



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 2705

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

**4. Project/Program Description**

In Bay County, more than 1,800 students are classified as homeless, facing the immense challenge of continuing their education without stable housing. To support these vulnerable students, 100 homeless and neglected youth in the care of Anchorage Children's Home will receive Bark Phones equipped with Bark Safety Software and preloaded with all district-required applications. These devices will provide a critical lifeline, enabling students to complete coursework, submit assignments, and communicate with teachers and support services. Additionally, Bark's content blocking and filtering features will create a safer digital environment by preventing access to harmful content that could lead to risky behavior. By ensuring consistent connectivity and access to educational tools, this initiative aligns with Florida's Digital Classroom Plan, helping to bridge the digital divide and offering these students a fair chance at academic success and long-term stability.

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	66,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>66,000</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)	66,000	100%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026</b>	<b>66,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

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.
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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
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	\$660 per line includes unlimited talk, text, 4GB of High Speed data for 12 month includes Current Bark Phone, Bark Safety Software, Charging Block, Charging Cable, Protective Case, and any preloaded applications that the school district requires.	66,000
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		0
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>66,000</b>

**13. Program Performance**

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



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More than 1,800 students in Bay County are classified as homeless, facing extreme instability as they pursue their education. Many lack stable housing, while others live in shelters, motels, or on the streets, making it difficult to stay engaged in school. Anchorage Children’s Home provides housing, essential services, and support to help these vulnerable students navigate their challenges and continue their education. For these students, access to reliable technology is critical to bridging the digital divide. The Bark Phone, equipped with Bark Safety Software and preloaded with all district-required educational apps, will serve as an essential lifeline. These devices will enable students to complete coursework, submit assignments, and stay connected with teachers and support staff, aligning with Florida’s Digital Classroom Plan. Access to digital learning tools will allow homeless and neglected youth with the resources they need to succeed academically despite their circumstances.

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

Funds will provide homeless students with smartphones preloaded with educational tools, ensuring access to coursework, communication, and essential resources. Equipped with content blocking and filtering, these devices prevent access to harmful content that could lead to risky behavior, creating a safer digital environment. By enabling students to stay connected with teachers, public services, and Anchorage Children’s Home support network, the initiative fosters academic success and stability while reducing barriers to education and opportunity.

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

1) Academic Access: Smartphones preloaded with educational applications and district-required software that allow students to access online coursework, submit assignments, and participate in virtual classrooms, 2) Communication Support: Tools that facilitate direct contact with teachers, tutors, and school counselors, ensuring students remain connected to essential educational support, 3) Mental Health and Crisis Resources: Built-in access to mental health apps, emergency assistance hotlines, and crisis intervention services to support students’ well-being, 4) Digital Literacy Training: Technical support and training to empower students with the skills needed to effectively use their devices, 5) Community Engagement: Connectivity to local community programs and support services that help mitigate isolation and promote overall stability.

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

The project targets 100 homeless and neglected youth receiving care and shelter through Anchorage Children's Home. Identified under the McKinney-Vento Act as lacking stable housing, these students face significant educational barriers. By providing smartphones preloaded with essential digital tools, the initiative bridges the digital divide, enabling access to coursework, teacher communication, and critical support services. This effort promotes academic engagement and long-term stability, empowering students to succeed in their education.

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

Providing 100 homeless students with free Bark phones aims to bridge the digital divide and enhance educational engagement. The project focuses on improving academic performance, attendance, and access to mental health, safety, and support services through consistent connectivity. Outcomes will be measured through 1) Quantitative Metrics: a) Academic Performance: Comparison of GPA, assignment completion rates, and attendance before and after phone distribution. b) Digital Engagement: Bark phone analytics tracking educational app usage and teacher communication; 2) Qualitative Metrics: Surveys & Focus Groups: Feedback from students, educators, and caregivers at Anchorage Children’s Home on improved learning access and the effectiveness of content filtering. This mixed-method evaluation will provide a comprehensive assessment of the project’s impact on students’ academic and personal success.

**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?**

The contracting agency may impose liquidated damages following a monthly audit, provided that a written warning detailing the unmet deliverables or performance measures outlined in the contract has been issued and discussed. A financial deduction of \$1,000 per month will be applied until the deficiencies are fully remedied.

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)



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- 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**

**b. Municipality and County**

**c. Organization Type**



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- 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.*