



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 2356

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

4. Project/Program Description

Clearwater Marine Aquarium's capital renovation project will revitalize the oldest part of CMAs facility, the Winter Zone. Funding will help improve the facility, creating habitats for sea lions, otters and other marine life. CMAs significant contributions to the local economy and role in promoting marine life conservation attract visitors worldwide, driving tourism and generating substantial economic impact for Pinellas County. Our educational programs, conservation efforts, and scientific research benefit the community and help preserve marine life. This new habitat will attract even more visitors to CMA.

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

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

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	3,700,000
Total State Funds Requested	3,700,000

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)	3,700,000	38%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	6,050,000	62%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	9,750,000	100%

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

01/01/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

11/1/2028

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

Once built, admissions and fundraising will support 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.

CMA

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		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	Design and construction of CMAs new sea lion habitat	3,700,000
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		3,700,000

13. Program Performance

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

Increase attendance by revitalizing the oldest part of CMAs facility to welcome new species by the end of 2026. Provide rescued, non-releasable marine life with environmentally appropriate habitats where they can educate patrons on their conservation message.

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



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Remodel the former Winter Zone, including the adjacent pools, walkways and stairwells, elevator, viewing areas, and elevator. Prepare to house sea lions by seeking funding for pinniped care, staff professional development, and program development. Develop marketing and sponsorship opportunities to share the addition of sea lions to attract increased and new patrons.

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

CMA attracts visitors from throughout the state, US and worldwide, driving tourism and generating substantial economic impact for Clearwater and the broader region. Sixty percent of CMAs guests are tourists, further boosting the local economy. Forty percent are Florida residents. The aquarium's educational programs, conservation efforts, and scientific research benefit the community and help preserve marine life. Our research indicates that this new habitat would attract even more visitors to CMA, as sea lions are a popular attraction at aquariums.

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

CMA visitors are the target population served by this project. CMA hosts over 300,000 guests, the addition of sea lions will increase admission.

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

Outcomes include highlighting a new marine species and it's plight, while attracting new visitors from the Tampa Bay area and worldwide.

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?

Returning money if not spent as committed in scope of work.

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:



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Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 2356

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
- 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



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LFIR # 2356

d. Phone Number

The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.