

HB 1405

2026

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to a statewide project for missing persons with special needs; reviving, readopting, and amending s. 937.041, F.S., relating to the missing persons with special needs statewide project; providing that the project is created through the centers for autism and related disabilities; providing that the participants for the project shall be selected based on certain criteria; deleting obsolete language; providing appropriations; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Notwithstanding the repeal of section 937.041, Florida Statutes, in section 13 of chapter 2020-3, Laws of Florida, section 937.041, Florida Statutes, is revived, readopted, and amended to read:

937.041 Missing persons with special needs statewide project.-

(1) There is created a statewide project, to be known as "Project Leo," through the centers a ~~center~~ for autism and related disabilities established under s. 1004.55. Each center that opts to join the project shall distribute personal devices to aid search-and-rescue efforts for persons with special needs

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26 in the case of elopement.

27 (2) Participants for the project shall be selected based
28 on criteria developed by the respective center for autism and
29 related disabilities based on the specific needs of the
30 respective ~~each~~ center's service area counties prescribed under
31 s. 1004.55. Criteria for participation in the project must
32 include, at a minimum, the person's risk of elopement. The
33 qualifying participants shall be selected on a first-come,
34 first-served basis by the respective centers to the extent of
35 available funding within their existing resources. The project
36 must be voluntary and free of charge to participants.

37 (3) Under the project, personal devices to aid search-and-
38 rescue efforts shall be provided by the respective center to the
39 sheriff's offices of the participating counties. The devices
40 shall be distributed to project participants by the county
41 sheriff's offices in conjunction with the respective center. The
42 respective center shall fund any costs associated with
43 monitoring the devices.

44 (4) The project shall operate to the extent of available
45 funding within the respective center's existing resources.

46 ~~(5) This section expires June 30, 2019.~~

47 **Section 2.** For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of
48 \$250,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General
49 Revenue Fund to the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
50 at the University of Florida, the sum of \$250,000 in

51 nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund
52 to the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at Florida
53 Atlantic University, the sum of \$250,000 in nonrecurring funds
54 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Center for
55 Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of South
56 Florida, and the sum of \$250,000 in nonrecurring funds is
57 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Center for
58 Autism and Related Disabilities at Florida State University. The
59 funds provided to each center shall be used solely for the
60 purchase of personal devices to aid search-and-rescue efforts
61 for persons with special needs in the case of elopement.

62 **Section 3.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.