



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3271

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

4. Project/Program Description

The Help Me Grow Florida (HMGF) system is designed to help the state and communities leverage existing resources to ensure communities identify vulnerable children, link families to community-based services, and empower families to support their children’s healthy development through the implementation of four core components. The four core components include the centralized access point, family and community outreach, child health provider outreach, and data collection and analysis.

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 | 2,691,043 |
| Fixed Capital Outlay | 0 |
| Total State Funds Requested | 2,691,043 |

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) | 2,691,043 | 60% |
| Matching Funds | | |
| Federal | 1,808,957 | 40% |
| State (excluding the amount of this request) | 0 | 0% |
| Local | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 0 | 0% |
| Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 | 4,500,000 | 100% |

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 | | |
| 2024-25 | 1,808,957 | 2,691,043 | 80 | No |

9. **Is future-year funding likely to be requested?** Yes
- a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**
- b. **Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**
- CCDF federal funding could be used to fund the entire program, if the legislature chooses.

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? 06/01/2025

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction? 07/01/2026

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.

Help me Grow Florida

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 | The Help Me Grow Florida (HMGF) system is designed to help the state and communities leverage existing resources to ensure communities identify vulnerable children, link families to community-based services, and empower families to support their children's healthy development through the implementation of four core components. The four core components include the centralized access point, family and community outreach, child health provider outreach, and data collection and analysis. | 2,691,043 |
| Consultants/Contracted Services/Study | | 0 |
| Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation: | | |
| Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering | | 0 |
| Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6) | | 2,691,043 |

13. Program Performance

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



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Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGF) connects children and families to the services they need and provides support for families to navigate a complex system of resources. With increased funding, this will allow more children and families to access these resources. Currently, 92% of children and families are successfully connected to at least one health, social, or educational service. 89% of children are served by HMGF before entering kindergarten increasing opportunities for early intervention.

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

HMGF care coordinators answer questions that parents and caregivers have about their child's development (ages birth-8) and provide follow up to ensure children receive necessary services. Care coordinators average 5 direct follow-ups per family. Care coordinators provide ongoing communication with physicians working with children and families who access HMGF and maintain partnerships with 22 physician champions advocating for HMGF services throughout the state. Developmental and behavioral screenings are offered to all children and families within HMGF service areas, which currently 38 counties. Last year, 7,985 screenings were completed. With the requested funding, we expect to complete 24,000 screenings for children.

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

Maintaining a centralized access point that links families of young children with sources of support and services to address concerns about their child's health, development, behavior and learning. Providing developmental screenings and comprehensive care coordination with follow-up services to caregivers and child healthcare providers. Conducting child healthcare and early education provider outreach trainings to educate and raise awareness about child development and the importance of early detection and intervention. Conducting community outreach to promote the use of HMGF and to provide networking opportunities for the community. Data collection to understand all aspects of the HMGF system, including the identification of gaps and barriers.

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

The target population is children ages birth through 8 and their caregivers. Last year, 4,877 new children were served through HMGF. With the requested funding, HMGF is expected to reach 19,150 new children and families annually. HMGF's ability to screen out children who do not need costly additional services directly reduces Medicaid costs. Currently, seventy-three percent (73%) of children screened are Medicaid enrollees. Fifty-one percent (51%) of children served did not attend an early learning program and might not have otherwise received the necessary supports. Identifying issues early in life prevents costly interventions in the future, prioritizes limited state resources, and enhances self-reliance.

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

Providing access to developmental and behavioral screenings for early identification of early childhood and infant mental health concerns that may result in an immediate referral for services, thus reducing the need for costly intervention later on. This will be measured by keeping track of the percent of successful connections to services, percent of parents/caregivers reporting their child's development, behavior and/or mental health has improved, percent of parents/caregivers reporting that they have access to people they can talk to for advice and emotional support and percent of healthcare providers referring to HMGF.

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?

Payments shall be delayed for any deliverables that are not satisfactorily completed until all deficiencies are corrected and accepted by the Division of Early Learning. A corrective action plan will be imposed requiring the contractor to address all performance deficiencies. Failure to comply will result in a breach of contract. Financial consequences are also imposed including withholding of payment, a request to redo the work or reduced payment.

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)



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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 | Erin | Last Name | Smeltzer |
| b. Organization | Children's Forum | | |
| c. E-mail Address | esmeltzer@thechildrensforum.com | | |
| d. Phone Number | (850)487-6300 | Ext. | |

18. Recipient Contact Information

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| a. Organization | Children's Forum |
| b. Municipality and County | Statewide |

c. Organization Type

For Profit Entity



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- 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.