



Request for Proposals for Florida Children's Initiative Planning Grants

For July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026



About Florida Children's Initiatives

The 2008 Florida Legislature assigned the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida the responsibility for reviewing and approving requests from local municipalities and/or counties to obtain a Children's Initiative designation. The authority to review and approve such requests is based in Florida Statute (F.S.) 409.147.

A Children's Initiative is a neighborhood or community in Florida where the infrastructure and opportunities that middle-class communities take for granted are nonexistent or so marginal that they are ineffective.

- In many instances, children living in these neighborhoods are not read to by an adult on a regular basis and attend a prekindergarten education program at a much lower rate than children in other communities.
- These children experience below-average performance on standardized tests and graduate from high school in fewer numbers.
- Most of these children are eligible for the free or reduced-price school lunch program.
- Children in these neighborhoods often suffer from high rates of asthma, a higher risk of lead poisoning, higher rates of childhood obesity, and inadequate health care, and they are routinely exposed to violence and crime.

In spite of these obstacles, these neighborhoods are many times home to strong individuals and institutions that are committed to making a difference in the lives of children and their families.

It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to 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 its boundaries.

F.S. 409.147 establishes a process that clearly identifies severely disadvantaged areas and provides guidance for developing a new social service paradigm that systematically coordinates programs that address the critical needs of children and their families and for directing efforts to rebuild the basic infrastructure of the community.

Due to the intensive process of collecting all the materials and plans to request the designation of a Children's Initiative, a one-time grant of \$30,000 is being made available to eligible communities so that they have the resources to complete all the required steps.



Technical Questions

All **technical questions** about the format or requirements of the proposal **must be emailed** to Winifred P. Heggins at wheggins@ounce.org. If needed, a chart of all received technical questions and the accompanying answers will be published (on this same website) as an addendum.

Timeline

- **Proposals may be submitted as soon as they are ready.**
- **Deadline: ongoing**

IMPORTANT: Proposals will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. Grant recipients will be notified as they are deemed eligible. There are two grants available.

- **TBA** - Grantees Orientation (Virtual) and Letter of Agreement executed

Proposal Content and Format

In order to support a community seeking a Children's Initiative designation, the Florida Department of Children and Families is offering a one-time grant of \$30,000. **This grant is for communities in counties that currently do not have a Children's Initiative to help them put together the pieces of their designation request. Note: Any community can request FCI designation; however, this planning grant is for communities in counties that currently do not have a Children's Initiative.**

To request a planning grant, please build a thoughtful, comprehensive, and clear proposal showing that you have done your research about your community and about Children's Initiatives and you have a place-based strategy.

Before you create your proposal, please read all the information on the Children's Initiatives webpage: www.ounce.org/fci.html. Pay special attention to "**Children's Initiative Designation Process (PDF)**." Visit HCZ.org to obtain detailed insight on the "Cradle to Career" place-based model utilized by the Florida Children's Initiatives.

Your proposal should be in PDF or Word Document format. The text should be in black or blue and the font should be very easy to read. Please do not attach photos, videos, or other documents. Do not hyperlink to other sites in your proposal; instead, include the critical information within your proposal in the right section.

Use the format on the following page for your proposal. Be sure to label each section correctly. Use plain, concise, clear language. Check for errors/typos before submitting.

Email the final proposal as one attachment to Winifred P. Heggins, Vice President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc., at wheggins@ounce.org.

Outline Format

I. Table of Contents (1 page)

II. Cover Letter (1-2 pages)

- Introduce the main reason for seeking the Children's Initiative designation and share a little background about why this would be helpful to your community. Include a signature by the lead contact. By signing this letter, this person confirms they have read the complete proposal and that they understand the information on the Children's Initiatives webpage www.ounce.org/fci.html (especially "Children's Initiative Designation Process PDF").

III. Contact Information (1 page)

- List the name, title, organization, phone number, email address, and mailing address for the main contact person for your community.

IV. Summary of Community (2-3 pages)

- State the name of your neighborhood or community that you plan to designate as a Children's Initiative.
- State the exact location and population of the target community, including boundary lines, streets, land marks, ZIP codes, or other descriptors.
- Describe the social and economic challenges that currently exist in the area.
- Using recent data (from the last five years), explain clearly why the community is a disadvantaged area. Prove that it is a county or city/town (or is part of a county or city/town) that chronically exhibits extreme and unacceptable levels of poverty, unemployment, and physical deterioration, as well as limited access to quality educational, health care, and social services.

V. Statistics Demonstrating Need (2-3 pages)

- Choose at least four of the following bulleted factors and state facts/statistics using recent data (from the last five years) proving that the community of interest has a serious need for support in these areas. Statistics could include but are not limited to high school graduation rate, unemployment rate, youth arrest rate, crime rate, housing statistics, and literacy rates.
 - Early development and care of children
 - Education of children and youth
 - Health and wellness
 - Youth Support
 - Parent and guardian support
 - Adult education, training, and jobs
 - Community safety
 - Housing and community development

Scoring Rubric

- 1 POINT** - Proposal was received via email.
- 1 POINT** - Proposal has a table of contents (Section I) that is easy to follow.
- 2 POINTS** - Proposal has a cover letter (Section II) that is no more than 2 pages long.
- 3 POINTS** - Cover letter includes the main reason for seeking the designation.
- 3 POINTS** - Cover letter includes explanation of why it would help the community.
- 1 POINT** - Cover letter has a signature of the lead contact.
- 2 POINTS** - Full information for the main contact is included (Section III).
- 3 POINTS** - Proposal has a summary of the community that is no longer than 3 pages (Section IV).
- 4 POINTS** - Section IV includes the name of the community of interest and clearly states the location and boundary lines of the area.
- 5 POINTS** - Section IV includes a description of the social/economic challenges in the area.
- 5 POINTS** - Section IV proves that it is a county or city/town (or is part of a county or city/town) that chronically exhibits extreme and unacceptable levels of poverty, unemployment, and physical deterioration, as well as limited access to quality educational, health care, and social services.
- 5 POINTS** - Proposal has a Statistics Demonstrating Need section that is no longer than 3 pages (Section V).
- 5 POINTS** - Section V uses facts, data, and statistics to demonstrate that the community needs support in at least four of the areas (early development and care of children; education of children and youth; health and wellness; youth support; parent and guardian support; adult education, training, and jobs; community safety; and housing and community development).

_____ Total out of 40 possible points