



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 2881

1. Project Title

2. Senate Sponsor

3. Date of Request

4. Project/Program Description

The Animal Care Center will be on two levels and is targeted to be around 4,500 sq ft. The lower level will be used for animal support functions such as holding, surgery, and food prep. Visitors will be able to enter the building with Wonder Gardens staff to watch and learn about animal diets and health care. The upper level will be used for staff offices, group work spaces, and an open flex room.

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 | 2,100,000 |
| Total State Funds Requested | 2,100,000 |

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) | 2,100,000 | 82% |
| Matching Funds | | |
| Federal | 0 | 0% |
| State (excluding the amount of this request) | 0 | 0% |
| Local | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 462,289 | 18% |
| Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 | 2,562,289 | 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.

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)? No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction? 01/05/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction? 01/05/2027

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

Wonder Gardens daily revenue and funding from our donors.

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.

Property owner is City of Bonita Springs, applicant and operator is Bonita Wonder Gardens, inc. which has a Public-Private Partnership Operating Agreement (4/3/2024) in place with the City of Bonita Springs.

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 | Planning, engineering, and permitting costs through City of Bonita Springs, Quarantine area, plumbing, electrical, concrete, building. Walk-in refrigerators, counters, cabinets, exam tables, medical supplies, dishes, weighing scales. Engineering plans drawn by consultants. Quarantine area, plumbing, electrical, concrete, building. | 2,100,000 |
| Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6) | | 2,100,000 |

13. Program Performance

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

A new Animal care center (ACC) will safeguard the health and wellness of our resident animals and position the Wonder Gardens for future accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The ACC will replace the previous animal kitchen & holding building that was destroyed by Hurricane Ian and is being removed from the property. The current diet kitchen is held in the Administration office building temporarily. The ACC will provide much needed on site safe holding during hurricanes.



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

Funds will help provide services needed for our animal care, as well as a hurricane shelter for our animal residents, which will indirectly service citizens.

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

Provides opportunity for additional education based off building's purpose, as well as more advanced research opportunities for interns and other interested parties. As well as behind the scenes learning opportunities for guests to see diet prep and medical facilities. It will also support our partnerships with other learning facilities and give them access to opportunities to bring students in.

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

Our guests and our animal residents and staff will all be positively served by this project. We have over 80,000 visitors annually, from locals to tourists from all over the world that are traveling to SWFL.

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

For the animals: Onsite medical treatment when necessary, easier routine checkups, safety during severe weather, protection from physical harm, better diet preparation for their overall well-being. This will be measured by increased vet exams and detailed record keeping through an online database.

For people: overall planning intent is to cluster support functions in the north west section of the 3.45 acre property and create more space for visitor amenities and attractions near some of the existing core attractions. This will improve the overall visitor experience by having less fragmented exhibit sequences and will also help staff to be able to do their work without interfering with the visitors.

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?

Repayment of fees for uncompleted work.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster? No Yes

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):

Hurricane Ian

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#:



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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.**

19. Lobbyist Contact Information



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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.