

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [HB 933](#)

TITLE: Children's Initiatives

SPONSOR(S): Rosenwald

COMPANION BILL: None

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: [SB 1022](#) (Polsky)

Committee References

[Human Services](#)

16 Y, 0 N



[Health Care Budget](#)

13 Y, 0 N



[Health & Human Services](#)

23 Y, 0 N

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

HB 933 expands Florida's Children Initiatives by designating specific disadvantaged areas in Panama City (Bay County 32401 Children's Initiative) and Pompano Beach (Pompano RYZE Children's Initiative) as new initiatives, aiming to improve educational, economic, and health outcomes for residents within those areas.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

Designation of Bay County 32401 and Pompano RYZE as Florida Children's Initiatives

The bill codifies two existing Florida's [children initiatives](#), one in Panama City ([Bay County 32401](#) Children's Initiative) and one in Pompano Beach ([Pompano RYZE](#) – Resilient Youth with Zeal to Excel). (Section [1](#))

The bill requires each initiative to be managed by a not-for-profit corporation. The bill also requires the initiatives to comply with Florida public records laws, public meeting laws, and procurement laws. (Section [1](#))

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section [2](#))

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Children's Initiatives

The Harlem Children's Zone inspired the development of the Children's Initiatives in Florida. Founded in 1970, Harlem Children's Zone, Inc., (HCZ) is a nonprofit, community-based organization that aims to enhance the quality of life for children and families living in poverty-stricken neighborhoods of New York City.¹ In the 1990s, HCZ launched a pilot project to address the poor living conditions, drug problems, failing schools, violent crime, and chronic health problems that were affecting the children and families of an impoverished community.² The project

¹ Harlem Children's Zone, *History of Harlem Children's Zone*, available at <https://hcz.org/our-purpose/our-history-zone-map/> (last visited January 27, 2026).

² *Id.*

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began with a single block and has grown to over 100 blocks, serving tens of thousands of children and adults each year through collaboration between the local community, nonprofit organizations, and institutions.³

HCZ provides comprehensive and individualized support for children from birth through college to promote successful self-sustaining adults.⁴ This includes early childhood programs to make children school-ready, K-12 charter schools, academic support in and after school, afterschool programs, and college preparation programs with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and career readiness.⁵ The initiative also helps families by providing assistance with housing and safety concerns, tax preparation, legal issues, and childrearing education.⁶

In 2024, HCZ served 22,052 youth and adults through collaboration among the local community, nonprofit organizations, and institutional partners.⁷

Florida Children’s Initiatives

In 2008, using the Harlem Children’s Zone as a model, the Legislature created s. 409.147, F.S., which established children’s zones, currently referred to as children’s initiatives. Florida children’s initiatives assist disadvantaged areas within the state in creating a community-based service network that develops, coordinates, and provides quality education, accessible health care, youth development programs, opportunities for employment, and safe and affordable housing for children and families living within their boundaries.⁸

Section 409.147, F.S., outlines the process for a county or municipality (or designated area) to initiate a children’s initiative. The governing body of the county or municipality must first adopt a resolution finding the area has issues related to poverty, that changes are necessary for the area to improve, and that resources are necessary for revitalization of the area.⁹ The county or municipality must then establish a children’s initiative planning team and develop and adopt a strategic community plan.¹⁰ Once a county or municipality has completed these steps, they must create a not-for-profit corporation to facilitate fundraising and secure broad community ownership of the children’s initiative.¹¹ The local government must then apply to a nonprofit agency designated in statute, the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc. (Ounce), to designate an area as a children’s initiative.

While Children’s Initiatives are administratively housed within DCF, they are not subject to control, supervision, or direction by any department of the state.¹² They are, however, subject to the requirements of chapter 119, F.S., relating to public records, chapter 286, F.S., relating to public meetings and records, and chapter 287, F.S., relating to procurement of commodities or contractual services.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida

The Ounce is a private, nonprofit corporation dedicated to shaping prevention policy and investing in innovative prevention programs that provide measurable benefits to Florida’s children, families, and communities. The Ounce identifies, funds, supports, and tests innovative programs to improve the life outcomes of children, preserve and

³ *Id.*
⁴ Harlem Children’s Zone, *About Us*, available at <https://hcz.org/our-purpose/> (last visited January 27, 2026).
⁵ Harlem Children’s Zone, *Education and Youth Programs*, available at <https://hcz.org/education-and-youth-programs/> (last visited January 27, 2026).
⁶ *Id.*
⁷ Harlem Children’s Zone, *Discover Our 2022-2024 HCZ Impact Report*, available at <https://hcz.org/latest/discover-our-2022-2024-hcz-impact-report/>; (slide deck, p. 7, available at https://indd.adobe.com/view/588927e0-3d0a-4129-b0a2-6ca4f7366df1?utm_source=General&utm_medium=Web&utm_campaign=impactreport2024&utm_content=Web) (last visited January 30, 2026).
⁸ S. 409.147(1)(b), F.S.
⁹ S. 409.147(4)(a), F.S.
¹⁰ S. 409.147(5), 409.147(6), F.S.
¹¹ S. 409.147(7), F.S.
¹² S. 409.147(8)(a), 409.147(9)(a), 409.147(10)(a), F.S.

strengthen families, and promote healthy behavior and functioning in society¹³. Current law requires DCF to contract with a not-for-profit corporation to designate new initiatives and distribute any state funding, and expressly names The Ounce as that entity.¹⁴ In addition, The Ounce provides technical assistance to the initiative corporations created by the local governments, to help them achieve the goals of their initiative plans.

Funding

Section 409.147(8), F.S., sets requirements for children’s initiatives to receive funding. Unless otherwise specified in the general appropriations act, children’s initiatives must be awarded state funding through performance-based contracts that link payments to achievement of outcomes directly related to the goals, objectives, strategies, and tasks outlined in the strategic community plan. Counties that do not currently have an initiative and are trying to establish one have priority for funding.

The Ounce has a \$4.2 million contract with the Department of Children and Families to fund new and existing initiatives.¹⁵

Codified Children’s Initiatives

Current law specifically codifies five designated Children’s Initiatives, including: the Miami Children’s Initiative, the New Town Success Zone in Jacksonville, the Parramore Kidz Zone in Orlando, the Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise in Tampa, the Overtown Children and Youth Coalition in Miami.

Miami Children’s Initiative

Miami Children’s Initiative (MCI) focuses on transforming the lives of children and families in the historically underserved and impoverished Liberty City community. MCI connects parents with quality early learning centers, refers residents to physical and mental health services, and provides social, emotional, and educational support from birth through college and career.

With over 12 years of service, MCI has worked with community partners to create a continuum of solutions for Liberty City’s children and families, including youth development programs such as Project Promise (K–5), Promising Futures for middle and high school students, and family, social service, and health supports, including resume assistance, training, and job placement.¹⁶

New Town Success Zone - Jacksonville

New Town Success Zone (NTSZ) serves as a partnership of public and private organizations providing a continuum of services to support children and families living in the New Town neighborhood in achieving healthy development, academic success, and neighborhood well-being. The initiative includes leadership development and career exploration for students at the Young Men and Women’s Leadership Academy (formerly Butler Middle School) and Brighter Beginnings, a program for expectant mothers or parents of a child under the age of one, and their support partners, that provides education on prenatal care, nutrition, safe infant sleep, substance use during pregnancy, breastfeeding, parenting skills, infant CPR, and social and life skills.¹⁷

Parramore Kidz Zone - Orlando

¹³ The Ounce of Prevention Fund for Florida, available at <https://www.ounce.org/index.asp> (last visited February 23, 2026).

¹⁴ [409.147\(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

¹⁵ Department of Financial Services, Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System, Grant Disbursement Information, Contact No. LJ210, available at <https://facts.fldfs.com/Search/ContractDetail.aspx?AgencyId=600000&ContractId=LJ210> (last visited January 27, 2026).

¹⁶Florida Children’s Initiative, *2022-2027 Strategic Plan*, p. 9-10, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Unpublished report provided by Winifred P. Heggins, Vice President, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

¹⁷ *Id.* at p. 15-17

Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ) is a children’s initiative created as part of a comprehensive effort to revitalize Orlando’s highest crime and poverty-ridden neighborhood. The initiative includes early childhood and family support programs, including the Baby Institute and the Rosen Preschool.¹⁸

In 2020, the City of Orlando replicated the Parramore Kidz Zone model in the Holden Heights, Mercy Drive and Englewood neighborhoods and served more than 9,000 children, with measurable declines in juvenile arrests, which went down 81.2 percent, teen births, which went down 49.7 percent, and verified cases of child abuse and neglect, which went down 68 percent in the community¹⁹.

Tampa Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise Success Zone

Currently, the Sulphur Springs YMCA Community Learning Center, one of the foundational services provided by the Tampa Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise Success Zone, provides yearly academic enrichment and classroom support, and age-appropriate enrichment activities for children. This also includes the Champions for Children’s Layla’s House, a parent and child learning center offering early childhood development and family support services for children from birth to age five.²⁰

Overtown Children and Youth Coalition

The Overtown Children and Youth Coalition (OCYC) serves Miami’s Overtown neighborhood, one of the city’s oldest communities, which was once a thriving center of Black culture and commerce known as “the Harlem of the South” during the Harlem Renaissance,²¹ with performers such as Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday, appearing in the area. Today, children and families face extreme levels of poverty, low academic achievement, and health disparities.²²

OCYC supports the community through maternal health and early childhood programs, parenting workshops and maternal and child health services²³, as well as academic success and school engagement through tutoring and mentoring programs,²⁴ and community literacy activities, including reading focused events that promote early literacy and family involvement in education.²⁵

New Children’s Initiatives

Pompano RYZE Exit Children’s Initiative

Pompano RYZE Exit 36²⁶ serves Northwest Pompano Beach, including the Blanche Ely and Sanders Park neighborhoods, which experience high poverty rates, lower high school graduation rates, housing instability, and unemployment. Community Foundation of Broward’s strategic community plan recognizes that these neighborhoods also demonstrate resilience, cultural pride, and collective community will, and identifies the need for investment in housing, education, health, and community resources to improve outcomes for children and

¹⁸ *Id.* at p. 6-8.

¹⁹ City of Orlando, *Orlando Kidz Zones*, <https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/FPR/Orlando-Kidz-Zones> (last visited January 27, 2026).

²⁰ Florida Children’s Initiative, *2022-2027 Strategic Plan*, p. 12-14, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Unpublished report provided by Winifred P. Heggins, Vice President, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

²¹ Overtown Children & Youth Coalition, *Master Plan 2025-2035*, p. 9, available at https://overtowncyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/OCYC_MasterPlanBrochure-2025-2035-DIGITAL.pdf (last visited January 31, 2026).

²² The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, *Children Initiatives Communities in Florida*, https://www.ounce.org/fci_communities.html (last visited January 28, 2026).

²³ Overtown Children & Youth Coalition, *Master Plan 2025-2035*, p. 18, available at https://overtowncyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/OCYC_MasterPlanBrochure-2025-2035-DIGITAL.pdf (last visited January 31, 2026).

²⁴ *Id.* at p. 20.

²⁵ Overtown Children & Youth Coalition, *News & Events*, available at <https://overtowncyc.org/event/overtown-reads-1-29-26/> (last visited January 31, 2026).

²⁶ Pompano RYZE Exit 36, *Florida Children’s Initiative Designation Application*, p. 1, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Unpublished report provided by Winifred P. Heggins, Vice President, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

families.²⁷ Managed by the Community Foundation of Broward, the initiative targets a defined geographic area and proposes to provide academic support and mentoring, parenting and family support, job readiness and career exploration, mentorship and leadership development, and community engagement through a coordinated, cradle-to-career model.²⁸

The Pompano RYZE proposes a coordinated, cradle-to-career approach focused on whole-family engagement, early childhood education, academic support, youth development, health and wellness, and workforce readiness. The plan emphasizes community-led change, trauma-informed and culturally responsive programming, and collaboration among system partners to better align existing resources in support of children, youth, and families in the Blanche Ely and Sanders Park communities.²⁹

On September 10, 2024, the City of Pompano Beach adopted a resolution recommending and supporting the application on behalf of the children’s families of Blanche Ely and Sanders Park neighborhoods to be considered for designation as a Florida Children’s Initiative. The Ounce designated the Pompano RYZE as a Florida children’s initiative in 2025.³⁰

Bay County 32401 Children’s Initiative

The Bay County Zip Code 32401 Children’s Initiative³¹ is a community effort serving the 32401 zip code area in Panama City, Bay County. The initiative is led by Goshen Community Resource and Recovery Center, Inc³². The initiative was informed by community meetings, surveys, and census data identifying challenges facing children and families, including limited access to early learning, lower educational outcomes, health and wellness concerns, housing and transportation barriers, and economic instability.³³

Goshen Community Resource and Recovery Center, Inc.’s strategic community plan identified early childhood development as a priority, particularly for children from birth to age five. The plan highlights barriers to accessing formal early learning and childcare, as well as challenges related to literacy, academic performance, family and school communication, and gaps in tutoring, mentoring, and youth enrichment programs.³⁴ The plan also identified health and wellness concerns, including food insecurity, limited access to nutritious foods, and physical and behavioral health needs.³⁵ Additionally, the plan identified parent and guardian support as a necessity to improving child outcomes, with concerns related to childcare affordability, after-school care, housing, transportation, and access to resources, and proposes strengthening family engagement through parent leadership development, community and faith-based organizations, community hubs, and culturally relevant supports.³⁶ The strategic community plan proposes a coordinated, cradle-to-career approach to improve outcomes for children and families of the Bay County Zip Code 32401.³⁷

On May 14, 2024, the City of Panama City adopted a resolution recommending and supporting the application on behalf of the children’s families of Bay County Zip Code 32401 to be considered for designation as a Florida

²⁷ Pompano RYZE Exit 36, *Florida Children’s Initiative Designation Application*, p. 13, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Unpublished report provided by Winifred P. Heggins, Vice President, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ Pompano RYZE Exit 36, *Florida Children’s Initiative Designation Application*, p. 14-16, 33-36, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Unpublished report provided by Winifred P. Heggins, Vice President, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

³⁰ Email correspondence from Winifred Heggins, Vice President, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

³¹ City of Panama, *Strategic Community Plan*, Bay County Zip Code 32401 Children’s Initiative, p. 1, 2, 8, available at <https://www.panamacity.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/14320?fileID=30318> (last visited January 24, 2026).

³² Goshen Community Resource and Recovery Center, About Us, available at <https://www.goshencommunitypc.com/about> (last visited January 24, 2026).

³³ City of Panama, *Strategic Community Plan*, Bay County Zip Code 32401 Children’s Initiative, p. 12, available at <https://www.panamacity.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/14320?fileID=30318> (last visited January 24, 2026).

³⁴ *Id.* at p. 7-11.

³⁵ *Id.* at p. 14.

³⁶ *Id.* at p. 7-8, 12.

³⁷ *Id.* at p. 7-9, 16.

Children’s Initiative. The Ounce designated the Bay County Zip Code 32401 as Florida children’s initiative in 2025.³⁸

OTHER RESOURCES:

[The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida](#)
[Harlem Children’s Zone](#)

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Human Services Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N	2/4/2026	Mitz	Aderibigbe
Health Care Budget Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N	2/12/2026	Clark	Smith
Health & Human Services Committee	23 Y, 0 N	2/24/2026	Calamas	Aderibigbe

³⁸ Email correspondence from Winifred Heggins, Vice President, The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, dated January 29, 2026, on file with the Human Services Subcommittee.