



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

LFIR # 2124

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

4. **Project/Program Description**

The Undersea Human Presence and Technology Advancement Program supports Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) member use of next-generation undersea habitat technology to enable sustained human presence at depth. This initiative will enhance the efficiency, safety, and productivity of subsea research, monitoring, and technology development by providing funds to scientists and researchers for extended subsea habitat missions. Supported projects will focus on advancing reef restoration and environmental monitoring, generating new insights into human health from sea to space, and fostering human-machine collaboration.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**

State Agency contacted?

6. **Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2026-2027**

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	935,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	935,000

7. **Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (including matching funds available for this project)**

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	935,000	38%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	1,500,000	62%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	2,435,000	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.**



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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		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	USF - Florida Institute of Oceanography administrative expenses (F&A)	85,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs		
Salary and Benefits	Personnel costs cover PI salary, benefits and student stipends to plan and conduct research aboard a subsea habitat, process data post-mission, and deliver project summary reports.	100,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Itemized equipment necessary to meet deliverables, routine consumables and travel to conduct fieldwork (\$150,000). Operating days aboard subsea habitat for FIO scientists, engineers, and researchers (\$600,000).	750,000
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)		935,000

13. Program Performance

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



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One of the primary challenges to subsea exploration and technology development is sustaining human presence at depth. The requested funds will support Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) member utilization of next generation undersea habitat technology (e.g. Vanguard habitat), allowing for sustained undersea human presence while significantly improving cost and time efficiency, safety, and productivity of subsea science, monitoring, and technology development. Supported projects will focus on enhanced reef restoration and environmental monitoring capabilities, new insights into human health from sea to space, and human-machine collaboration.

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

FIO scientists and engineers will be provided with the appropriate training, research support, industry and academic collaboration, and outreach opportunities to maximize productivity, safety, and impact of their related projects via a subsea habitat. Specific to reef science and restoration, the subsea habitat improves cost and time efficiency, facilitates continuous monitoring, and enhances data collection by enabling scientists to live and work continuously near reefs. Florida's long-term objective to restore coral reef remains the FCR3 2050 objective (=25% of Florida's Coral Reef restored). This is explicit in DEP's FCR3 fact sheet and the Governor's FY 2025-26 budget materials.

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

This project will engage K-12 citizen communities through education and outreach activities while advancing innovative undersea, biomedical, and space-based technologies. This appropriation will also support the generation of high-skill, well-compensated jobs in the Florida Keys - supporting 10-12 staff to include technicians, engineers, vessel crew, and habitat operators. Reef restoration efforts will also strengthen marine ecosystems, protect local coastlines and infrastructure, and strengthen coastal economies.

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

The target population served by this project will be Florida Institute of Oceanography-affiliated scientists and engineers (e.g. USF, Nova SE, etc) who are seeking to amplify their undersea research capabilities. Five (5) FIO scientific/engineering teams will be selected for their participation in undersea missions that best support their research and development objectives. In addition to the individual leads for each of these projects, results from each of these projects will support FIO member institutions through development of future funding proposals, technology transfer, and public-private partnership opportunities.

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

Socioeconomic outcomes will also be closely tracked. Subsea habitation is expected to generate high-wage, high-skill employment, stimulate local businesses, and expand educational opportunities through the DEEP-Blue Star Dive Operator Program and interactive virtual learning initiatives. Its influence is projected to extend beyond direct job creation, benefiting sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and media, and producing a broad economic multiplier effect within the Florida Keys.

Florida academic and research institutions supported in 2027: 6
 Technical reports and research publications generated in 2027: 10
 New public-private partnership initiated: 10
 Future funding proposals by FIO institutions as a result of data and technology generated: \$5 million
 High skilled jobs generated as a result of the proposed project in 2027: 10
 In addition, local economic and outreach impacts will be tracked throughout the project.

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?

Cost reimbursement of any funds not used by FIO universities.

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)



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- 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):

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



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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.