



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3198

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

In the Lehigh Acres Sinkhole Phase I, LA-MSID successfully obtained a 2023 appropriation to purchase the 19-acre sinkhole parcel. Phase II will remove exotics from the parcel, design and build security and public access improvements. The funding will also prioritize the purchase of an additional 1.3-acre parcel, containing an existing building that will be used for an interpretive center. LA-MSID has held a public hearing and has a recommendation letter from Lee County Parks and Recreation.

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	150,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	1,700,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>1,850,000</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)	1,850,000	84%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	350,000	16%
Other	0	0%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026</b>	<b>2,200,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2023-24	0	1,500,000		No

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)?

No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

08/01/2025

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

03/31/2027

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

LA-MSID non-ad valorem assessments.

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.

Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District

### 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		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	This funding would provide survey, design and permitting tasks for the project.	150,000
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	The Lehigh Sinkhole Project, Phase II will remove exotics from the parcel, design and build security and public access improvements. The funding will also prioritize the purchase of an additional 1.3-acre parcel with an existing building that will be renovated and will be used for an interpretive center.	1,700,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>1,850,000</b>

### 13. Program Performance

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



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The funds will provide environmental conservation, security, passive recreation, an interpretive center for the ancient sinkhole property located in Lehigh Acres, FL. LA-MSID may entertain scientists to carefully study the sinkhole to determine the geologic circumstances for its formation and to determine if there are any important relics that can be salvaged.

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

There will be an interpretive center and museum for the sinkhole and Lehigh Acres. The interpretive center will be the gateway to the sinkhole property. It is important to allow hikers on the 20-acre parcel, but to keep the sensitive property safe while the property is closed.

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

The residents that will use the facilities for passive recreation can provide physical exercise and serenity for their mental health. There will also be a very interesting educational component in the interpretive center.

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

The target would be elderly persons, at-risk youth, physically disabled, and students ranging from preschool to university level. The center will provide services to the 135,000 residents in Lehigh Acres and the 750,000 residents in Lee County.

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

The goal would be 60 visitors per week to the facility. The visitors would benefit from the educational and wellbeing aspects of the property and interpretive center. The center will keep a written record of the visitors to the facilities.

**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 loss of the ability to apply for legislative appropriations for two years.

**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

**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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**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):**

**Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.**

**17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?**

- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Resilient Florida Grant Program
- Wastewater Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants)
- N/A

**18. What is the population economic status?**

- Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Rural Area of Economic Concern
- Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)
- N/A

**19. What is the status of construction?**

Planning Stage

**20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?**

0

**21. What is the estimated completion date of construction?**

03/31/2027



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#### 22. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name  Last Name   
b. Organization   
c. E-mail Address   
d. Phone Number  Ext.

#### 23. 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.

#### 24. 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.*