



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1088

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

Project: 75,980 sq. ft. AgriCenter and Emergency Shelter at the South Florida Fairgrounds in Palm Beach County to serve as a storm recovery venue in the event of a natural disaster. An existing facility at the South Florida Fairgrounds is the only special needs shelter in Palm Beach County and only accommodates 500 citizens for special needs sheltering. Construction of additional facility will expand existing shelter and eliminate the deficit of 700+ special needs space/beds for sheltering children and adults including individuals on the autism spectrum and caregivers. Facility will provide climate-controlled space in a structure built to withstand category 5 winds and would be available for storm evacuees from South Florida and the west coast of Florida if needed for sheltering while rebuilding communities. Constructed as a multi-purpose building, the facility will be used year-round for the South Florida community and surrounding rural counties for agricultural-educational purposes.

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

**State Agency contacted?**  No  Yes

6. **Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

| Type of Funding                    | Amount           |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Operating                          | 0                |
| Fixed Capital Outlay               | 6,000,000        |
| <b>Total State Funds Requested</b> | <b>6,000,000</b> |

7. **Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)**

| Type of Funding                                      | Amount            | Percentage  |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)       | 6,000,000         | 16%         |
| <b>Matching Funds</b>                                |                   |             |
| Federal  | 0                 | 0%          |
| State (excluding the amount of this request)         | 0                 | 0%          |
| Local  | 24,000,000        | 67%         |
| Other  | 6,000,000         | 17%         |
| <b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026</b> | <b>36,000,000</b> | <b>100%</b> |

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**  No  Yes

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

| Fiscal Year<br>(yyyy-yy) | Amount    |              | Specific<br>Appropriation # | Vetoed |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------|
|                          | Recurring | Nonrecurring |                             |        |
|                          |           |              |                             |        |

9. **Is future-year funding likely to be requested?**  No  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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## 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)?

No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

08/01/2025

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

11/1/2026

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

The South Florida Fair & Palm Beach County Expositions, Inc. will oversee the operations and management of the project. Funds from the organization's annual operating budget will be utilized.

### 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.

Matthew Wallsmith, President & CEO of the South Florida Fair & Palm Beach County Expositions, Inc., oversees the operations of the 501 C(3) non-profit organization. He, along with CFO Shamel Jalahej, will manage the funds for this project as well as maintain all records for the project. The Fair board of directors volunteer to support the non-profit organization.

### 12. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

| Spending Category                                   | Description   | Amount    |
|---|---|-----------|
| <b>Administrative Costs:</b>                        |   |           |
| Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits |   | 0         |
| Other Salary and Benefits                           |   | 0         |
| Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other             |   | 0         |
| Consultants/Contracted Services/Study               |   | 0         |
| <b>Operational Costs</b>                            |   |           |
| Salary and Benefits                                 |   | 0         |
| Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other             |   | 0         |
| Consultants/Contracted Services/Study               |   | 0         |
| <b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b> |   |           |
| Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering   | Funds are for construction of a 75,980 sq. ft. multi-purpose emergency special needs shelter and agricultural exposition building. The final design, with input from Palm Beach County emergency management, includes schematic designs, construction plans and specifications. Surveys, soil testing and drainage plans are complete. Demolition of existing structures and construction will begin when funding is secured. | 6,000,000 |



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|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b> | <b>6,000,000</b> |
|--|------------------|

**13. Program Performance**

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

Funds are for construction of a multi-purpose exhibition building on the South Florida Fairgrounds that will serve as a special needs emergency shelter. It will include specially designed dedicated shelter space for those with autism spectrum disorders. The new facility will connect to the existing shelter located on the Fairgrounds and eliminate the deficit of beds that currently exists. It will also be used to assist with storm recovery and rebuilding efforts if needed by counties on both the east and west coast and in the rural heartland of Florida in the event a natural disaster occurs. When it is not required for emergency use, the building will be utilized for agricultural educational programming for residents of South Florida and surrounding 4 counties the Fair is chartered to serve which includes Hendry, Martin, Broward and Okeechobee counties.

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

The multi-purpose exhibition building will replace an existing structure that has limited utilization due to aging of the facility. The new building will provide space for an additional special needs beds in the event of an emergency. The new building will connect to the existing shelter which can accommodate 500 citizens, eliminating the need for duplication of resources during an emergency. We also recognize that the Palm Beach County area represents approximately 10% of Florida's identified families with children on the autism spectrum. These families require specially designed and dedicated shelter space. This has been included in the facility design.

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

Services provided during an emergency would be shelter, medically necessary beds, food and water to citizens who have Special Needs and must be housed in a facility that will not lose power during a catastrophic event. It will also provide a unique opportunity to safely and appropriately house families with children on the autism spectrum. Year round use of the facility will enhance the quality of life for citizens of South Florida through agricultural education activities and social interaction.

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

The use of this facility during emergency situations will protect the citizenry by providing an area of shelter with lifesaving support. There is a need for additional space because the only other existing special needs shelter can only accommodate a small percentage of the population. Thousands of people could be served in this situation. Agriculture education is the primary mission of the South Florida Fair and through exhibitions in the multi purpose facility, shows would be produced that would educate the public about the agricultural industry. An annual industry trade exposition would also be part of the programming. Over 400,000 attend the Fair each January. The Fairgrounds is a place where all members of the community attend events and activities. The addition of the Agri-Center exposition space would allow the Fair to offer cultural activities to an underserved demographic who may not otherwise have access to affordable community events and activities.

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

This would be a regional facility that can provide backup space, when appropriate, to the rural communities of Hendry and Okeechobee counties as well as serve the west coast of Florida with sheltering during storm recovery and rebuilding efforts. The Fair is a regional Fair operation that covers a 5 county region: Palm Beach, Hendry, Broward, Martin and Okeechobee. It serves as a huddle point for regional recovery operations. This benefit is easily measurable. It will also provide a specialized shelter unit for children with autism, if a family is in need.

**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?**

Should the South Florida Fair not secure additional funding which would result in failure to meet the deliverables, the appropriated funds would revert back to the state. The design is funded and in final stage and will be completed by March 2025. Construction will begin immediately following approval of funds.

**14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?**  No



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**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**

**a. Organization**



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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.*