



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3480

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. Project/Program Description

Our funding request will be used to produce five new episodes of "The Voice Inside", a TV series based on true stories of resilience within the autism community and beyond. This will allow us to create an eight-episode mini-series to pitch to national and international platforms like PBS, Angel Studios, and Hulu. Our writers, including one on the spectrum, have outlined additional episodes to ensure long-term expansion.

Additionally, funding will support ten screening events in 2025-2026 across South and Central Florida, including Miami-Dade County, Broward County, Palm Beach County, and Orange County. These events will feature screenings, live performances, and motivational speeches by autistic self-advocates, fostering inclusion and community engagement.

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	902,675
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	902,675

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)	902,675	100%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026	902,675	100%

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?** Yes

a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**

b. **Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**

Grants, angel investments, and sponsorships 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
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Oversees organizational operations and ensures productions and educational initiatives are executed effectively.	35,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Funds will provide part-time and full-time jobs to young adults on our administrative team as volunteer coordinators, marketing managers, and operation coordinators.	90,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits	Funding will cover compensation for actors, writers, and motivational speakers of all abilities, the event production team, and the director, assistant director, and producer of "The Voice Inside" series.	345,125
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Funds will cover marketing costs, merchandise, catering, marketing, travel, venue rental, and filming location rental, out-of-town travel costs, copyright fees for "The Voice Inside" series, and production insurance.	272,300
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Funding supports music production for an original soundtrack for the series, cinematography, editing, and event videography.	160,250
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		902,675

13. Program Performance

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



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We will produce five more episodes of "The Voice Inside" series, and ten screening events featuring "The Voice Inside", along with musical performances and speeches by inspiring autistic self-advocates. Based on true stories of resilience, the series inspires all audiences. Funds will create paid jobs for young adults with and without disabilities working at the highest level of professionalism as actors, musicians, motivational speakers, event production team members, and administrators.

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

We will produce five new episodes of "The Voice Inside" and host ten screening events, featuring the series, musical performances, and speeches by autistic self-advocates. Events will include stories of resilience shared by our motivational speakers, talkbacks, and live musical performances. These events will educate all audiences, particularly students and the autism community, highlighting self-determination and faith in people of all abilities. Funds will create paid jobs, especially for disabled young adults.

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

We will provide jobs in particular to young adults with disabilities, educate school-aged children at our events using "The Voice Inside" series, and provide inspiration and motivation for autism families, by showcasing the work and true success stories of our actors, speakers, writers, and musicians on the spectrum.

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

We will especially serve persons with poor mental health, persons with poor physical health, jobless persons, economically disadvantaged persons, and at-risk youth. Through continued broadcasting on South Florida PBS, and potentially nationwide, a minimum of 6 million viewers are expected to be reached. Through our in-person events, up to 4,255 people will be additionally served. A minimum of 15 screen actors, writers, live performers, motivational speakers, and musicians with disabilities, already committed to the Autism Theater Project, will receive paid jobs in 2025/2026, and more jobs are expected to be created on an ongoing basis.

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

The Autism Theater Project empowers actors, writers, musicians, and speakers on the spectrum by providing a platform to share their stories, build self-esteem, and work alongside colleagues of all abilities. The Voice Inside increases autism awareness, teaches practical mental health tools, and fosters emotional resilience in Generation Z. The series and speaking engagements promote empathy, friendship, and inclusion, helping to prevent bullying. Additionally, the project creates jobs for individuals with disabilities and supports community organizations through select fundraising events.

We will record the number of jobs created, compensation provided, number of jobs we anticipate to create, and satisfaction of our workers through surveys and carefully kept records. We will also keep track of how the Autism Theater Project's events helped increase fundraising and visibility for our community partners. Participant surveys and post-event testimonial videos will also be used.

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?

If deliverables or performance measures are not met, the Autism Theater Project will submit a corrective action plan with a revised timeline. Payments may be withheld for specific unmet milestones, with flexibility to resolve issues. Continued non-compliance could affect future funding eligibility. The Autism Theater Project will maintain communication with APD to adjust the project as needed, ensuring progress and preserving partnerships.

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):



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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

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)



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- 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.