



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1240

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

4. Project/Program Description

The Fire Watch is Florida's fight to end Veteran suicide. We've built an early intervention network of community members - called 'Watch Standers' - who are trained to identify at-risk Veterans and direct them to the resources they need. The program is inspired by CPR. We have trained 8,233 Watch Standers to date who will make more than 10,000 Veteran referrals over the next 12 months. In NE Florida, where we launched the program, Veteran suicides are down 27% since we started, compared to 5% statewide and 1% nationwide. These funds will expand the Watch Stander program to the rest of Florida and will be implemented in partnership with FDVA.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**
- State Agency contacted?** Yes

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	927,651
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	927,651

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)	927,651	56%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	90,000	5%
Other	647,673	39%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	1,665,324	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		
2023-24	0	250,000	593A	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.

The Trump Administration is likely to increase federal VA grants for community-based Veteran suicide prevention initiatives. Until then, our cost-effective Watch Stander program is delivering results, and expanding it statewide will help Florida deliver far better reductions than other States.



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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)?

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	Executive Director (ED) leads the implementation of the Watch Stander program and other Veteran suicide prevention initiatives statewide, including a key statewide initiative of the Governor's Challenge to End Veteran Suicide. The ED coordinates closely with the Florida Department of Veteran Affairs (FDVA). Remaining portion of ED compensation to be covered by other contracts and grants.	50,922
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Registrations, subscriptions, laptop, monitor, office supplies, office space, full year.	21,200
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	IT support and helpdesk - \$20,400. 3rd party accountant, audit - \$9,800.	30,200
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits	Partial comp for 3 Regional Directors, 4 Regional Managers, Program Manager, Program Evaluator / Administrator. 8.5 FTEs @ ~67% total. The RPDs (North, Central, South Florida) and RMs train community members. The PM manages program / vendors. The PE/A evaluates program results and provides administrative services. This structure allows program delivery to all 67 counties in Florida.	408,129
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	RPDs and RMs travel to neighboring counties across State for trainings - \$21,000. Marketing and Collateral - \$31,400. Train the Trainer program miscellaneous costs - \$62,400. Laptops, equipment, supplies - \$8,600.	123,400



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Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Primary contracted service is marketing - creating and delivering social media, digital media, and other media and collateral across Florida to drive program awareness and Watch Stander recruitment - \$139,000. Next most important vendor is our training portal developer, PsychArmor. They will charge \$105,000, at \$10 per trainee in 2025. Website and App maintenance - \$19,800. Veteran Suicide Data Collection & Analysis (NLP Logix) - \$30,000.	293,800
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		927,651

13. Program Performance

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

Our Watch Stander program engages community members to create protective factors around at-risk Veterans and to get them to the crisis or upstream help they need. The three goals achieved by the funding will be:

1. Increase Watch Standers by 3,000 (to a total of 11,000) during program year.
2. Achieve 70% Veteran Engagement and 30% Veteran Referral rates during program year; and
3. Reduce Veteran suicides in Florida by 25% over baseline year.

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

This funding supports statewide expansion of The Fire Watch's 'Watch Stander' Veteran suicide prevention program -- an early intervention network of Gatekeeper volunteers trained to direct at-risk veterans to the resources they need. We will train community members in NE Florida, Greater Tampa Bay, SE Florida, Space Coast and the Western Panhandle as a result of this funding. Where we've already grown our Watch Stander network in Florida, Veteran suicides are down 16% since 2019. Where we are not, they are up 8%.

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

Direct services will be training a network of community volunteers to identify risk signs of Veterans in crisis and direct those veterans to the resources they need. We have trained 8,233 Watch Standers across Florida to date who will refer more than 10,000 Veterans to help over the next 12 months. Due to this, Veteran suicides are dropping. This funding will train 3,000 more Watch Standers during the funding year and drive more than 4,000 Veterans to resources such as VA healthcare, mental health counseling, and other community services.

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

Florida's Veterans are the target population. We expect our existing network of 8,233 Watch Standers to refer more than 10,000 Veterans to upstream and crisis care resources they need, just as CPR trainees refer potential victims to upstream resources or, in a crisis, to 911 and paramedics. This funding will grow our network by 3,000 members who will make 4,000 additional referrals. Getting at-risk Veterans to services they need saves lives.

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

We track our program goals and outcomes (noted in Question 13a) as follows.

1. Measure new Watch Stander trainees weekly. Currently 8,233. Goal is 11,000 by end of the program year.
2. Measure Engagements and Referrals of Veterans quarterly. This is done by a quarterly survey of Watch Standers developed for us by the CDC Foundation.
3. Measure annual Veteran suicides via Florida DOH data collected for us every May by partner NLP Logix. We can sort by County, Age, Race, Gender, and Method. Most recent report (2022) showed 655 suicides statewide.

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?

Our primary performance measures, as described above, are the Number of Trained Watch Standers and the Veteran Engagement and Referral Rates made by Watch Standers. Penalties for not meeting those two performance measures would be discontinuation or withholding of funding.



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14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?

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



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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 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.