



# **Florida Cancer Innovation Fund**

**Funding Opportunity Announcement**

**FY 2023-2024**

**Updated 11/7/2023**

**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: [FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov](mailto:FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov).  
Website Links: <https://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/research/florida-cancer-innovation-fund/index.html>  
Portal Link <https://cancerinnovation.floridahealth.gov>

## **Florida Cancer Innovation Fund (FCIF)**

### **Information and Instructions for applying to the Florida Cancer Innovation Fund**

#### **Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative Mission**

Established in 2023 and at the direction of First Lady Casey DeSantis, the Cancer Connect Collaborative's mission is to break down longstanding silos between researchers, cancer facilities, and medical providers to improve cancer research and treatment. In fiscal year 23-24 funding was made available to support innovative cancer research that aligns with the mission of the Florida Cancer Connect Collaborative.

#### **Florida Cancer Innovation Pilot Awards**

The Florida Department of Health is accepting applications for 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.

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) will focus on three 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. This research 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. This research 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. This research 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 Due	October 25, 2023, 5:00 PM EDT
Award Notification	On or around January 31, 2024
Start of the Award (signed agreement)	After January 31, 2024
Award Period	Award execution from date of signed agreement for 12 months.

**Proposal Areas of Interest**

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

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Successful FCIF 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
- Post-doctoral/Graduate student fellows
- Non-profit organizations
- Medical providers
- Oncology practices
- Florida Cancer Centers of Excellence

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

Each application must identify a Corresponding Principal Investigator/Study or Research Coordinator, herein named the PI. The Corresponding PI is the individual designated by the applicant organization legally responsible to direct the grant project. The Corresponding 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 Corresponding PI. There may be multiple PIs on a project, but there must be only one Corresponding Principal Investigator/Study or Research Coordinator.

The Corresponding 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 Corresponding 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.

**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. Use the same website link (<https://cancerinnovation.floridahealth.gov>) to access and send the letter of intent form between October 4, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET), and October 11, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). Upon submission of the letter of intent form you will receive an email with further instructions.
3. 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 October 13, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET), and October 25, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (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. (<https://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/research/florida-cancer-innovation-fund/index.html>).
4. 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. Eastern Time (ET).
5. For questions about the funding opportunity, email [FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov](mailto:FloridaCancerInnovationFund@flhealth.gov).

**Budget**

Awards of 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 justification for each item, personnel (names and position), and time devoted to the project (percentage). Any equipment purchases that exceed \$5000 are subject to further review and approval by the department.

**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. 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.

### **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.**