vendors, advertising campaign, development and oversight, recruitment and supervision of staff, development and administration of company policies & procedures and quality control.	75,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Finance Director responsibilities include: Budgeting, independent contractor agreement negotiations and oversight, accounts payable and payroll.	60,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Commercial productions, 2 laptops, 2 DSLR cameras, camera lenses, production lighting, green screen, Lavalier and shotgun microphones, portable mobilized slider, drones, promotional material, acoustic paneling, audio interface, travel, shipping, supplies, software subscriptions, travel and miscellaneous business expenses.	1,520,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Marketing & Advertising Consultant Website Developers Graphic Designers Legal Fees	200,000
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits	(1) Website Development Manager (1) administrative assistant, (1) technical assistant	150,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	(3) Laptops, software subscriptions, travel and miscellaneous supplies	10,000



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 2833

Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Ad buys (radio, television, print, social media)	700,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		2,715,000

14. Program Performance

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

Funds will be used to create a website/digital presence to collectively market, promote and provide technical support to small retailers enabling them to participate in the digital/e-commerce market space. Helping leverage each other's customer base and marketing/advertising resources.

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

The online mall's activities and services include:

- marketing and promotion
- small business recruitment and retention
- website design and development
- commercial/video productions
- product images
- promotional materials
- advertising purchases (radio, social media, print and cable)
- small business technical support

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

Increased revenues will enable small businesses to hire more citizens. Citizens/digital buyers will be able to more easily locate small Black-owned businesses in a common market space.

A Nielson study states that this year "48% of African American households will shop online, 11% more than the average household". Our goal is to help them tap into the African American online shopper market.

Small businesses are the life-blood of communities. By helping small businesses we help sustain communities.

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

The project targets serving approximately 500+ small retail businesses that are at least 50% Black-owned and 2.68 million online shoppers (10% of the 268 million online buyers).

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

Participating businesses are expected to benefit by increased/expanded revenue streams and collective advertising, impacting their long-term viability and sustainability, especially during pandemic-like periods.

Businesses would be able to participate and/or have heightened visibility in national promotions such as "Cyber Monday" significantly impacting the bottom line of small businesses operating in the online/digital market space.

Website analytics will be used to measure the following:

- Click-throughs
- Time spent on the site

Other assessment tools include business owner surveys as well as shopper and Google reviews.

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?



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 2833

Failing to meet our deliverables will result in brand reputation damage, hamper future opportunities for funding and the continued sustainability of the company/project.

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

- 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**