



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 1538

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

Florida is among the top states in the country experiencing a behavioral healthcare workforce shortage. Devereux created the ASCEND Career Development Accelerator Program to invest in the development of behavioral healthcare professionals, to enhance the advancement of behavioral healthcare workforce development initiatives in our state, and to ensure the provision of critical services are available for Floridians.

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	600,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	600,000

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)	600,000	40%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	900,000	60%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	1,500,000	100%

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

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

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

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

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.

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

Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects



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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		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Funding for educational opportunities and coursework, professional development activities, recruitment/retention support.	600,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		600,000

13. Program Performance

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

The demand for behavioral health services is greater than ever and Florida is among the top states in the country experiencing a mental health workforce shortage. Current industry trends project prolonged critical shortages of healthcare professionals in a variety of roles, especially those serving individuals with behavioral, emotional, and cognitive differences. The goal of this program is to; a) offer support for qualified and dedicated professionals to enter the behavioral healthcare workforce, b) to further the professional experience, education, and advancement opportunities of professionals in behavior healthcare and c) enhance the sustainability of workforce development efforts statewide to d) support access to care amid the surging demand for mental health services.

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



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Program components include multi-track career advancement, financial education and resources, personalized career coaching, mentoring and skill development. Multi-track career advancement: Implement multi-track career pathways that provide a clear roadmap for advancement opportunities in behavioral healthcare roles. Financial Education Resources: Provide funding to cover the costs of exam fees, training, tuition, and study materials to support professional career pathways. Personalized Career Coaching: Provide career coaching and guidance to help build personalized career plans that best match unique skills, interests, and opportunities. Dedicated Mentoring and Skill Development: Provide a variety of custom education and professional development pathways, including individualized learning journeys, training, and certifications, learning cohorts and leadership development. Target metrics to measure program participation will be documented and qualitative outcomes will be evaluated.

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

This project will ensure the capacity and quality of services available for Floridians with emotional, behavioral, and cognitive differences are accessible and expanded to meet the growing demand of critical support for our most vulnerable citizens. Direct therapeutic services made available to recipients statewide include mental health counseling, crisis intervention, behavioral training and support, direct instruction and educational consultation, medical/psychiatric/nursing coordination, and technical administrative support.

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

Behavioral healthcare professionals will benefit directly from this project through the comprehensive approach to advance educational opportunities, career experience, fulfillment and commitment supporting Florida's most vulnerable citizens; those experiencing mental health challenges and/or intellectual and developmental delays. This project also has a direct impact on the well-being of children and families statewide, as the return on investment for strengthening the behavioral healthcare workforce ensures access to critical services and improved outcomes for individuals with mental health challenges, developmental disabilities, at-risk youth, and children/families in need of therapeutic support.

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

This project establishes a public/non-profit partnership, providing a dollar-for-dollar match for investment, to expand access to education and career advancement opportunities in the field and enhance access to specialized care for those in need. A minimum of 75 participants will benefit from the workforce development components outlined in this project. Target metrics to measure participation and engagement will be provided, and qualitative outcomes will be evaluated to assess the impact and efficacy of the project. This project will ensure provision of service delivery while also minimizing the need for more costly services. Per average caseload rates, over 1,500 individuals will directly benefit from service provision supported through this project.

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?

Performance objectives, quantifiable measures, and target goals are established. Failure to meet performance measures will result in corrective action plans and financial penalties if unresolved, as described in the contract.

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)

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



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- 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)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College



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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.