

FY 2026-27 Questions & Answers

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Emailed questions regarding the fiscal year 2026-27 Biomedical Research Advisory Council (BRAC) Grants Funding Opportunity Announcement were accepted through 5:00 p.m. ET on August 19, 2026. Following are the questions received and their corresponding answers for the William G. “Bill” Bankhead Jr., and David Coley Cancer Research Program, the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program, and the Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative.

1. May a Research Infrastructure application be submitted under the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program for infrastructure addressing tobacco-related diseases, including cardiovascular and pulmonary disease? For such an application, how should the required Cancer-Relatedness section be addressed when the project is not limited to cancer?

The James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program supports research initiatives addressing “the health care problems of Floridians in the areas of tobacco-related cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pulmonary disease.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, pages 6-7.

Research Infrastructure is listed as a grant category for the combined Bankhead-Coley / James and Esther King Programs, with a maximum award of \$1,500,000 and maximum duration of 36 months. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 15. Applications must also comply with the applicable Research Focus, Research Priorities, and Research Infrastructure requirements described in the FOA.

The Cancer-Relatedness component is identified as a required application component and directs applicants to “Provide a clear explanation of how the project is related to cancer.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 28. The FOA does not provide a separate exemption or alternative Cancer-Relatedness instruction for James and Esther King Program applications focused on tobacco-related diseases other than cancer.

2. Are food costs allowable when the food itself is part of a clinical or socio-behavioral research intervention, and may those costs instead be supported by another funding source?

The FOA states that the following shall not be paid for with grant funds: “Meals/Food (other than as part of travel costs).” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 24. The FOA does not provide an exception to this prohibition for food that is part of a research intervention.

With respect to funding from another source, the FOA requires applicants to ensure that the proposed project does not duplicate or have significant scientific or financial overlap with other projects. Scientific, financial, and commitment overlap is prohibited. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, pages 17 and 24. The FOA does not otherwise specifically address the use of another funding source to support a project component that may not be charged to this grant.

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3. May an out-of-state investigator serve as a paid consultant on a Florida-led project, and what limitations apply?

For consultants, the FOA provides that consultant costs are allowable provided they do not exceed 10% of the total budget. Consultant costs must be based on a reasonable hourly or daily rate and supported by a detailed scope of work, justification of qualifications, and a Letter of Commitment. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 21.

The FOA also requires that all grant-funded activities, work, and expenditures occur in Florida. The Department “may make exceptions if the service is essential and only provided outside Florida, and if the amount is less than 10% of the total award.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 16.

4. May a PI with an active Bankhead-Coley award submit a new Bankhead-Coley application for a different, unrelated project?

The FOA does not state that serving as PI on an active Bankhead-Coley award, by itself, makes an individual ineligible to serve as PI on a new application.

However, the FOA provides that a PI shall not “Apply for the same research project for which he or she was a previously funded grant recipient,” and states that “The aims and experiments of a new proposal must be significantly different from any previously funded grants.” The PI also may not submit duplicate projects or projects with significant scientific or financial overlap. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 17.

The FOA further prohibits scientific, financial, and commitment overlap, including project-member effort greater than 100%. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 24.

5. For a New Investigator Research application, how should the required senior investigator mentor be identified in the LOI and application, and must the mentor hold a particular academic rank or be located in the same department or institution?

The FOA provides: “New Investigator Research (NIR): The NIR grant category fosters development of new investigators so they may undertake independent research that is competitive for national research funding. New investigators must have been full-time faculty for no more than six years and must work under the mentorship of a senior investigator.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 12.

The LOI must include the “Names of other research personnel,” and the application requires identification of all key personnel and submission of biographical sketches for key personnel involved in the research. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, pages 27-28.

The FOA does not further define “senior investigator” or require that the mentor hold a particular academic rank, be tenured, or be located in the same department or university.

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6. How many applications may an applicant institution submit to each of the three grant programs: one or two?

For purposes of Section 11.1.1, the term “Applicant” is intended to refer to the Principal Investigator (PI), rather than the applicant institution. Accordingly, the application limits in Section 11.1.1 apply at the PI level and do not establish an institution-wide limit on the number of applications that may be submitted.

Section 11.1.1 states: “Applicants can submit: 1. One new application to the Bankhead-Coley Program or one revised application, but not both. 2. One new application to the James and Esther King Program or one revised application, but not both. 3. One new application to the Bella Initiative or one revised application, but not both.”

The section also states that “Applicants cannot submit more than two applications or substantially similar applications to the same grant funding program.” Each PI must comply with the submission limits stated in Section 11.1.1. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 25.

7. May an individual apply for a Bankhead-Coley or Bella Initiative grant based on status as a Florida medical marijuana patient, and can an email serve as the required Letter of Intent?

The FOA provides that applications for biomedical research funding “may be submitted by any Florida-based universities or established research institutes.” Grant applications failing to meet the eligibility requirements will be rejected. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 16.

The FOA defines an “Established Research Institute” as a Florida-based nonprofit organization that is legally registered with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations, holds current active status under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes, maintains a physical location in Florida, and has a stated purpose that includes scientific, biomedical, or biotechnological research and/or development. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 39.

An email does not satisfy the LOI submission requirement. The FOA requires the LOI to be submitted through the online system by the deadline, and applications without a timely LOI are not eligible and will not be considered. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 18.

8. Are leukemia and other blood-cancer projects eligible and prioritized even though blood cancers are not among the six cancers receiving stated preference?

The FOA expressly identifies “Research focused on sarcomas, or leukemia and other blood cancers” as a research priority. The FOA separately states that preference will be given to applications addressing at least one of six listed cancer categories: lung, breast, prostate, colon, melanoma, and pediatric-specific cancers. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 9.

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Accordingly, research focused on leukemia and other blood cancers is specifically identified as a priority under the FOA. The six identified cancer categories are subject to the separate stated preference described in the Research Priorities section.

9. Is a separate Research Plan required, or are applicants required to submit only the application components listed in the FY 2026-27 FOA, including the Work Plan?

Regarding application components, Table 6 identifies the required components of a complete grant application. A separate component titled “Research Plan” is not identified. The FOA requires, among other components, Specific Aims and a Work Plan. The Specific Aims section must address “the significance, innovation, and approach of the project,” and the Work Plan must include a clearly defined evaluation plan with measurable outcomes, activities, timelines, responsible personnel, and performance metrics. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, pages 28-30.

10. May a Florida-based for-profit small business serve as the lead applicant for a Bankhead-Coley grant? If not, may an eligible Florida research institution serve as the applicant and include the Florida-based business as a subcontractor or consortium partner?

The FOA provides that applications for biomedical research funding “may be submitted by any Florida-based universities or established research institutes.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 16.

The FOA defines an “Established Research Institute” as: “Any Florida-based nonprofit organization that is legally registered with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations, and holds current active status under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes.” The definition also requires the organization to maintain a physical location in Florida and have a stated purpose that includes scientific, biomedical, or biotechnological research and/or development. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 39.

Accordingly, a for-profit small business does not meet the FOA's definition of an eligible lead applicant based solely on its status as a Florida-based for-profit business.

The FOA does permit consortium or contractual costs for formal partnerships with other institutions or organizations carrying out a substantive portion of the research. Each consortium or contractual relationship must be supported by a detailed budget, budget justification, scope of work, and Letter of Commitment. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, pages 21-22. Subcontracts must also be described in the Department-approved budget template and are subject to pre-approval. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 16.

11. May a PI submit two new Bankhead-Coley applications in different grant categories, or is the PI limited to one new Bankhead-Coley application overall?

For purposes of Section 11.1.1, leadership has clarified that the term “Applicant” is intended to refer to the Principal Investigator (PI), rather than the applicant institution. Section 11.1.1

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states that applicants can submit “One new application to the Bankhead-Coley Program or one revised application, but not both.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 25.

Accordingly, the specific program-by-program instruction provides for one new Bankhead-Coley application per PI, or one revised Bankhead-Coley application, but not both, regardless of grant category.

12. Do the LOI character limits, including the 3,500-character limit for the General Audience Abstract, include spaces?

The FOA states that the LOI General Audience Abstract may contain “no more than 3,500 characters.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 30. The FOA does not specify whether spaces are included in the character count.

Applicants must comply with the character limits displayed and enforced by the online application system. Questions about the online application process and related technical issues may be directed to Help.FLDOH@orau.org. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 41.

13. May the same investigator serve as Corresponding PI on more than one distinct application within the same research program if the projects are scientifically and financially distinct?

For purposes of Section 11.1.1, leadership has clarified that the term “Applicant” is intended to refer to the Principal Investigator (PI). Section 11.1.1 states that a PI may submit one new application to a given program or one revised application to that program, but not both. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 25.

Accordingly, under the specific program-by-program instruction in Section 11.1.1, a PI may serve as Corresponding PI on one new application, or one revised application, within the same grant funding program.

14. May the same investigator serve as Corresponding PI on one application to each of the Live Like Bella, Bankhead-Coley, and James and Esther King programs?

For purposes of Section 11.1.1, leadership has clarified that the term “Applicant” is intended to refer to the PI. Section 11.1.1 provides separate submission limits for the Bankhead-Coley Program, the James and Esther King Program, and the Bella Initiative. It also states that applications submitted to the three programs must be different and may not be the same or substantially similar, as determined by the Department. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 25.

Accordingly, a PI may submit one application to each of the three programs, subject to the new-versus-revised application limits for each program and all requirements concerning scientific, financial, and commitment overlap.

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15. Within the same program, may an investigator serve as Corresponding PI on one application and as Co-PI on another distinct application led by a different PI?

Yes, subject to the requirements of the FOA. The FOA states: “The PI may serve as Co-PI or other role on other applications, provided they are not over-committed.” The PI may not submit the same project through another investigator or submit duplicate projects or projects with significant scientific or financial overlap. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 17.

Accordingly, a PI may serve as Co-PI on a separate application provided the projects are distinct, there is no prohibited scientific or financial overlap, and the investigator is not overcommitted.

16. May additional personnel or collaborators be added at the full application stage if they were not identified in the LOI?

The FOA requires the LOI to include the names of other research personnel and consortium partners, collaborators, and research personnel, if any. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 30. The full application also requires applicants to identify all key personnel involved in the project and to upload biographical sketches of key personnel. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 28.

The FOA states that some LOI fields — including the PI, Lead Institution, Research Project Title, Research Priority, Mechanism of Support, and Keywords — will not be editable after the LOI deadline and will become part of the main application. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 31. The FOA does not expressly state whether additional personnel or collaborators may be added after the LOI deadline.

17. Would a Live Like Bella project using a large prospective database to conduct comparative effectiveness research on treatment regimens for children with cancer fit the Emerging Therapeutics and Technologies grant category?

Emerging Therapeutics and Technologies is an available grant category under the Bella Initiative. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 16. The FOA describes this category as supporting research on emerging therapeutics and technologies used in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and identifies “comparative effectiveness trials of emerging treatments” as an example. It also states that studies focused on innovations in cancer diagnosis and treatment fall under this mechanism. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 11.

Applicants should select the grant category that best aligns with the proposed research and ensure that the project satisfies all applicable Bella Initiative and grant-category requirements.

18. For the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program, must cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pulmonary disease research also be related to tobacco use, or does the “tobacco-related” qualifier apply only to cancer?

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The FOA describes the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program as supporting research related to tobacco-related diseases. It specifically identifies a program goal to “Expand the foundation of biomedical knowledge relating to the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and cure of diseases related to tobacco use, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pulmonary disease.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 7.

The Research Focus section likewise states that James and Esther King Program applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project is relevant to “tobacco related diseases.” See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 7. Accordingly, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pulmonary disease projects submitted to the James and Esther King Program must demonstrate relevance to tobacco use.

19. Are any direct-cost categories excluded from the base used to calculate indirect costs, or should indirect costs be calculated using total direct costs without exclusions?

The FOA states that indirect costs “may not exceed 15% of the total direct costs requested” and that applicants must calculate indirect costs based on their institution’s approved indirect cost rate or, if no negotiated rate exists, on the 15% maximum allowable. Applicants must provide the rate being applied and its basis, a clear calculation, and any required justification. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 23.

The FOA does not identify specific direct-cost categories that must be excluded from the indirect-cost calculation base. It further states that subcontract or consortium indirect costs should be detailed separately, with supporting documentation as needed. See FY 2026-27 BRAC FOA, page 23.
