



Florida Cancer Connect Innovation Fund

Funding Opportunity Announcement

FY 2023-2024

Florida Cancer Connect Innovation Fund (FCCIF)

Information and Instructions for applying to the Florida Cancer Connect Innovation Fund

Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative Mission

The mission of the Cancer Connect Collaborative is to break down longstanding silos between researchers, cancer facilities, and medical providers to improve cancer research and treatment.

Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative Innovation Pilot Awards

The Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative is accepting applications for pilot projects in cancer research and innovation. 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.

At the direction of First Lady Casey DeSantis, the Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative will focus on goal areas to bring a revolutionary new approach to combatting cancer in Florida:

1. Data Statistics about the proliferation and treatment of cancer should be both timely available and easily accessible. The Collaborative will 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. The Collaborative will 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 by cutting the red tape and fully unleashing the power of innovation in the battle against cancer. Advancements in technology improve at an exponential rate yet clinical application has historically lagged. The Collaborative will identify the reasons that technology gets held up — 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. The funding levels are available for all grant categories. Organizations may not submit the same application in different grant categories. For example, organizations may not submit the same project for a Standard Grant and a Pilot Grant.

- **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:** This FOA aims 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

Letters of Intent Submissions Open	October 4, 2023, 2:00 PM EDT
Questions and Answers Posted	October 9, 2023, Noon
Letters of Intent Due	October 11, 2023, 5:00 PM EDT
Full Application Open	October 13, 2023, 10 AM EDT
Full Application Due	October 25, 2023, 5:00 PM EDT
Funding Decisions	November 16, 2023
Start of the Award	On or About December 8, 2023
Award Period	Award execution DOE to June 30, 2024

Applicant Eligibility

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

- Researchers working on cutting edge cancer treatments
- Florida Cancer Centers of Excellence
- Post-doctoral/Graduate student fellows
- Non-profit organizations

Proposal Areas of Interest

Proposal topics need to be focused on innovative cancer research and adhere to the main objectives of the Florida Cancer Connect collaboration. These include:

- Data – 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.

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. **Disproportionately Impacted Communities:** Research that contributes to reductions in deaths due to the cancers resulting from disproportionately impacted individuals due to race, ethnicity, or income.
6. **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).

7. 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.

To complete the online application process:

1. Applicants must register to access the online application and forms on the program website (<https://peernet.orau.org/Intake/Submission/Index?id=f8195bd2-ff1d-4afe-9125-08dba410a4d5>) and complete the brief project profile. Registration will be acknowledged with an email message containing login instructions and a username and password. Reference http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/research/funding_opportunity.html for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and additional information.
2. Complete the online application form. Deviations may be grounds for the collaborative to reject the entire application. Special formatting, scientific notation, pictures, and objects may be included in these documents. However, within the online application form fields such as the Project Title, General Audience Abstract and the Scientific Abstract, use only conventional alphanumeric letters and numbers (i.e., ASCII text) with no drawings, special characters, or symbols.
3. An application cannot be changed after it is submitted. Errata sheets or replacement files will not be accepted once an application is submitted.

Budget

Awards of up to \$2,000,000 each (direct research costs only). Award allocations will be based on scope of the project and dependent on funds available. Budgets should be structured to include personnel, supplies, and technical support. Equipment, maintenance costs, and travel should not be included in the final budgets. Budgets must be completed using the required format available on PeerNet. Budgets need to include justification for each item, personnel (names and position), and time devoted to the project (percentage).

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. The National Institutes of Health criteria will be used for ranking applications. Specific criteria include:

1. Innovation and significance to Cancer Research and Care with a priority given to projects that streamline patient trials to clinical practice.
2. Scientific merit
3. Potential of subsequent extramural funding (Grants, both federal and non-federal, originating outside the applicant's institution)
4. Productivity/Feasibility

Review and Selection Process

1. All proposals will be reviewed by two or more experts.
2. Proposals that meet the desired criteria will undergo systematic review.
3. Feedback on all proposals will be delivered post-process.

Progress Reports

Detailed quarterly summaries assessing progress will be required for all funded pilot projects. These summaries will include performance updates, successes, and unexpected barriers. Final progress reports will be due at the end of the project cycle 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.

All awards in response to this funding opportunity are subject to the availability of funds and spending authority provided by the Florida Legislature. By submitting a grant application pursuant to this Funding Opportunity, all applicants acknowledge and consent to this condition.

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

Florida Department of Health
Public Health Research Unit
Division of Community Health Promotion
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin A24
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1725
Office: 850-245-4585
Email: Research@flhealth.gov
Website Links: [Peer Net Grant Application Submission Portal](#)