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**Florida Department of Health**  
**Rare Disease Advisory Council (RDAC) Grants**  
Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

**Award Period:**

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

**Letters of Intent Due:** January 27, 2026

**Applications Due:** March 3, 2026

**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 a grant 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:

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Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management  
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin A-15  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1720  
Office: 850-245-4585  
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## 1. FOA KEY POINTS

Applicants should note the following key points:

1. This FOA supports applications for pediatric rare disease research for innovative approaches to research and treatment for pediatric rare diseases. Refer to the [Eligibility](#) section of this FOA for more information.
2. Priority will be given to project proposals that focus on reduce mortality and morbidity, improve screening, and establish consortia. Refer to the [Research Priorities](#) section of this FOA for more information.
3. Applicants are required to submit a Work Plan with each application for the entire project timeframe. The Work Plan must include identified milestones for the project and will serve as contract deliverables for grant-funded projects. A Work Plan template will be provided in the online application and Biomedical Research Program's [Grant Management Forms and Resources](#) web page on the Florida Department of Health's website.
4. Applicants must identify one Corresponding Principal Investigator, herein named the Principal Investigator (PI), for each project proposal submitted. Refer to the [Eligibility](#) section of this FOA for more information about the PI.
5. Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are allowed under this FOA, though there must be only one PI listed for each grant project. Co-PIs are optional and serve as secondary PIs on the project. Refer to the [Eligibility](#) section of this FOA for more information about PIs and Co-PIs.
6. A project proposal may be submitted **only once** for this FOA during the current grant funding period, defined as either a new or a resubmission proposal. Resubmission proposals are project proposals that were submitted in previous grant cycles but not funded.
7. Specific grant funding amounts are available for the grant categories outlined in the [Grant Categories](#) section of this FOA. Refer to the [Funding Information](#) section of this RFA for details on the maximum amounts available. Funding for this FOA is subject to the annual appropriation of funds by the Florida Legislature and granted spending authority to the Department.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The Rare Disease Advisory Council (RDAC) was created within the Florida Department of Health (Department), under section 381.99, Florida Statutes. RDAC advises the State Surgeon General as to the direction and scope of the Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program. The responsibilities of RDAC include, but are not limited to:

1. Consulting with experts on rare diseases and solicit public comment to assist in developing recommendations on improving the treatment of rare diseases in this state.
2. Developing recommended strategies for academic research institutions in this state to facilitate continued research on rare diseases.
3. Developing recommended strategies for health care providers to be informed on how to more efficiently recognize and diagnose rare diseases in order to effectively treat

patients. The advisory council shall provide such strategies to the Department of Health for publication on the department's website.

4. Providing input and feedback in writing to the Department, the Medicaid program, and other state agencies on matters that affect people who have been diagnosed with rare diseases, including, but not limited to, pandemic or natural disaster preparedness and response.

This FOA covers the Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program included in the following subsection.

### **2.1. Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program**

The Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program is established in section 381.991, Florida Statutes. The program's purpose is to advance the progress of research and cures for pediatric rare diseases by awarding grants through a competitive, peer-reviewed process. The program provides grants for pediatric rare disease research to further the search for cures for pediatric rare diseases, by pursuing the following goals:

- Significantly expanding pediatric rare disease research capacity in Florida.
- Investigating novel approaches in rare disease research and therapeutics.
- Reducing pediatric rare disease research silos through partnerships with nontraditional partners.

## **3. RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

To balance the number of grants awarded across research areas, the Department will prioritize applications that address the following:

1. Reducing mortality and morbidity among pediatric rare disease patients.
2. Improving screening accuracy and detection in high-risk groups.
3. Establishing consortia to collaboratively work on pediatric rare diseases.

## **4. GRANT CATEGORIES**

Applications in response to this FOA must align to a grant category from the list below to pursue an area of focus from the [Research Priorities](#) section of this FOA. Refer to the [Funding Information](#) section of this FOA for the maximum funding available per grant category.

**Grant Category Descriptions (listed in alphabetical order):**

1. **Consortium:** Proposals in this grant category will stimulate a consortium of clinical, basic, and underrepresented research institutions or 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, and include sound background information,

hypotheses, protocols, and promising practices that address clearly one or more areas of research interest.

**2. Discovery Science:** Discovery science means fundamental theoretical or experimental investigative research to advance knowledge without a specifically envisaged or immediately practical application. Applications under this mechanism can include observational or cross-sectional studies not involving a clinical trial. Outcome measures can be self-reported, observational, behavioral, biologic, or genetic. Projects in this mechanism must be applicable to one of the following sub-mechanisms:

- Bioinformatics: Applications for projects to expand existing infrastructure/resources for analysis of biomedical data, including genomic and proteomic information and the study of biological systems. Projects may include improving algorithms, databases, and modeling of biological phenomena; purchase of equipment, and software; and support for the expansion of cross-disciplinary research teams. The expectation is that projects will include sustainable ongoing mechanisms to improve sharing of infrastructure/resources with external researchers and research institutes in Florida. Projects should describe measurable targets and time frames for expanding access as well as describe a process to evaluate improved outcomes related to this infrastructure. Projects may include, but are not limited to, expanding the ability to analyze very large data sets; the identification of tissue-specific biomarkers; or improvements in ways of automating clinical imaging.
- Medical imaging: Applications for projects to expand existing infrastructure that improves the quality, speed, and accuracy of medical imaging or develops processes that measure the effectiveness of imaging technologies. Projects may include, but are not limited to, improvements in screening or research examining the correlation between the expanded use of imaging technologies and health outcomes. Projects may include improvements to software and equipment. The expectation is that projects will include sustainable ongoing mechanisms to improve sharing of infrastructure/resources with external researchers and research institutes in Florida. Projects should describe measurable targets and time frames for expanding access as well as describe a process to evaluate improved outcomes related to this infrastructure.
- Genomics: Applications for projects to expand existing infrastructure in the areas of functional genomics, genomic biomarkers, epigenetics, next-generation sequencing, miRNA and non-coding RNA, qPCR, proteomics, and proteome analysis including chromatography or mass spectroscopy. Funds are intended to be used to upgrade software and equipment that will make organizations competitive for additional funding and serve as a national resource. The expectation is that projects will include sustainable ongoing mechanisms to improve sharing of infrastructure/resources with external researchers and research institutes in Florida. Projects should describe measurable targets and time frames for expanding access as well as describe a process to evaluate improved outcomes related to this infrastructure.

**3. Equipment:** This mechanism is for infrastructure/resources to augment research equipment that advances the current and future pediatric rare disease research

capability. The expectation is that new equipment will be shared with other researchers as beneficial. Reporting on the role of equipment in research studies will be required.

4. **High-Risk, High-Reward Discovery Science:** Research in this mechanism of support pursues bold, unconventional hypotheses or cutting-edge methodologies to explore uncharted biological territories relevant to pediatric rare diseases. This research challenges existing paradigms, investigates counterintuitive phenomena, or develops innovative approaches that may appear technically unfeasible. The high-risk nature stems from possibilities that novel hypotheses prove incorrect or new methods fail to yield interpretable data. The high-reward potential includes groundbreaking discoveries that fundamentally alter disease understanding, identify new therapeutic targets, or elucidate previously unknown pathways spawning multiple research directions.

## 5. FUNDING INFORMATION

Applicants must request funding in the following grant categories to pursue research in the areas of focus outlined in the [Research Priorities](#) section of this FOA. Preference will be given to applications that address the priorities listed in the [Research Priorities](#) section of this FOA. For more information about the types of grants listed below, please see the descriptions in the [Grant Categories](#) section of this FOA.

**Table 1. Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program Grant Categories, Maximum Amounts, and Maximum Duration**

Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program		
Grant Category	Maximum Amount (Including direct and indirect costs)	Maximum Duration
Consortium	\$500,000.00	36 Months
Discovery Science	\$500,000.00	36 Months
High-Risk, High-Reward Discovery Science	\$300,000.00	36 Months
Equipment	\$100,000.00	12 months

## 6. ELIGIBILITY

### 6.1 Applicants

According to sections 381.991(2)(a), Florida Statutes, applications for biomedical research funding may be submitted by [any university or established research institute in Florida](#). Additionally, to be considered eligible, all the following guidelines must be met. **Grant applications failing to meet the eligibility requirements will be rejected.**

1. 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 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 award amount.

2. Subcontracts must be pre-approved in the Public Health Research Program Budget Template (Attachment V). The Budget Narrative must justify the purpose of the subcontract, whether this is the only vendor that can perform the services, regardless of if they are in-state or out-of-state.
3. Each project proposal must identify a Corresponding Principal Investigator (PI). The PI is the individual, designated by the Applicant, who is legally responsible to direct the project and is accountable for the project's scientific and technical direction as well as the proper conduct of the project. There may be multiple PIs (called Co-PIs) on a project, but there must be only one designated PI.
  - a. The PI must be an employee of the Applicant organization/entity and meet that institution's criteria for serving as a PI in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements listed in this FOA.
  - b. 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.
  - c. The PI may serve as Co-PI or other role on other applications, provided they are not over-committed. The Corresponding Principal Investigator shall not:
    - i. Apply for the same research project for which he or she was a previously funded grant recipient. The aims and experiments in the new proposal must be significantly different from any previously funded grants.
    - ii. Submit the same project/research that is also being submitted by another investigator regardless of the grant mechanism.
    - iii. Submit duplicate projects or projects with significant scientific or financial overlap during the same competition year.
4. Applicants must ensure that their proposed project does not duplicate or significantly overlap, scientifically or financially, with other projects in which they or any key personnel are involved. Overlap, whether scientific or financial, or commitment of a project member's effort greater than 100% is prohibited.
5. The proposed research project must focus on a non-cancer pediatric rare disease.

## **6.2. Guidelines for RDAC Member Participation**

RDAC has statutory conflict of interest obligations regarding the participation of its members in grant applications.

RDAC members **shall not**:

1. Advise applicants regarding the preparation of a specific grant application for an Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant Program grant award.
2. Answer any programmatic questions (including those related to eligibility, the contents of the FOA, competition procedures, etc.).
3. Violate any provision of Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes.

RDAC 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.

Violations of these restrictions may result in the disqualification of an applicant for this competition.

## 7. KEY DATES

Please refer to the table below for a schedule of key grant-related dates.

**Table 3. Schedule of Important Dates**

Activity	Date	Key Information
<b>FOA Announced</b>	Anticipated: January 8, 2026	Located on the Biomedical Research Program's <a href="#">Funding Opportunity Announcements</a> web page on the Department's website.
<b>Letter of Intent Opens (Required)</b>	By 5:00 p.m., ET on January 13, 2026	Letter of Intent must be submitted in the online system located on the Biomedical Research Program's Funding Opportunities web page. Applications without a Letter of Intent by the deadline are not eligible and will not be considered.
<b>Emailed Questions Accepted</b>	Due by: 5:00 p.m. ET on January 15, 2026	Email questions to: <a href="mailto:Research@flhealth.gov">Research@flhealth.gov</a>
<b>Q&amp;A Posted Online (answers to emailed questions)</b>	By January 16, 2026	Questions and answers will be published on the Biomedical Research Program's <a href="#">Funding Opportunity Announcements</a> web page.
<b>Letter of Intent Due (Required)</b>	Due by: Noon, ET on January 27, 2026	Letter of Intent must be submitted in the online system accessible from the Biomedical Research Program's <a href="#">Funding Opportunity Announcements</a> web page. Applications without a Letter of Intent by the deadline are not eligible and will not be considered.
<b>Application Opens</b>	Anticipated: February 2, 2026	Applications must be submitted in the online system located on the Biomedical Research Program's <a href="#">Funding Opportunity Announcements</a> web page.
<b>Applications Due</b>	Submissions due by: Noon, ET on March 3, 2026	Applications must be submitted before the deadline. Applications being edited will not be accepted after the deadline.

**Any changes to the schedule will be posted to the Biomedical Research Program's [Funding Opportunity Announcements](#) web page. Applicants should monitor the website for changes and announcements.**

## **8. INSTITUTIONAL APPROVALS**

If selected for funding, the grantee must submit to the Department proof of submission to the appropriate institutional review bodies, and any applicable protocol(s) and consent form(s), **within five business days** from execution of the Grant Agreement, for all institutional authorizations including, but not limited to, an Institutional Review Board (IRB), an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) approval, and a Radiation Safety Review, if the grant project requires the use of human subjects or vertebrate animals, recombinant DNA, stem cells, or radiation. Projects that include research participant incentives in their budgets must receive approval from an IRB accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) or another accrediting body deemed acceptable by the Department. If the research proposal is selected for Department funding, the original IRB approval protocol and consent forms must be submitted to the Department before any incentives are distributed. These documents will be kept in the grant management folder at the Department.

## **9. PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **9.1. Budget Guidelines**

Award allocations will be based on the scope of the project and dependent on funds available, subject to the annual appropriation of funds by the Florida Legislature and approval of spending authority to the Department. All costs must be allowable, reasonable, and necessary for the successful completion of the program. Costs must be specifically related to the services provided and comply with state and federal expenditure laws, rules and regulations. Costs that do not meet these criteria are disallowed.

In preparing the requested budget, applicants should be aware of the provisions in the following subsections.

#### **9.1.1. Allowed Direct Costs**

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

1. Salaries, including up to a three percent increase per year.
2. Background screening: Level II (if required) should be included under other expense category.
3. Tuition: To assure that the tuition waiver or reimbursement is related to the research project, a course description or class schedule must be submitted with the quarterly invoice that includes the tuition waiver or expenditure. Tuition waivers or support should be included in the approved Public Health Research Program Budget Template and the purpose of the tuition support must be included in the final Budget Narrative. Submitting class schedule or attestation of verification by the Principal Investigator with quarterly invoices is required for payment.
4. Fringe benefits
5. Supplies
6. Equipment, including 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.

7. Lab services
8. Consultant costs, provided they do not exceed 10 percent of the total budget
9. Patient-care costs
10. Animal-care costs
11. Committee fees for IRB or Institutional Animal Care and Use
12. Consortium or contractual costs
13. Fees to obtain data from the Florida Cancer Registry Data System and Florida Office of Vital Statistics.
14. 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, Florida Statutes, and in the [Reference Guide for State Expenditures](#). In order to implement appropriations in the General Appropriations Act for state travel and notwithstanding section 112.061, Florida Statutes, 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, grantees must submit a travel authorization form and travel reimbursement voucher form in every quarter in which they will charge travel to their grant budgets. Travel is only approved within the United States (U.S.). The State of Florida Authorization to Incur Travel Expenses and the State of Florida Voucher for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses forms must be used for all travel-related expenses unless the research institution's travel voucher/expenditure form has received prior approval from the Florida Department of Financial Services (DFS). Supporting documentation is required for all travel-related expenses e.g., receipts for flight, hotel (up to \$225/night), parking, rental car, gas, ground transportation, as well as registration, meeting agenda/schedule, and copy of any presentation(s) made. Travel forms and guidance are available on Biomedical Research Program's [Grant Management Forms and Resources](#) web page.
15. Research participant incentives in the form of cash, check, or gift card. Gift cards should not be purchased in bulk as tracking and inventory control can be difficult. Gift cards should be purchased as needed. If awarded, the original approved IRB protocol and consent form must be submitted to the Department before any participant incentive charges may be made to the grant. Each grant agreement executed will reference the approved IRB protocol in the method of payment section of each grant agreement.

### **9.1.2. Maximum Annual Base Salary Calculations**

Grant funds may be used to pay a proportional percentage of the base salary (based on effort) of any personnel named on the application for this grant. The maximum annual base salary used in calculating these payments must not exceed the Executive Level II annual salary rate of the Federal Executive Pay Scale that is in effect as of the application submission date. See the [Definitions](#) section of this FOA for more information about the Federal Executive Pay Scale. This salary cap excludes fringe benefits, facilities, and administrative (finance and accounting) expenses, and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties to

the applicant organization. This provision is consistent with the NIH salary limitations on grants and cooperative agreements.

#### **9.1.3. 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.

#### **9.1.4. 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 canNOT be paid for with grant funds:

1. Florida Department of Health personnel salary
2. Construction, renovation, or remodeling
3. International travel (including Canada)
4. Vehicles
5. Entertainment
6. Employment subsidies
7. Dues/Membership fees
8. Lobbying
9. Meals/Food (other than as part of travel costs)
10. Malpractice insurance premiums
11. Expenditures related to legal services, business filing fees, or other costs for visas, green card or similar processing fees

#### **9.2. Overlap Limits**

Applicants must ensure that their proposed project does not duplicate or significantly overlap, scientifically or financially, with other projects in which they or any key personnel are involved. Overlap, whether scientific or financial, or commitment of a project member's effort greater than 100% is prohibited.

#### **9.3. Protecting Intellectual Property**

Submitted materials are subject to the provisions of Article I, Section 24, Florida Constitution and Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, 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.

Applicants 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] 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 applicant so that he/she may substantiate and defend the claim. The Department will not provide legal representation to assert a confidentiality claim.

## 10. RESPONDING TO THIS FOA

### 10.1 Application Guidelines

The following application guidelines must be followed:

1. Applicants must register and submit an application through the online system accessible from the Biomedical Research Program's [Funding Opportunity Announcements](#) web page.
2. **Application materials not submitted in the specified manner and in the specified format will be disqualified from competition.**
3. Required signature pages such as budgets and letters of support, must be included in the appropriate section of the application as indicated in the online instructions. Online applications without scanned copies of these pages will be disqualified.
4. Other documentation and materials such as biographical sketches and other support must be converted to electronic format and placed in the appropriate section of the online application.
5. Peer reviewers evaluate only the materials in the application, and do not consider other sources of information.
6. The Department recommends that applications be submitted early. Applications submitted past the deadline will not be considered, regardless of the reason.
7. **Submission of an application is considered an acceptance of the terms and conditions of this FOA.**

#### 10.1.1. Duplicate Applications and Resubmission Policy

Eligible applicants can submit one application. Applicants who submitted but were not funded in the previous fiscal year funding competition may submit a revised application only one time. Applicants may submit either a new application or revised application from the previous fiscal year funding competition but cannot submit both.

#### 10.1.2. 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 [Key Dates](#) section of this FOA. 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.

### 10.1.3. Inclusion of Department Data

Applications for research that includes Department data must include a letter of support from the office that houses the data. For example, researchers conducting behavioral health research involving tobacco cessation and control data from the Department must include a letter of support from the [Tobacco Free Florida](#) program. Requests must include an overview of the data being requested from each data registry.

Following is the contact information for common Department data requests:

1. Bureau of Vital Statistics: Contact Gary Sammet at [VitalStats@flhealth.gov](mailto:VitalStats@flhealth.gov)
2. Florida Cancer Data System: Contact Heather Lake-Burger at [Heather.Lake-Burger@flhealth.gov](mailto:Heather.Lake-Burger@flhealth.gov)
3. Tobacco Free Florida Program: Contact Jean "Raymond" Calixte at [Jean.Calixte@flhealth.gov](mailto:Jean.Calixte@flhealth.gov)

## 10.2 Application Preparation

In preparing their application, applicants should be aware of the provisions in the following subsections.

### 10.2.1 Application Components

A complete grant application package must contain all required fields, including the components outlined below, in the online application accessible through the Biomedical Research Program's [Funding Opportunity Announcements](#) web page. Note: The online application will prompt applicants of required fields and character limits for each section.

**Table 4. Application Components**

Components	Instructions
<b>General Project Information</b>	<b>Required.</b> Identify general project information, including the applicant organization and the Corresponding Principal Investigator.
<b>General Audience Abstract</b> (3,500 maximum characters)	<b>Required.</b> Explain the proposed project in lay terms, including its relationship to the goals of the Florida Department of Health. This information must be included in the General Project Information section of the application.
<b>Scientific Abstract</b> (2,100 maximum characters)	<b>Required.</b> Provide the scientific description of the project. This description must be included in the General Project Information section of the application.
<b>Health Impact</b> (3,500 maximum characters)	<b>Required.</b> Describe how the proposed project impacts the health of Floridians. For the purposes of this FOA, "health impact" means the ability of the research to reduce morbidity and mortality from pediatric rare diseases. Applications must describe how the results of the research can provide information and evidence for changes in policy, improve health service delivery and quality of care, or improve disease prevention through improvements in health literacy and changes in health-related decision-making and practices over time. Consider possible long-range effects of applying knowledge gained in the research, or the ability of the research to

	support future research grant applications or publications or patents. Applicants will complete this in the General Project Information section of the application.
<b>Pediatric Rare Disease Relatedness</b> (2,100 maximum characters)	<b>Required.</b> Provide a clear explanation of how the project is related to a non-cancer pediatric rare disease. This explanation must be included in the General Project Information section of the application.
<b>Collaborator Information</b>	<b>Required.</b> Identify all key personnel involved in the project.
<b>Biographical Sketch</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required.</b> Upload bio-sketches of key personnel involved in the research. All bio-sketches must be uploaded as a single document in the format specified in the online system.
<b>Consultants</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required (if there are consultants).</b> Upload letters from all consultants confirming their roles in the project, including the rate/charge for consulting services. Letters must be uploaded as a single document.
<b>Research/Project Plan</b> (6,800 maximum characters)	<b>Required.</b> Describe the specific aims including the significance, innovation, and approach of the project. Provide a bibliography of any references cited and list facilities and other resources.
<b>Human Subjects</b>	<b>Required (if applicable).</b> Describe protections for human subjects involved in the research. If human subjects will be involved <b>at any time</b> 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.
<b>Vertebrate Animals</b>	<b>Required (if applicable).</b> Describe protections for animals involved in the research. If vertebrate animals will be used <b>at any time</b> in the research, the applicant must address all vertebrate animals' questions in the online application. If all questions are not answered, the application will be disqualified.
<b>Recombinant DNA Molecules</b>	<b>Required (if applicable).</b> Describe use of recombinant DNA molecules involved in the research.
<b>Survey Instruments</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required (if applicable).</b> Survey Instruments must be uploaded as a single document.
<b>Table, Image, or Graph</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Optional.</b> Images, graphs, and figures may be included with the online application; however, these cannot appear in the text of the application. Instead, they must be uploaded separately in this section. Figure legends need to be included in the document. Upload a single document containing images, graphs, and figures. There is no page limit on the number of images, graphs, and figures.

<b>Budget Template</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required.</b> The budget must explain the planned spending. See appendix for a sample of the template. The budget template can be downloaded within the online application system. The completed budget template form must be uploaded as a single document. For applications involving collaborations with different universities or research institutions, the lead institution should complete the budget form and include collaborating institutions as a contractual expense.
<b>Budget Narrative</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required.</b> The Budget Narrative must explain in detail how funds from each budget category will be spent for each year of project funding.
<b>Letters of Support</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required (if applicable).</b> If applying for a grant involving Department of Health data, a signed letter of support must be uploaded for each dataset owned by the Department. Letters of support are not required for other types of research. Upload a single document in the appropriate upload field. There is no limit to the number of letters of support that may be submitted.
<b>Work Plan</b> (100 MB maximum file size)	<b>Required.</b> The Work Plan must include a clearly defined evaluation plan with measurable outcomes that align with the goals and objectives of the proposed research. Applicants should outline the specific activities, timelines, responsible personnel, and performance metrics that will be used to assess progress. The Work Plan should describe how success will be measured, including the tools and methods for data collection and analysis. Outcomes should be realistic, time-bound, and quantifiable wherever possible, and the plan should demonstrate how evaluation results will inform the ongoing development and impact of the project.

Applicants 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 [Requirements for Protecting Intellectual Property](#) section of this FOA for more information.

### 10.3. Application Submission

In preparing their application submission, applicants should be aware of the provisions in the following subsections.

#### 10.3.1. Online Application Portal

The online system will be available to accept applications for this FOA on the date published in the [Key Dates](#) section of this FOA.

To complete the online application process:

1. Applicants must register to access the online application and forms. During registration, complete the brief project profile. Information entered into the registration fields will carry forward to the application. Registration will be acknowledged with an email message containing login instructions and a username and password.
2. Complete the online application form. Deviations may be grounds for the Biomedical Research Program 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. If an application is accidentally submitted, contact program staff for assistance.
4. An application cannot be changed after the submission due date. Errata sheets or replacement files will not be accepted after the application deadline. If an application has been submitted and the applicant wishes to change the submitted application before the deadline, they must contact program staff so that the application can be unsubmitted. Then, the applicant can change and resubmit the application. The change and resubmission must occur before the submission deadline. Refer to the [Contact Information](#) section of this FOA for information on how to contact program staff.

#### **10.3.2. Application Submission Guidelines**

Before it can be submitted, the application must contain all of the required sections identified in the [Application Components](#) section of this FOA. Applications must comply with the character/file size limitations specified in the online application. Appendices are not allowed.

Uploaded files should be titled by the categories listed in the Application Components section. Documents that require signatures must be printed, signed, scanned, and then uploaded in PDF format. Formatting guidelines for all documentation submitted with the online application are as follows:

1. **Language:** English
2. **Document Format:** PDF only
3. **Font Type/Size:** Arial, 11-point for the text and no less than 10-point for table figures and legends
4. **Font Color:** Black
5. **Line Spacing:** Single
6. **Page Size:** 8.5 x 11 inches
7. **Margins:** at least 1 inch, all directions, excluding required headers and footers
8. **Color and High-Resolution Images:** Images, graphs, figures, and other illustrations may be submitted as part of the online application. Applicants should include text to explain illustrations that may be difficult to interpret when printed in black and white.
9. **Scanning Resolution:** Images and figures must be of lowest reasonable resolution that permits clarity and readability. Unnecessarily large files will NOT be accepted, especially those that include only text. However, all application components (including uploaded attachments) must be clear, sharp, and easy to read when scanned or converted to PDF format.
10. **References:** Applicants should use a citation style that includes the full name of the article and that lists at least the first 3 authors. Official journal abbreviations may be used. An example is included below; however, other citation styles meeting these parameters are also acceptable as long as the journal information is stated. URLs of publications referenced in the application maybe included.

Smith, P.T., Doe, J., White, J.M., et al (2006). Elaborating on a novel mechanism for cancer progression. *Journal of Cancer Research*, 135: 45-67.

11. **Internet URLs:** Applicants are encouraged to provide the URLs of publications referenced in the application; however, applicants must not include URLs directing reviewers to websites containing additional information about the proposed research.
12. **Headers and Footers:** These should not be used unless they are part of a provided template. Page numbers may be included in the footer (see Page Numbering section below).
13. **Page Numbering:** Pages should be numbered at the bottom right corner of each page.

#### 10.3.3. Budget Forms

1. **General Instructions:** Budget documents are in Excel format and available in the online application and on the Biomedical Research Program's [Grant Management Forms and Resources](#) web page. When calculating the budget summary and narrative be sure to use whole dollars. The budget summary contains totals for each fiscal year and calculations for determining total grant costs. The budget summary must correspond to the calculations in the budget narrative. The budget contains two parts, Attachment V Budget Summary and Budget Narrative:
  - a. The **Budget Summary** provides an overview of the estimated budget for the life of the grant by category and by state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Do not use calendar months to calculate the budget. The grant start date is anticipated to begin April 1, 2025 (for fiscal year 2025-2026). The first fiscal year grant budget should be calculated for three months. Each remaining year will be for 12 months (July – June). The final budget year should be calculated for nine months.
  - b. 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.
  - c. **Personnel/Fringe:** The name, staff member's 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.
    - i. **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.
    - ii. **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 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.

## **11. APPLICATION REVIEW**

The Department will use a multi-step evaluation process before making award determinations for all applications submitted in response to this FOA. The Department will consider the outcome of each of these evaluation steps in making final funding recommendations to the State Surgeon General.

### **11.1. Administrative Review**

Application materials not received according to the date, time, and location specified in the [Key Dates](#) section of this FOA will be disqualified. Each application submitted by the deadline indicated in the Key Dates section 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.

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

The Department reserves the right to disqualify any and 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 affects the interests of Florida. At its option, the Biomedical Research Program may correct minor irregularities but is under no obligation to do so.

### **11.2. Peer Review**

Department peer reviewers will assess the overall impact of all qualified/eligible applications. Peer review panels comprise reviewers with expertise in the substance and methodology of the proposed project. Individual reviewers will review and rate applications, including assessing pediatric rare disease-relatedness, health impact, examining budget requests, and recommending the level of support necessary to complete the work. Reviewers will be nationally prominent individuals drawn from various sectors in the life sciences including universities, government agencies, and industry. Reviewers will be located outside of Florida and will not be associated with any Florida-based public or private entity working in the life sciences. Before being granted access to proposals, every reviewer will be required to accept the terms of a Confidential Nondisclosure Agreement. Reviewers are required to disclose financial interests to the Department, and the Department determines if any disclosed financial interests are conflicts of interests. Reviewers with financial conflicts of interest are not allowed to review applications. Reviewers will receive honoraria for their participation and are expected to set a high standard for scientific excellence. The number and composition of peer review panels will be determined by the number and scientific range of applications received.

### **11.2.1. Overall Impact Score**

Similar to the NIH, peer reviewers will use a standard rating format, as follows:

1. **Exceptional:** Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses.
2. **Outstanding:** Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses.
3. **Excellent:** Very strong with only some minor weaknesses.
4. **Very Good:** Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses.
5. **Good:** Strong but also at least one moderate weakness.
6. **Satisfactory:** Some strengths and some moderate weaknesses.
7. **Fair:** Some strengths but with at least one major weakness.
8. **Marginal:** A few strengths and a few major weaknesses.
9. **Poor:** Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses.

Peer reviewers will rate all proposals for overall impact on the following criteria:

1. **Significance:** The importance of the topic being addressed.
2. **Investigators:** The qualifications of the key personnel contributing to the project.
3. **Innovation:** The potential for the project to shift current paradigms.
4. **Approach:** The appropriateness of the planned strategy, methodology, and analyses.
5. **Environment:** The suitability of institutional support, equipment, and physical resources.
6. **Health Impact:** The health impact on the people of Florida.

### **11.2.2. Other Review Considerations**

Individual peer reviewers will rate the relationship of the project to the advancement toward prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and/or cure of pediatric rare disease. Peer reviewers will be asked the question: "Has the applicant made a compelling case for a strong pediatric rare disease relationship?" Peer reviewers will also identify any concerns regarding the proposed budget. Reviewer concerns regarding protection of human and/or animal subjects will be considered.

### **11.3. Programmatic Review**

The Department and the RDAC will consider the peer review scores in a manner that eliminates or appropriately manages any conflicts of interest. Other programmatic interests, such as the availability of funds, and Program goals and preferences, will be used to form a funding recommendation to the State Surgeon General.

### **11.4. Evaluation Reports**

For all eligible and qualified applications, an evaluation report will be sent to the researcher.

## **12. AWARD NOTIFICATION**

### **12.1. Notification of Funding Decision**

The applicant organization and the 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.

## **12.2. Requests for Reconsideration**

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

# **13. POST-AWARD GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS**

## **13.1. 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 is required as part of the grant award process. The Department reserves the right to change or modify the Terms and Conditions as needed. By submitting a grant application pursuant to this FOA, all applicants acknowledge this requirement. The Terms and Conditions include the post-award schedule of deliverables.

## **13.2. 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 pediatric rare disease research, a list of presentations, a list of publications in peer-reviewed journals, commercialization results and any invention disclosures, patent filings, and patents received.

Grantees are required to follow Department policies for reporting to the Department unanticipated problems and non-compliance involving the research.

## **13.3. 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 Department funded projects/research. For more information on the NIH Open Access Policy, visit <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/>.

## **13.4. 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 pediatric rare disease research and patient care that the proposal has had on Floridians living with pediatric rare disease.

### **13.5 Financial Reports**

Detailed annual financial reports will be required for all funded projects. These reports will state, by line item, all expenditures made as a direct result of activities conducted through the funded project during the most recent completed fiscal year.

In addition, detailed quarterly expenditure reports will be required for all funded projects. These reports will state, by line item, all expenditures made as a direct result of activities conducted through the funded project during the most recent completed quarter.

## **14. DEFINITIONS**

1. **Applicant:** The entity/organization applying for grant funds.
2. **Application materials:** Any documents or information to be included in the application.
3. **Collaborator:** An individual involved with the PI in the scientific development or execution of the project. These individuals typically devote a specific percent of effort to the project and are identified as key personnel. A collaborator may be employed by or affiliated with either the applicant/grantee institution or an institution participating in the project under a consortium or contractual agreement.
4. **Commercialization:** The process of developing markets and producing and delivering products or services for sale (whether by the originating party or by others).
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI):** An individual who serves as a secondary PI. The Co-PI shares responsibility and accountability to Applicant officials, the Department, and the Collaborative for the proper conduct of the project.
8. **Corresponding Principal Investigator (PI):** 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. (See the [Eligibility](#) section of this FOA for details regarding PI requirements.)
9. **Department:** The Florida Department of Health.

10. **Eligible Institution:** Any university, research hospital, Florida-based Veteran's Administration, or established research institute in Florida.
11. **Established Research Institute:** An established research institute eligible for Program funding is an organization that is any Florida nonprofit covered under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes, with a physical location in Florida, whose stated purpose and powers are scientific, biomedical or biotechnological research and/or development and is legally registered with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.
12. **Feasibility:** The practical extent to which a project is capable of being successfully performed within the requested time and for the awarded money.
13. **Federal Executive Pay Scale, Executive Level II:** The U.S. Office of Personnel Management establishes executive pay schedules each year, normally around the first month of the calendar year. To view the current [Executive Senior Level](#) pay scale, visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management website.
14. **Financial Contact:** The person responsible for financial reporting in connection with sponsored research projects.
15. **Full-time Faculty:** Full-time Faculty positions are defined as teaching, clinical, and research appointments carrying classroom teaching, laboratory teaching, clinical teaching or service, or research assignments equal to at least nine months per fiscal year or 0.75 FTE. This includes tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track appointments.
16. **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.
17. **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):** A committee that oversees the ethical care and use of animals in research, teaching, and testing activities within institutions.
18. **Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC):** A committee that reviews and approves research that involves potentially hazardous biological agents.
19. **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** A committee that reviews research involving human subjects to determine if the research complies with laws, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to 45 CFR 46, and 21 CFR 50, 56, 312, and 812 as applicable.
20. **Grantee:** The institution to which a grant is awarded.
21. **Key Personnel:** Project key personnel include the PI, Co-PI(s), Project Director, and Mentor (in the case of directed research projects involving post-doctoral researcher). These personnel contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive way, whether salaries are requested or not.
22. **Overlap, Commitment:** Commitment overlap occurs when any project staff has time commitments exceeding 100 percent. This is the case whether the grant includes salary support for the effort. While information on other support is only requested for the Corresponding Principal Investigator, no individual on the project may have combined commitments more than 100%.

23. **Overlap, Financial:** Financial overlap occurs when duplicate or equivalent budget items (e.g., equipment, salary) are requested in an application but are already funded or provided for by another source.
24. **Overlap, Scientific:** Scientific overlap occurs when: (1) substantially the same research is funded by two or more different funding sources, or (2) a specific research objective and the research design for accomplishing that objective are the same or closely related in two or more awards, regardless of the funding source.
25. **Radiation Safety Committee (RSC):** A group established within a research organization to oversee and enforce policies regarding the safe use of radioactive materials and radiation-producing equipment.
26. **Sponsored Research Official (SRO):** The individual responsible for facilitating and managing sponsored research at a research institution.
27. **Terms and Conditions:** An agreement whereby a project is carried out by the Grantee and one or more other organizations that are separate legal entities. In this arrangement, the Grantee contracts for the performance of a substantial and/or a significant portion of the activities to be conducted under the grant.

## 15. CONTACT INFORMATION

### 15.1. Helpdesk

Direct all questions about the online application process and related issues (e.g., username and password problems) to [Help.FLDOH@orau.org](mailto:Help.FLDOH@orau.org).

### 15.2. Scientific and Programmatic Questions

This FOA is issued by the Florida Department of Health. The Public Health Research Unit manages the FOA and is responsible for answering all applicant questions. Applicants and persons acting on their behalf may contact the Department in writing via email as indicated below regarding programmatic issues. Applicants who attempt to contact Biomedical Research Advisory Council members regarding this FOA may have their applications disqualified.

To ensure equal access by all applicants to the questions and answers, all programmatic questions must be submitted in writing via email to [research@flhealth.gov](mailto:research@flhealth.gov). Answers to questions will be available on the Biomedical Research Program's [Funding Opportunity Announcements](#) web page. Answers to submitted questions will be posted in groups as they are received and published on the website, according to the schedule in the [Key Dates](#) section of this FOA.