



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 3519

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

4. Project/Program Description

The Florida Debate Initiative is an educational non-profit designed to meet the following goals: assisting schools without existing programs to develop speed and debate; supporting schools with existing programs; providing affordable academic competition opportunities for all, and most importantly to increase civic literacy by fostering civic engagement through participation in competitive speech and debate activities. The FDI serves as the educational support organization tasked with educating and training coaches and students, training judges, and establishing competition standards for existing organization to partner with and to provide ample educational competition opportunities. Competitive speech and debate can address the need for both bridging the educational achievement gap and instilling critical thinking skills in students, in addition to instilling higher-level critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills.

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	2,100,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
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	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	2,100,000	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	0	1,500,000	100	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.

N/A



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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	FDI prioritizes fiscal responsibility and relies heavily on dedicated unpaid volunteers, emphasizing operational efficiency. However, there are necessary administrative expenses, which the President, who serves as both the project leader and manager, oversees diligently. This underscores our commitment to advancing our mission while maintaining prudent stewardship of resources.	193,058
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Website maintenance, payroll processing, rent, utilities, bank fees, technology, hardware and software licenses, audio/visual supplies, office supplies, memberships, dues, insurance, tournament operations, marketing, printing, postage, medals, trophies, and travel.	307,750
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	This line item is crucial for securing the services of our Accountant and Auditor. It's important to highlight that these positions are contractual services, devoid of staff employment benefits, reflecting our commitment to prudent financial stewardship.	37,000
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits	FDI prioritizes fiscal responsibility and relies on unpaid volunteers, but sustaining our impact requires key roles: Program Manager, Administrative Assistant/Project Coordinator, Tournament Coordinator, and Alumni Relations & Engagement Director. This team ensures program execution, support, and engagement, maximizing opportunities for Florida students while maintaining prudent stewardship.	265,892



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Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	This line item serves to cover a spectrum of programmatic and operational expenses, encompassing tournament operations and travel costs. It also facilitates essential initiatives like DebateEd 101 for FL educators, ProCamps, Summer Camps, Civics Immersion Experience, FDI Fellows Program, Summer Debate Coach Learning Retreats, Elementary Program launch, American Dream Debates, & Salute to Service.	581,300
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	This line item is dedicated to providing invaluable support to debate teachers and coaches across the state as they guide students in civics, speech, and debate programming. Additionally, this line item is crucial for securing the services of our Accountant, Development Consultant, Grants Management Consultant, Public Relations, Consultant, and Board Appointed Sr. Advisor. These positions are contractual, devoid of staff employment benefits.	715,000
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
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?

The funding request is a strategic step toward bridging the geographical divide in students' access to vital programs in civic literacy and speech and debate. By making these programs widely available, we empower students with essential life skills. They gain confidence, sharpen critical thinking, and master effective communication. This initiative promotes civil discourse and a deeper understanding of our founding principles, fostering patriotism. It also boosts local Social Studies/ELA scores.

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

We will use the funds to support key initiatives: providing resources to schools without programs, strengthening existing programs, offering affordable academic competitions, and, most importantly, advancing civic literacy by increasing participation in speech and debate.

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

FDI is the leading educational support organization dedicated to speech and debate, providing comprehensive coaching, student and judge training, and establishing rigorous competition standards. This school year, we will proudly serve all 67 counties in Florida. We will also expand into elementary schools, empowering students with critical life skills & enhancing academic achievement.

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

Grade school students, high school students, and university/college students.

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



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Presently, the geographic location of a student often dictates their ability to compete in speech and debate. This funding will help to equalize those opportunities statewide to provide access to speech and debate in all counties over time. Also, speech and debate provides confidence for students to be their own advocate and to have the critical thinking and communication skills to defend their views. Speech and debate provides the opportunity for students to be exposed to a variety of viewpoints, cultures, backgrounds and experiences and to engage in thoughtful and civil discourse with others. Speech and debate is an educational equalizer for students providing them the ability to learn beyond what classroom education alone can provide. Students will be able to critically analyze information and understand civics in a more meaningful way. The assessment process by which outcomes will be measured will be established by the FDOE.

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?

While we cannot foresee an applicable scenario under this question arising, if some unforeseeable event occurred where the deliverables/performance measures were not being met, the FDOE would have the discretion to restrict access to funding

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?

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:

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):



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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

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.