



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 2856

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

JU aims to develop a workforce in advanced technology sectors of AI and automation, which is critical as the digital economy grows. Northeast Florida has significant opportunities to collaborate with local businesses and schools to address the skills gap in specific industry applications in 3D manufacturing, and cybersecurity. Through the development of centers in AI and Automation we will expand the talent in these transforming industries, which have over 50% of employees needing reskilling by 2025. Cybersecurity demands are also rising, with 3.5 million unfilled jobs globally and 31% growth projected in Florida for information security analysts by 2031, while 3D manufacturing market is projected to grow 20–25%. Investing in training will help Florida companies stay competitive, secure assets, and leverage emerging technologies.

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	2,900,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	2,100,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>5,000,000</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)	5,000,000	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>5,000,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

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.**

If the state does not provide funding, the project will not be able to enhance and expand as described.



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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?

07/01/2025

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

06/30/26

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

The operational funding for the project will be supported through a diversified approach. This includes revenue generated from a variety of activities such as tuition, program fees, as well as strategic industry partnerships.

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.

Jacksonville University is the sole owner of any facilities or improvements funded through any fixed capital outlay funding.

### 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	Program oversight and reporting.	100,000
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salary and Benefits	Faculty and Staff for instruction support.	800,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Automation technology, Computer workstations and servers, and Manufacturing equipment investment	1,400,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Contracted services for community outreach and training.	600,000
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	Renovation of existing space to construct a 3D manufacturing studio and retrofit space in the STEAM institute for A.I., Automation and Cybersecurity.	2,100,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>5,000,000</b>

### 13. Program Performance

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



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With a mission to promote AI education, workforce development, and industry collaboration in Florida, AI-LEAD will prepare industry professionals, educators, and students for a rapidly evolving technological world. The funds will establish Jacksonville University's AI-LEAD initiative to address workforce shortages in AI, cybersecurity, autonomous systems, and 3D manufacturing. The goal is to upskill workers, train students and educators, and develop career pathways to meet Florida's advanced technology needs.

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

Activities include corporate training, AI education for students and educators, 3D manufacturing programs, cybersecurity training, and partnerships with local industries. Services include creating a "Learning Factory" for engineering, enhancing the CyberRange and Digital Forensics Lab, and offering certifications and career pathways.

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

Citizens will access advanced training in AI, cybersecurity, and manufacturing, career development programs, certifications, and educational resources. The project will also engage local industries, K-12 schools, and other high education partners to provide hands-on learning opportunities and practical applications of technology.

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

The target population includes students, educators, incumbent workers, and industry professionals. Over five years, 1,000 individuals will receive AI training, 500 will be trained in cybersecurity, and 100 graduates or certified workers will be leveraging AI and autonomous systems in Cyber Industries or Advanced Manufacturing.

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

The project will create a skilled workforce in advanced technologies, strengthen local industry partnerships, and enhance regional competitiveness. It aims to close the skills gap, improve job readiness, and foster innovation in Florida's technology sectors. Outcomes will be measured by the number of individuals trained, certifications awarded, new industry collaborations, job placements in technology sectors, and the success of engineering graduates in autonomous systems and advanced manufacturing.

**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?**

Awardee to return any unexpended funds to the state of Florida.

**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
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply



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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
- Other (please specify)

d. First Name  Last Name

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number  Ext.



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#### 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.*