

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

12  
13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

14  
15 **Section 1. Notwithstanding the repeal of section 937.041,**  
16 **Florida Statutes, in section 13 of chapter 2020-3, Laws of**  
17 **Florida, section 937.041, Florida Statutes, is revived,**  
18 **readopted, and amended to read:**

19 937.041 Missing persons with special needs statewide  
20 project.—

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

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.