



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1133

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

The five Easterseals affiliates in Florida continue to share, scale, and expand program innovations and successes in services for individuals with autism and related disabilities. Key initiatives include: (1) The PLAY Project-A parent-centered, autism intervention for young children. (2) Behavioral Health Services-autism early diagnosis and therapeutic interventions. (3) STRIVE-Industry recognized certifications in hospitality and virtual employment training. (4) Specialized K-12 Education-Academic programs. (5) Adult and employment services including transition. Our goal is to strengthen our statewide network and collective outcomes in urban and rural areas of Florida, informing decisions that promote earlier diagnoses and interventions. By providing diagnostics, therapy, specialized education, and employment, we aim to empower children, adults and their families to achieve greater independence.

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

State Agency contacted? No

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	7,000,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	7,000,000

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)	7,000,000	48%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	122,084	1%
Other	7,366,586	51%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	14,488,670	100%

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

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2024-25	0	6,500,000	246A	No

9. **Is future-year 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.**

Increased program fees, diversification of program fees, philanthropic donations.



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1133

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		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Administrative Cost Allocation	300,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits	Salaries/Wages; Benefits	2,814,323
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Program Supplies: Training, Rent, Supplies, Travel, Diagnostic Supplies, Educational Supplies, Continuing Education, IT, Telephone/Utilities, Equipment lease/purchase, Maintenance/Repairs, Postage, Bank Fees, Licensure Fees, Subscriptions, Misc.	275,677
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Professional Fees (Equine Specialists in Mental Health and Learning, PLAY home consultants, Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors, mental health clinicians, pediatrician, virtual reality consultant) Subcontracted affiliates.	3,610,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		7,000,000

13. Program Performance

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



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1133

Easterseals affiliates in Florida are committed to sharing, scaling, and expanding innovations and successes in key urban and rural areas, including autism early diagnosis and intervention, comprehensive behavioral health and mental health services, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, supported employment training, and intensive education and therapies. Our goal is to strengthen our statewide network, enhance collective outcomes, and apply best practices in education, specialized therapies, and employment to empower individuals with disabilities.

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

Each affiliate has a successful client approach appropriate for scaling across affiliates via direct service delivery, virtual services, consultation, technical assistance training, community education, etc. Together, affiliates will identify capacity gaps and expand local access to early intervention and clinical therapies, supported workforce training, intensive specialized education and comprehensive behavioral health/mental health services. Easterseals will provide comprehensive family support services including case management and post-diagnostic wrap around services.

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

PLAY Project- parent implemented intervention for young children with autism
 Behavioral Health-Psychology, Psychiatry for children with autism and other disabilities
 Therapies-Speech, Occupational, Physical, Behavioral
 STRIVE - vocational skills towards industry-recognized certifications in hospitality and healthcare
 Life skills training focusing on employment goals
 Virtual Reality - digital simulation training in retail/ hospitality
 Early intervention therapies, intensive education and comprehensive behavioral mental health
 K-12 specialized education programs
 Case management and family support

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

Each Florida Easterseals' target populations are (1) children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities that reside in Florida, as well as their families/caregivers, (2) Local businesses and industries who rely on a qualified, dependable workforce, and (3) Members of the local community who benefit from an inclusive and diverse society. Up to 2,200+ children and adults with disabilities are expected to be served directly through our collaborative efforts.

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

More children and adults with disabilities will benefit by our collective sharing of innovative programming in key areas that impact independence and early intervention (1) autism early diagnosis and cost-effective interventions that result in increased functional development levels, (2) vocational skills training that respects the person's own choices and leads to industry-recognized certifications for increased independence and employability, (3) employment skills to improve management/communication, financial/service, self management adaptive skills; (4) comprehensive behavioral/mental health therapeutic and educational services that reduce maladaptive behaviors, learning disabilities and improve overall independence and self-esteem. In-depth performance measures across multiple programs will include data collection/analysis, diagnostic testing, treatment plans, job placements, retention, skills improvement, case management notes, and improved economic status.

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?

Since we are proposing a direct services contract, we would expect not to be paid until the monthly reporting of performance levels met the contract expectation.

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

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)



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1133

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

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1133

- 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.