Florida Cancer Innovation Fund

Funding Opportunity

Announcement FY 2024-2025

Updated 10/25/2024

Direct all questions about the online application process and related issues to:

Florida Department of Health

Public Health Research Unit

Division of Public Health Statistics and
Performance Management

4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin A24
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1725
Office: 850-245-4585
Email: FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov.
Website Links: Florida Cancer Innovation Fund | Florida Department of Health (floridahealth.gov)
Portal Link: https://cancerinnovation.floridahealth.gov/

Florida Cancer Innovation Fund (FCIF)

Information and Instructions for applying to the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund

The Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program Mission

The Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program is established to enhance the quality and competitiveness of cancer care in this state, further a statewide biomedical research strategy directly responsive to the health needs of Florida's citizens, capitalize on the potential educational opportunities available to its students, and promote the provision of high-quality, innovative health care for persons undergoing cancer treatment in this state.

Florida Cancer Innovation Fund

The Florida Department of Health is accepting applications for innovative cancer research and treatment models. The purpose of this effort is to energize collaborations between oncologists, cutting edge researchers and cancer facilities and to provide a plausible route for expedited funding to bolster competitiveness for extramural cancer research funding. This funding aims to provide opportunities to break down longstanding silos between researchers, cancer facilities, and medical providers to improve cancer research and treatment through innovative approaches to data infrastructure and best practices through the provision of innovation grants. Funding is for Florida-based institutions only.

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) will focus on three goal areas to bring a revolutionary new approach to combatting cancer in Florida:

1. **Data and Statistics** about the proliferation and treatment of cancer should be both timely and easily accessible. Research should seek to identify the reasons data is slow to move or hard to access and dismantle those barriers.
2. **Best Practices** when it comes to treating cancer, best practices shouldn't be proprietary. Research should seek to streamline, encourage, and incentivize the sharing of treatment best practices among public and private entities so that everyone is treated with the most effective treatment possible.
3. **Innovation** is about cutting the red tape and fully unleashing the power of innovation in the battle against cancer. Although advancements in technology improve at an exponential rate, clinical application has historically lagged. Research should identify the reasons that technology gets held up — for example, whether it be special interests, over-litigiousness, or bureaucratic red tape — and recommend ways to eliminate these barriers.

Grant Categories

Applications will be accepted in the grant categories outlined below. Funding amounts are available for all grant categories.

Each application must identify a Corresponding Principal Investigator/Study or Research Coordinator, herein named the Principal Investigator (PI). PIs and organizations may **not** submit the same application in different grant categories. For example, PIs and organizations may not submit the same project for a Standard Grant and a Pilot Grant in the same grant funding cycle.

- **Consortium Grant:** Stimulate a consortium of clinical, basic, translational, and underrepresented research institutions/centers to conduct high quality grant-supported research. The consortium should involve partnerships to be developed among investigators across the state of Florida, with the award made to the lead organization. The lead organization of the consortium must perform a substantive role in conducting the planned research including providing oversight of all scientific, programmatic, financial, and administrative matters related to the grant. The collaborating organizations must have well-defined roles that contribute to the common scientifically rigorous research goals that must include sound background information, hypotheses, protocols, and promising practices that address clearly one or more areas of research interest.
- **Standard Grant:** Research projects that are fully developed, scientifically rigorous, and include sound background information, hypotheses, and promising preliminary results or supporting data.
- **Pilot Grant:** Exploratory, novel studies that break new ground or extend previous discoveries toward new directions or applications. No preliminary data are required but may be included if available.
- **Post-doctoral Fellowship Grant:** Projects that aim to provide clinical, patient-oriented research fellowship training that stimulates novel insights, discovery,

and validation of novel diagnostic strategies to symptomatology, and treatment. Organizations must have a certified fellowship-training program or an established training program for health professionals to be considered eligible.

Deadlines and Award Timeline

1. The application process will be as follows:
    a. The FOA release date is October 25, 2024.
    b. A pre-application period which begins when the FOA is released and ends when the application portal opens.
    c. The initial application period for Florida fiscal year July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025, begins on November 4, 2024, and will remain open until January 21, 2025.
    d. There will be two grant award periods.
2. A pre-application webinar will be held 10 a.m. EST November 1, 2024 . During this time any questions will be solicited, and answers will be posted two business days after the Q&A deadline, which is November 4, 2024.
    a. Between October 26, 2024, and November 1, 2024, the Department will solicit any questions pertaining to the FOA. Questions may be submitted any time until 5:00 p.m. EST. Email question to: FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov.
    b. After November 1, 2024, the Department will be unable to answer any questions until the application period has closed.
    c. The Department will respond to questions received, and post on its website on November 4, 2024.
3. The application period will be on a rolling basis during Florida fiscal year 2024-2025:
    a. **Period 1**: Applications open November 4, 2024; Applications received by December 13, 2024, will be reviewed by January 22, 2025; Applicants will be notified on or around March 6, 2025.
    b. **Period 2**: Applications received by January 21, 2025, will be reviewed by March 3, 2025; Applicants will be notified on or around April 15, 2025.
    c. Applications received after January 21, 2025, will not be reviewed.
    d. Applications received during application period one will also be considered against other applications received during application period two if not funded in the previous application period that they were submitted under.
4. Approximately, $30 million will be available for distribution during each rolling application period for a total of $60 million for Florida fiscal year 2024-2025, however, the Department reserves the right to award during an application period depending on applications received and their scientific merit.
5. Each Principal Investigator is allowed to submit only one project per Florida fiscal year (2024-2025) application period.

Proposal Areas of Interest

Proposal topics need to be focused on innovative cancer research and adhere to one of the main goals of the FOA. These include:

- **Data and Statistics** – Improve data timeliness and accessibility.
- **Best Practices** – Streamline, encourage, and incentivize the sharing of treatment best practices among public and private entities.
- **Innovation** – Advancements in cutting-edge technology and clinical treatments.

All applications submitted in response to this funding opportunity must be responsive to one of the most prevalent cancer diagnoses in Florida or cancers impacting pediatrics.

This FOA encourages different research types including those listed below:

1. **Translational Research**: Projects designed to translate scientific bench discoveries to practical therapeutic interventions in a clinical setting. These efforts can relate to studies intended for translation to human subjects (Phase I clinical trials), translation to patients (Phase II, III clinical trials), translation to practice (Phase IV clinical trials), and/or translation to population health.
2. **Implementation Research**: Research projects focused on methodologies designed to promote the implementation of verified clinical treatments and practices into routine healthcare protocols at a clinical and organizational level. These studies can also focus on the de-implementation of clinical practices deemed to be of low or insignificant benefit to patient care and outcomes.
3. **Open Science**: Increases rigor and transparency of research studies while maximizing return on research investments. Open Science establishes repositories for sharing research as research is being conducted. This includes open access by sharing of information and making progress and findings accessible while the research is being conducted. This accelerates the sharing of knowledge while the research is being conducted and project aims and progress toward aims is shared. Knowledge is shared throughout the project period with all grantees. More people can become more involved and collaborate with multiple institutions. Scientist self-correcting reduces gaps and reduces problems and short-timeframe deadlines.
4. **Patient and Family Support**: Research that focuses on psychosocial support for patients and families, including patients participating in their care to improve outcomes. This research also includes supporting and encouraging patient engagement in improving the quality of care provided by their care team for the continuity of care. Examples can include access to support groups provided by the healthcare organizations or partners and patient navigators.
5. **Treatment-Related Morbidities**: Expand upon research that improves scientific understanding of causes and subsequent impact of cancer/cancer-treatment related morbidities in other systems (e.g., cardiovascular,

pulmonary, endocrine, lymphatic, central nervous system, reproductive, and developmental).

6. **Technology Transfer Feasibility (TTF)**: The goals of the TTF grant mechanism are to stimulate technology transfer activities for promising research discoveries that could lead to innovations in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and/or cure of cancer and strengthen a project's economic feasibility and commercialization prospects. The primary objective is to assist investigators in moving promising research findings toward commercialization. The TTF grant offers early-stage funding to develop intellectual property and improve its commercial potential and competitiveness for further development activities, including company formation or partnering with private interests. Projects should be designed to establish the technical/scientific merit and feasibility needed to attract commercial interest.
7. **Treatment Studies**: Proposals should explore innovative treatment models, including the latest research trends and emerging therapies. These studies should highlight promising treatments that have the potential to drive further research and development in the field.
8. **Special populations**: Research targeting specific or niche groups, including pediatric populations.

Eligibility Requirements

Successful FCIF projects will focus on cutting edge cancer research and patient care and treatment prioritized on the expeditious nature of the proposal. Potential applicants may include but are not limited to:

- Researchers working on cutting edge cancer treatments.
- Post-doctoral/Graduate student fellows.
- Health care providers.
- Oncology practices.

Facilities demonstrating excellence in patient centered cancer treatment or Research.

Applications for FCIF funding may be submitted from any Florida-based entity, facility, medical professional, university, or established cancer institute serving Floridians.

The PI is the individual designated by the applicant organization legally responsible to direct the grant project. The PI is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization officials for the project's scientific and technical direction as well as the proper conduct of the project. There must be only one designated PI. There may be multiple PIs on a project, but there must be only one PI/Study or Research Coordinator.

The PI must work at an eligible Florida-based establishment and meet that organization's criteria for serving as a PI in addition to the eligibility requirements listed in this FOA. The PI must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; unauthorized aliens shall not be employed pursuant to §274A(e) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (8 U.S.C. 1324a), section 101 of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and Florida Executive Order 11-02. Non-U.S. citizens can serve as Collaborators or

members of a research team.

Grant applications failing to meet the eligibility requirements will be rejected.

Required Grant Application Components

A complete grant application package must contain all required items listed in Table 2.

Category	Comment
General Audience Abstract	Required. Identifies general project information, the applicant organization, and the Corresponding Principal Investigator.
Scientific Abstract	Required. This is the scientific description of the project. Applicants will complete this in the General Project Information section of the application.
Project Collaborators	Required. A list of collaborators, the institution/facility, Department, brief description of role in project (Scientific mentor, Coinvestigator, etc.)
Specific Aims	Required. State the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcomes.
Research Strategy	Required. State the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcomes, including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the field involved.
Long-term Goals	Required. Describe the future direction of the research, long-term goals, and the project timeline for submitting additional grant application(s) to other federal or state funding opportunities. Explain the benefits/Return on Investment (ROI) to the state of Florida.
Budget	

Professional Qualifications/Experience	Required. Budgets should be organized to cover personnel, equipment, supplies, and technical support. Required. Please submit a curriculum vitae, resume or bio sketch.
Letters of Support	Required. A letter of support is a document designed to corroborate the proposed research through a third-party. Letter of Support from the Resource officer. The document should provide testimony that supports the anticipated study and methods.
Regulatory Approvals	Required (if applicable). Describe protections for human subjects, animals, embryonic stems cells and/or recombinant DNA involved in the research. If human subjects will be involved **at any time** in the research, even if the project protocol has already received Institutional Review Board approval or is deemed exempt, the applicant must address all human subject questions in the online application. If all questions are not answered, the application will be disqualified.

To complete the online application process:

1. Go to the program website at https://cancerinnovation.floridahealth.gov/ and complete all fields to register. You will receive an email with details about the next steps.
2. Access the online application and other required forms and submit them along with any necessary attachments using the same website link (https://cancerinnovation.floridahealth.gov/) between November 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET), and January 21, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET. Application submissions will be followed with an email indicating acceptance of the application and next steps, or denial of the same and reasons why. PDF versions of the online application and related required forms will be posted in the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund Announcement webpage when available. (Florida Cancer Innovation Fund | Florida Department of Health (floridahealth.gov)).
3. If you experience technical problems with the website, please call 850-245-4744, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. ET).
4. For questions about the funding opportunity, email FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov.

Budget

Awards can be up to $2,000,000 each. Award allocations will be based on scope of the project and dependent on funds available. Budgets should be structured to include personnel, equipment, supplies, and technical support. Budgets need to include a justification for each item, personnel (names and position), and percentage of effort devoted to the project percentage. Any equipment purchases that exceed $5,000 are subject to further review and approval by the department.

Disallowed Costs

All direct costs must be specifically and directly related and allocated to the project, necessary for the project's completion, adequately justified, and made during the active grant period. Any other costs are disallowed. Additionally, the following items shall NOT be paid for with grant funds:

- Florida Department of Health personnel salary
- Construction, renovation, or remodeling
- International travel (including Canada)
- Vehicles
- Entertainment
- Employment subsidies
- Dues/Membership fees
- Lobbying
- Meals/Food (other than as part of travel costs)
- Malpractice insurance premiums
- Expenditures related to legal services, business filing fees, or other costs for visas, green card or similar processing fees

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluations will be based on scientific merit, potential to extract funding from extramural sources and capacity to stimulate innovation pertaining to cancer research and care in Florida. Specific evaluation criteria will focus on:

1. Innovation and significance to Cancer Research and Care with a priority given to projects that streamline patient trials to clinical practice.
2. Priority will be given to new applicants who have not previously received funding from either the cancer innovation fund or from other cancer programs.
3. Additional merit will be awarded to those concentrating on pediatric cancers, research or treatment within rural populations, and studies or interventions targeting modifiable risk factors related to cancer.

4. Productivity, feasibility, and capacity to complete the proposed treatment or research:
    - **Productivity**: Assess the anticipated output and effectiveness of the treatment or research project, including the ability to achieve milestones and deliverables within the proposed timeline.
    - **Feasibility**: Evaluate the practicality of the project, considering factors such as resource availability, logistical considerations, and any potential obstacles that could impact the project's success.
    - **Capacity**: Determine the ability of the team or organization to successfully carry out the project, including assessing the expertise, experience, and resources available to ensure the completion of the proposed treatment or research.

POST APPLICATION SUBMISSION

1. Changes to a Submitted Application

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a complete application is submitted before the date and time specified in Deadlines and Award Timelines. The Department does not allow submitted application files or data to be replaced or changed after the submission deadline. This decision will help ensure no applicants receive an unfair advantage. Before submitting your application, please check it for completeness, accuracy, quality, and readability. This should include verifying that all graphic elements, including tables, charts, and images are converted properly when saving the original documents in PDF format as required.

2. Evaluation of Applications

The Department will use a multi-step evaluation process before making award determinations for all applications submitted in response to this Funding Opportunity. The Cancer Connect Collaborative, herein after “Collaborative,” shall advise the Department on the awarding of grants issued through FCIF. During any fiscal year for which funds are appropriated to FCIF, the collaborative shall review all submitted grant applications and make recommendations to the department for awarding grants. The Department will consider the outcome of each of these evaluation steps in making final funding recommendations to the State Surgeon General.

A. Administrative Review

Application materials not received according to the date, time, and location specified in Deadlines and Award Timelines will be disqualified. Each application submitted by the deadline indicated in Deadlines and Award Timelines will receive an administrative review verifying mandatory eligibility requirements, budget compliance, and the

completeness of the application. The administrative review includes a check for potential scientific or budgetary overlap with active or pending projects supported by the Department. The administrative review does not include review of the overall scientific impact.

Any application failing to meet all administrative requirements may be ruled ineligible for funding in response to this FOA, not entitled to further consideration, and will not undergo peer review.

The Department reserves the right to disqualify all applications or to waive minor irregularities when doing so would be in the best interest of the State of Florida. A minor irregularity is defined as a variation from the specifications of this FOA that does not give any applicant an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other applicants, does not affect the cost of the application, nor adversely affect the interests of the State of Florida. At its option, the Biomedical Research Program may correct minor irregularities, but is under no obligation to do so.

3. Notification of Funding Decision

The applicant organization and PI will receive written notification via email of the funding decisions. All awards in response to this FOA are subject to the availability of funds and spending authority provided by the Florida Legislature. By submitting a grant application pursuant to this FOA, all applicants acknowledge and consent to this condition.

4. Requests for Re-Consideration

All funding decisions of the State Surgeon General or designee are final.

Grantee Requirements

A. Terms and Conditions

After awards are made, each grantee must sign a contract, called the “Terms and Conditions,” agreeing to certain legal requirements of the award. The Terms and Conditions are non-negotiable, and acceptance are required as part of the grant award process. The Department reserves the right to change or modify the Terms and Conditions as needed. The Terms and Conditions include the post-award schedule of deliverables.

B. Grantee Reporting Requirements

If the applicant’s proposal is funded, the Grantee must respond to Department requests for information for a period of five years after the end of the grant period, including any no cost extensions. The requested information may include but is not limited to long-term outcomes based on the funded project, including the value of additional grant awards for cancer research, a list of cancer presentations, a list of cancer publications in peer-

reviewed journals, commercialization results and any invention disclosures, patent filings, and patents received.

C. Open Innovation and Sharing of Publication Related Materials, Data, and Software

Publishing a scientific paper is a transaction whereby the author(s) receive credit and status in exchange for sharing their scientific findings. Authors have a responsibility to make available materials, databases, and software integral to their findings so that others may validate or refute the results and/or extend them in new directions. Grantees funded through the Department are encouraged to use material transfer agreements to make materials, data and databases, and software that result from this funding and which is integral to their research findings, freely and promptly available upon request for research use by other scientists. Also, grantees should provide a copy of any article published from research supported by this Program to the Department within three months of the date the article is published.

In accord with the National Institutes of Health notice NOT-OD-08-033, Grantees shall submit or have submitted for them to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication, in a manner consistent with copyright law. This applies to all publications resulting from the Department funded projects/research. For more information on the NIH Open Access Policy, visit http://publicaccess.nih.gov/.

Progress Reports

Detailed quarterly summaries assessing progress will be required for all funded projects. These summaries will include performance updates, successes, and unexpected barriers. Final progress reports will be due at the end of the project cycle or annually depending upon the agreement and will outline the impact on cancer research and patient care that the proposal has had on Floridians living with cancer.

Typically, there is a reconciliation of funds that also results in the final payment.

Sample Agreement and Budget Summary

A copy of a sample Terms and Conditions and the Budget Summary are available on our website: https://cancerinnovation.floridahealth.gov. There will be a review period after the Awards are made to revise the Grant Budget Summary and Narrative. No modifications will be allowed once the Budget Revisions are complete, and the entire review packet is routing in our contract review system.

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