



Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative Research Incubator

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Fiscal Year 2025-26

Incubator Period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030

Applications Due August 29, 2025

August 4, 2025

NOTE: All awards in response to this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) are subject to the availability of funds and spending authority provided by the Florida Legislature. By submitting an application pursuant to this FOA, all applicants acknowledge and consent to this and all other conditions in this FOA.

Direct all questions about this FOA, online application process, and related issues to:

Florida Department of Health
Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin A-15
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1720
Office: 850-245-4585
Email: cccincubator@flhealth.gov



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A Brief Description of this FOA

- This FOA supports applications for pediatric cancer research proposals that advance the care and treatment of individuals 0 to 18 years old within the state of Florida. See the Eligibility Section of this FOA for more information.
- **Applications for Cancer Connect Collaborative Research Incubator funding may only be submitted by a Florida-based specialty hospital as defined in s. 395.002(28)(a), Florida Statutes, which provides cancer treatment for patients from birth to 18 years of age. All qualified applicants have equal access and opportunity to apply for research funding.**
- Eligible Florida-based specialty hospitals may request a maximum of \$7.5 million for proposals submitted under the FOA for Fiscal Year 2025-26 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026). Funding for the Incubator is subject to the annual appropriation of funds by the Florida Legislature and granted spending authority to the Florida Department of Health (Department).
- Eligible Florida-based specialty hospitals must submit **only one application** through the online portal that includes all proposed activities in response to the FOA. Proposals submitted for Incubator funding must be for projects not previously receiving awards under the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund or the Department's other biomedical research grants, i.e., the William G. "Bill" Bankhead Jr., and David Coley Cancer Research Program, the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program, or the Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative.
- Funding is for Florida-based research only.

About the Cancer Connect Collaborative

The 2024 Florida Legislature established the Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative (Collaborative) as a council supported by the Florida Department of Health (Department) under s. 381.915(7), F.S., as part of the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program. The Collaborative's duties include advising the Department and the Legislature on developing a holistic approach to the state's efforts to fund cancer research, cancer facilities, and treatments for cancer patients. The Collaborative may also make recommendations on proposed legislation, proposed rules, best practices, data collection and reporting, issuance of grant funds, and other proposals for state policy relating to cancer research or treatment.

Introduction

Program Authority

In 2025, the Florida Legislature created the Cancer Connect Collaborative Research Incubator (Incubator) as part of the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program, (s. 381.915(12), F.S.) The Incubator is housed within the Department and the Collaborative is charged with program oversight. The Incubator was established to provide funding for a targeted area of cancer research over a five-year period. For the five-year period beginning on July 1, 2025, the Incubator's targeted area of cancer research is **pediatric cancer**.

Rationale

Nationally, pediatric cancer research funding has been historically lower compared to funding for adult cancer research. Pediatric cancer drug and device development continues to lag behind programs addressing adult cancers, with industry-sponsored cancer trials involving

children remaining limited due to expected lower profitability and the smaller patient populations typical of pediatric malignancies. Pediatric cancer research faces considerable challenges due to heightened regulatory, ethical, and safety standards for clinical trials involving children with cancer, as well as complexities around obtaining parental informed consent and child assent when families are dealing with a cancer diagnosis. The Cancer Connect Collaborative Research Incubator seeks to address these gaps by boosting pediatric cancer research and treatment in Florida, focusing attention and funding specifically on pediatric cancer proposals that can advance treatment options for children battling cancer.

Legislative Priorities

Subsection 381.915(12)(a), F.S., designates pediatric cancer as the Incubator's targeted area of cancer research for the five-year period beginning on July 1, 2025.

Applications for Incubator funding may only be submitted by Florida-based specialty hospitals, as defined in s. 395.002(28)(a), F.S., which provide cancer treatment for patients from birth to 18 years of age. All qualified applicants have equal access and opportunity to apply for research funding.

Additionally, s. 381.915(12)(b) and s. 381.915(12)(c), F.S., stipulate that:

- Priority must be given to applicants who focus on enhancing both pediatric cancer research and treatment by increasing participation in clinical trials related to pediatric cancer research, including all the following:
 - Identifying strategies to increase enrollment in cancer clinical trials.
 - Supporting public and private professional education programs to raise awareness and knowledge about cancer clinical trials.
 - Providing tools for cancer patients and community-based oncologists to help identify available cancer clinical trials in this state.
 - Creating opportunities for the state's academic cancer centers to collaborate with community-based oncologists in cancer clinical trial networks.
- Priority may be given to proposals that foster collaborations among institutions, researchers, and community practitioners to support the advancement of cures through basic or applied research, including clinical trials involving cancer patients and related networks.

Incubator proposals will be reviewed and recommended by the Collaborative and awarded by the Department based on scientific merit through a peer-reviewed process.

Research Focus

This FOA solicits applications for innovative proposals and associated activities that will provide Florida families with access to cutting-edge pediatric cancer treatments within the state. By establishing a robust infrastructure for children and adolescents with cancer, this funding opportunity aims to eliminate the need for families to travel out-of-state for experimental therapies and specialized care.

Funding Information

Eligible facilities may request a maximum of \$7.5 million for 2025-26 for all proposed activities under this FOA. Funding for the Incubator is subject to the annual appropriation of funds by the Florida Legislature and granted spending authority to the Department.

Key Dates

Table 1. Schedule of Important Dates

Activity	Date	Key Information
FOA Announcement	Anticipated: August 4, 2025	Located on the Florida Cancer Connect Incubator webpage .
Application Opens	Anticipated: August 11, 2025	Applications must be submitted in the Department's online application system at Florida Cancer Connect Incubator Portal at https://cancerconnectincubator.floridahealth.gov/ccigp/
Applications Due	Submissions due by: 5:00 p.m. ET on August 29, 2025	Applications must be submitted at the link above before the deadline. Applications being edited will not be accepted after the deadline.

Any changes to the schedule will be posted to the Florida Cancer Connect Incubator webpage. Eligible applicants should monitor the website for changes and announcements or email cccincubator@flhealth.gov with any questions.

Requirements

Eligibility

Applicants must be a Florida-based specialty hospital, as defined in s. 395.002(28)(a), Florida Statutes, that provides cancer treatment for patients from birth to 18 years of age. Additionally, to be considered eligible, all the following guidelines must be met.

Florida Projects and Activities

All grant-funded activities must take place in Florida. All work (effort) must occur, and funds must be spent in Florida at the applicant organization and any listed collaborating entities. However, the Department may make exceptions if the service is essential and only provided outside Florida, and if the amount is less than 10 percent of the requested amount.

Subcontractors

Subcontracts must be pre-approved using the Public Health Research Program Budget Template. The Budget Narrative must justify the purpose of the subcontract, whether this is the only vendor that can perform the services, regardless of whether they are in-state or out-of-state. Please complete budget requirements within the Florida Cancer Connect Incubator Portal at <https://cancerconnectincubator.floridahealth.gov/ccigp/>.

Project Management

Each project proposal must identify a Proposal Lead (PL)/Project Manager (PM). The PL/PM is the individual, designated by the eligible facility, who is legally responsible to direct all proposed activities and is accountable for the proposal's scientific and technical direction as well as the proper conduct of activities.

Budgets

Budget requirements are to be completed in the Florida Cancer Connect Incubator Portal at <https://cancerconnectincubator.floridahealth.gov/ccigp/>.

When calculating the budget summary and narrative, be sure to use whole dollars. The budget contains two parts, the Budget Summary and the Budget Narrative:

- The Budget Summary provides an overview of the estimated budget for the life of Incubator funding by category and by state Fiscal Year (FY) (July 1 – June 30). Do not use calendar months to calculate the budget. The first budget should be calculated for nine months. Each remaining year will be for 12 months (July – June). The final budget year should be calculated for three months.
- The Budget Narrative provides information regarding how expenses will be used to support the grant. Each budget category requested should include enough detail to justify the expense and should include all calculations for arriving at the totals.
- Personnel/Fringe: Include the staff member's name, role on the project, percent of effort, and any other specific rates or cost breakdowns to justify the total personnel and fringe expense. Be sure to account for any cost-of-living increases and include a statement in the narrative. Cost of living increases are limited to three percent per year. Detailed calculations are required to justify the cost for each staff member.
 - Subcontracting: Preapproval of subcontracting is required prior to grant execution. A copy of the proposed or sample subcontract must be provided to the assigned contract manager.
 - Indirect Costs: Indirect cost rates may not exceed 15 percent of the total direct costs requested. Direct costs are all expense categories directly associated with the research project.

There will be a review period after the awards are made to revise the Incubator Budget Summary and Narrative. No modifications will be allowed once the budget revisions are complete, and the entire review packet is routing in the Department's contract review system.

Guidelines for Cancer Connect Collaborative Member Participation

Members of the Collaborative have statutory conflict of interest obligations regarding the participation of its members in Incubator applications.

Collaborative members shall not:

- Receive any form of financial compensation from Incubator awards.
- Participate in any named role on a proposed Incubator project or activity in this FOA.
- Advise applicants regarding the preparation for a proposal for an Incubator award.
- Answer any programmatic questions (including those related to eligibility, the contents of the FOA, competition procedures, etc.). Please contact the Department for these specifics.
- Violate any provision of Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes.

Additionally, a member of the Collaborative may not participate in any discussion or decision of the Collaborative or a panel regarding a research proposal from any firm, entity, or agency with which the member is associated as a governing body member, as an employee, or through a contractual arrangement.

Violations of these restrictions may result in the disqualification of an eligible applicant for this funding opportunity. For a list of Collaborative members, refer to the [Florida Cancer Connect website](#).

Collaborative members may provide, and sign, letters of assurance/support or cover pages submitted as part of the application in cases in which doing so is part of their official duties at the applicant organization.

Responding to this FOA: Application Guidelines

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 proposal pursuant to this FOA, all eligible applicants acknowledge and consent to this condition.

Total funding available: Eligible Florida-based specialty hospitals may request a maximum of \$7.5 million for proposals submitted under the FOA for fiscal year 2025-26 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026). Award allocations are dependent on funds available, subject to the annual appropriation of funds by the Florida Legislature and approval of spending authority to the Department. All direct costs must be specifically and directly related and allocated to the proposed activities in response to this FOA, necessary for the proposal's completion and execution, adequately justified, and made during the active award period. Any other costs are disallowed. See the Budget section for details.

Applications will only be accepted through the online application portal system.

Applicant questions can be submitted through the Incubator portal or via email.

Application Components

Category	Comment
General Project Information	Required. This section identifies general project information, the applicant organization, and the Proposal Lead/Project Manager.
Health Impact	Required. Applications must describe how the proposed project impacts the health of Floridians. Health impact means the ability of the research to reduce morbidity and mortality from pediatric cancer. Applications must describe how the results of the research can provide information and evidence for changes in policy, or improve health service delivery, and quality of care, or improve disease prevention. Consider possible long-range effects of applying knowledge gained in the research or the ability of the research to support future research, grant applications, publications, or patents.
State Return on Investment and Translation Strategy	Required. Projects must directly tie to population health, delivery system improvement, and fiscal stewardship of state funds. Applications must include how results will translate into improved access, earlier diagnosis and/or enhanced treatments. Describe return on investment and long-term value to Florida's pediatric cancer ecosystem.
Data and Best Practices Dissemination Strategy	Required. Describe how findings will be disseminated to non-academic clinicians, policymakers, families, and other Floridians.
Collaborator Information	Required. Identify all key personnel.
Biographical Sketch or CVs	Required. Bio-sketches or CVs of key personnel must be uploaded as a single document in the format specified in the online system.
Consultants	Required (if there are consultants). Letters from all consultants confirming their roles in the project, including the rate/charge for consulting services must be uploaded as a single document.
Work and Evaluation Plan	Required. A detailed work and evaluation plan that includes milestones, SMART metrics, and expected outcomes for the duration of the project must be uploaded as a single document in the format specified in the online system.

Budget Template	Required. The budget must explain the planned spending. The budget can be completed within the online application system. If applications involve collaborations with different institutions, the eligible facility should complete the budget form and include collaborating institutions as a contractual expense.
Budget Narrative	Required. The Budget Narrative must explain in line-item detail how funds from each budget category will be spent for each year of project funding. Ensure the budget narrative includes a cap of no more than 15% for itemized administrative expenses.
Reportable Financial Interests	Required. The PL/PM must disclose any financial interests that they, or their immediate family, or any other personnel on the project (sub-investigators and research staff) and their immediate families, have related to the project and/or its research if applicable.
<p>Eligible facilities are discouraged from submitting information considered proprietary unless it is deemed by the applicant to be essential for proper evaluation of the application. See the FOA Requirements for Protecting Intellectual Property, page 10 of this FOA.</p> <p>If the application contains information that the applicant believes constitutes trade secrets or proprietary information or is protected by a specific statutory exemption; it should be limited to the Research Project Plan section. The eligible facility applying for these funds must CLEARLY identify the information with [brackets] and a footnote that specifies the law that makes the document or information exempt from the public records laws. If a public records request is made involving documents with declarations of confidentiality, the Department will notify the facility so that he/she may defend the claim in circuit court. The Department will not provide legal representation to assert a confidentiality claim when a public record request is made.</p>	

Allowed and Disallowed Costs

The following information explains direct and indirect costs allowed by the Department, as well as disallowed costs.

Allowed Direct Costs

Allowed direct cost expenses must be directly related to the proposed activities and may include:

- Salaries, including up to a three percent increase per year.
- Background Screening: Level II (if required) should be included under other expense category.
- Fringe benefits.
- Supplies.
- Equipment, including for example, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or other imaging systems, and improvements to existing systems. For the purposes of this FOA, "equipment" refers to items with a purchase price of over \$5,000.00 and with a useful life of over one year.
- Lab Services.
- Consultant costs, provided they do not exceed 10 percent of the total budget.
- Patient-care costs.
- Consortium or contractual costs.
- Domestic travel (Travel will be reimbursed at no more than the state of Florida travel reimbursement rates. Current state of Florida reimbursement rates can be found in section 112.061, F.S. To implement appropriations in the General Appropriations Act for state travel and notwithstanding s. 112.061, F.S., costs for lodging associated with a meeting,

conference, or convention organized or sponsored in whole or in part by a state agency or the judicial branch may not exceed \$225 per day.) If awarded, eligible facilities must submit a travel voucher form in every quarter in which they will charge travel to their Incubator budgets. Travel is only approved within the United States (US). The State of Florida Voucher for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses should be used for all travel-related expenses unless the institution's travel voucher/expenditure form has received prior approval from the Department of Financial Services (DFS). Support documentation for all travel-related expenses is needed, e.g., receipts for flight, hotel (up to \$225/night), parking, rental car, gas, ground transportation, as well as registration, meeting

- Other Expenses, e.g., fees to obtain data from the Florida Cancer Registry Data System and Florida Office of Vital Statistics, Institutional Review Board costs or Institutional Animal Care and Use.

Allowed Indirect Costs

Indirect costs (also referred to as IDC, Finance and Accounting, or administrative costs) may not exceed a total of 15% of the direct costs requested.

Disallowed Costs

All direct costs must be specifically and directly related and allocated to the proposed activities in the application in response to this FOA, must be necessary for the completion of all proposed activities, adequately justified, and made during the active award period. Any other costs are disallowed. Additionally, the following items shall NOT be paid for with Incubator funds:

- Florida Department of Health personnel salary
- International travel (including Canada)
- Vehicles
- Entertainment
- Employment subsidies
- Dues/Membership fees
- Lobbying
- Meals/Food (other than as part of travel costs)
- Malpractice insurance premiums

Programmatic Questions About the Funding Opportunity

This FOA is issued by the Florida Department of Health. The Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management manages the funding opportunity and is responsible for answering all applicant questions. Eligible facilities and persons acting on their behalf may contact the Department through the Incubator portal or via email. Programmatic questions can be submitted in writing via email to CCCIncubator@flhealth.gov. Answers to questions will be available from the Florida Cancer Connect Incubator Portal at <https://cancerconnectincubator.floridahealth.gov/ccigp/>: Answers to submitted questions will be posted in groups as they are received and published on the website.

Technical Questions

Direct all questions about the online application process and related issues (e.g., username and password problems) by calling call 850-245-4744, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

The Department recommends that applications be submitted early. Applications submitted past the deadline will not be considered, regardless of the reason.

Requirements for Protecting Intellectual Property

Submitted materials are subject to the provisions of Art. I, Sec. 24, Florida Constitution, and Chapter 119, F.S., Florida's public records law. These laws grant the right to any person to

inspect any public record. There are some documents and information that are exempt from the public records laws. All application materials are public record unless the applicant can show how they are exempt.

Eligible facilities are strongly discouraged from submitting information considered proprietary unless it is deemed by the applicant to be essential for proper evaluation of the application. If the application contains information that the applicant believes constitutes trade secrets, intellectual property, proprietary information, or information protected by a specific statutory exemption, it should be limited to the research/project plan. The applicant must clearly identify the confidential information with [brackets].

If a public records request is made involving documents with declarations of confidentiality, the Department will notify the applicant so that he/she may substantiate and defend the claim. The Department will not provide legal representation to assert a confidentiality claim.

Evaluation of Applications

Administrative Review

Each application submitted by the deadline indicated in Table 1 will receive an administrative review verifying mandatory eligibility requirements 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.

The Department reserves the right to return applications for corrections or to waive minor irregularities when doing so would be in the best interest 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 affects the interests of Florida. At its option, the Department may correct minor irregularities but is under no obligation to do so.

Full Peer Review

Department peer reviewers will assess the overall impact of all qualified/eligible applications received from eligible facilities. Individual reviewers will review, and rate applications based on the required elements listed within the application components section.

Application Submission

The online system will be available to accept applications for this FOA on the date published in Table 1 of this FOA.

Award Notification

The applicant organization and the PL/PM will receive written notification via email of the funding decisions as indicated in Table 1 of this FOA. All awards in response to this FOA are subject to the availability of funds and spending authority provided by the Florida Legislature. By submitting an application pursuant to this FOA, all applicants acknowledge and consent to this condition.

Post-Award Requirements

Terms and Conditions

After awards are made, each eligible facility 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 is required as part of the 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.

Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Financial Reporting Requirements

Recipients of Incubator funding must submit a comprehensive quarterly report within 30 days following each quarter. The report must include:

- A line-item list of all expenditures made by the hospital with funds received through the Incubator.
- An attestation confirming completion of required tasks.
- A detailed report for any equipment purchases supporting the link between equipment purchases and patient outcomes, specifying equipment locations.

Quarterly 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

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.

For each award received, the eligible facility must respond to Department requests for information for a period of five years after the end of the award period, including any no-cost extensions. The requested information may include but is not limited to long-term outcomes based on the proposed funded activities, including but not limited to number of patients served, patient outcomes, 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.

Reports will also require a description of how findings are disseminated to other Florida hospitals, pediatric practices or within the health care system, including information on promoting best practices, replication and scale-up of findings within the state. The Department may request best practices and protocols developed from the Incubator award to be disseminated through the Cancer Connect Collaborative and other cancer-related councils.

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. Eligible facilities funded through the Department are required to use material transfer agreements to make materials, data, 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, eligible facilities should provide a copy of any article published from research supported by the Incubator 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, eligible facilities 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/>.

Definitions

Application materials: Any documents or information to be included in the FOA application.

Consortium: A 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, and include sound background information, hypotheses, protocols, and promising practices that address clearly one or more areas of research interest. A letter of commitment from all collaborating organizations is required.

Contractual Agreement: An agreement whereby a project is carried out by the eligible facility and one or more other organizations that are separate legal entities. In this arrangement, the eligible facility contracts for the performance of a substantial and/or a significant portion of the activities to be conducted under the grant.

Consultant: An individual hired to give professional advice or services for a fee, normally not as an employee of the hiring entity. Consultants may also include firms that provide paid professional advice or services.

Department: Florida Department of Health.

Eligible Institution: Any Florida-based specialty hospital as defined in s. 395.002(28)(a), F.S., which provides cancer treatment for patients from birth to 18 years of age.

Feasibility: The practical extent to which a project is capable of being successfully performed within the requested time and for the awarded money.

Full-time Equivalent (FTE): The definition of a Full-time Equivalent must be in accordance with the institution's policy, used consistently by the institution regardless of the source of support, and may be different in terms of actual months per year or days per week at the applicant institution.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs up to 15% *may* be included in direct cost categories for services, functions, or activities that are directly necessary for this grant.

Institutional Base Salary: The annual compensation that the applicant institution pays for an employee's appointment, whether that individual's time is spent on research, teaching, patient care, or other activities. Base salary excludes any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of duties to the applicant institution. Base salary may not be increased by replacing institutional salary funds with Incubator funds.

Key Personnel: Project key personnel include the Project Manager or Proposal Lead and all other key personnel that are taking part in proposed activities or being funded under this opportunity. These personnel contribute to the scientific development or execution of the proposed activities in a substantive way, whether salaries are requested or not.