

Florida Department
of Health

FY 2025–26 BRAC Award Recommendations Update

Prepared for Dr. Daniel Armstrong and CCRAB discussion

Biomedical Research Advisory Council Members

Current roster for CCRAB/BRAC discussion; Dr. Vidrine has requested to step down.

Member	Affiliation / Role	Appointing seat / status
Daniel Armstrong, PhD Chair	University of Miami Miller School of Medicine	American Cancer Society
Stephen Black, PhD	Director, Center for Translational Science Florida International University	Governor
Shaye Moskowitz, PhD	Neurosciences Medical Director Broward Health Physicians Group	Governor
Akram Shibani, PhD	Ascension Medical Group St. Vincent's Lung Institute	Governor
Nicole de Lara Puente	Chief Executive Officer Live Like Bella® Childhood Cancer Foundation	Governor
Guilherme Oliveira, MD, MBA	Tampa General Hospital University of South Florida	House of Representatives
Roxana S. Dronca, MD	Director, Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Center	House of Representatives
Tushar Patel, MB, ChB	Mayo Clinic Jacksonville	Senate
Jennifer I. Vidrine, PhD, MS	Assistant Center Director of Research Community Partnerships Moffitt Cancer Center	Senate Requested to step down; replacement pending

Note: Membership list carried forward from the Spring CCRAB/BRAC presentation and updated per Dr. Armstrong's direction regarding Dr. Vidrine.

FY 2025–26 Award Recommendations

Cross-program summary of BRAC recommendations and high-scoring unfunded applications.

Bankhead-Coley
14 awards
\$8.07M recommended

James & Esther King
9 awards
\$6.67M recommended

Live Like Bella
6 awards
\$2.55M recommended

Program	Applications received	Advanced to review	Recommended awards	Recommended amount	1.0–3.5 not funded
Bankhead-Coley	143	100	14	\$8,070,345	39
James & Esther King	55	31	9	\$6,671,900	1
Live Like Bella	36	36	6	\$2,549,500	4
Total / Combined	234	167	29	\$17,291,745	44

Note: “1.0–3.5 not funded” counts applications with an overall impact score from 1.0 through 3.5 that were not included in the recommended award set.

Cross-Program Funding Snapshot

Recommended awards and unmet high-scoring demand by program.

Recommended awards



1.0–3.5 applications not funded



Recommended funding (\$M)



Bankhead-Coley

FY 2025–26 BRAC award recommendations

14 recommended awards totaling \$8.07M.

Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program

Recommended awards
14
from 100 reviewed

Recommended amount
\$8.07M
\$8.075M available

1.0–3.5 not funded
39
53 total in score range

Funding utilization
100%
of available dollars

Awards by mechanism



Awards by institution



Key point: 14 proposals were recommended within available funding, while 39 additional applications scored from 1.0–3.5 but were not funded.

Bankhead-Coley Funded Projects (1 of 3)

Investigator, institution, project title, mechanism, and recommended amount.

Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program

Grant	PI	Institution	Project Title	Mechanism	Amount
26B01	Shoumin Zhu, PhD	Univ. of Miami	Targeting HDAC2-NOTCH1 to Reverse Immune Evasion in Gastric Cancer	NIR	\$300,000
26B02	Florian Karreth, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Defining the role of MAFG in melanocyte transformation and melanoma development	Bridge	\$100,000
26B03	Priyamvada Rai, PhD	Univ. of Miami	Investigating a clinically actionable immunometabolic axis as a novel link between diet-driven obesity and poor prostate...	Discovery Science	\$582,000
26B04	Lixin Wan, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Functional characterization of the SPOP-BRAF-mTORC1 signaling axis in melanoma pathogenesis	Bridge	\$100,000
26B05	Peter Kanetsky, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Boosting response to immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy for melanoma patients with aerobic exercise	Clinical/Socio-behavioral	\$1,673,110

Bankhead-Coley Funded Projects (2 of 3)

Investigator, institution, project title, mechanism, and recommended amount.

Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program

Grant	PI	Institution	Project Title	Mechanism	Amount
26B06	Chiara La Tessa, PhD	Univ. of Miami	Risk-Adaptive Machine Learning to Preserve Quality of Life in Head and Neck Proton Therapy Patients	Discovery Science	\$582,000
26B07	Chengguo Xing, PhD	Univ. of Florida	DHM as a Novel Anticancer Agent Against NSCLC via LKB1 Functional Restoration	Bridge	\$100,000
26B08	Alex Jaeger, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Targeting the antigen landscape induced by KRAS inhibitors in lung cancer	Discovery Science	\$582,000
26B09	Shannon Christy, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	BRIDGE: Building Routes to Increased Detection with Guidance & Education in cervical cancer screening	Clinical/Socio-behavioral	\$1,423,235
26B10	Maria Figueroa, MD	Univ. of Miami	PDZD2, a novel driver and therapeutic for AML	Discovery Science	\$582,000

Bankhead-Coley Funded Projects (3 of 3)

Investigator, institution, project title, mechanism, and recommended amount.

Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program

Grant	PI	Institution	Project Title	Mechanism	Amount
26B11	Gina DeNicola, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Targeting serine synthesis as a metabolic vulnerability of melanoma and lung cancer	Discovery Science	\$582,000
26B12	Rana Falahat, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Engineering tertiary lymphoid-like structures to overcome melanoma immunotherapy resistance	NIR	\$300,000
26B13	Marcelo Bonini, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Sulfur-Heteroaratinoid A2 (SHetA2) as a novel pharmacologic treatment for metastatic breast cancer.	Emerging Therapeutics	\$582,000
26B14	Ramiro Verdun, PhD	Univ. of Miami	Synthetic Lethality Between Impaired Transcriptional Shutdown and Platinum-Induced DNA Damage	Discovery Science	\$582,000

Recommended awards by mechanism, institution, and research priority.

Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program



James & Esther King

FY 2025–26 BRAC award recommendations

James & Esther King Award Summary

9 recommended awards totaling \$6.67M.

James & Esther King Biomedical Research Program

Recommended awards 9 from 31 reviewed	Recommended amount \$6.67M \$6.6725M available	1.0–3.5 not funded 1 Proposal 20030	Funding utilization 100% of available dollars
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Awards by mechanism

Discovery Science	5
Clinical/Socio-behavioral	2
High-Risk/High-Reward Di...	1
Emerging Therapeutics	1

Awards by institution

Univ. of Miami	3
Univ. of Florida	3
Moffitt Cancer Center	2
UCF	1

Portfolio note: Proposal 20030 was not recommended; funding moved to 20057 to broaden cancer-type coverage and include Emerging Therapeutics.

James & Esther King Funded Projects (1 of 2)

Investigator, institution, project title, mechanism, and recommended amount.

James & Esther King Biomedical Research Program

Grant	PI	Institution	Project Title	Mechanism	Amount
26K01	Claudia Andl, PhD	UCF	Cellular Stress Pathways as Therapeutic Entry Points in E-Cigarette and Nicotine-Pouch Toxicity	Discovery Science	\$580,000
26K02	Vani Simmons, PhD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Leveraging Immersive Mobile Technology for Vaping Cessation among Emerging Adults	Clinical/Socio-behavioral	\$1,450,300
26K03	Kunjan Dave, PhD	Univ. of Miami	Impact of Nicotine Exposure on Hematoma Progression and Outcomes in Intracerebral Hemorrhage	Discovery Science	\$580,200
26K04	Medhi Wangpaichitr, PhD	Univ. of Miami	Precision Tryptophan Repletion to Prevent Relapse and Metastasis in Non-small Cell Lung Cancer	High-Risk/High-Reward Discovery	\$290,100
26K05	Olga Guryanova, MD, PhD	Univ. of Florida	The impact of clonal hematopoiesis on the development of obesity and metabolic syndrome	Discovery Science	\$580,200

James & Esther King Funded Projects (2 of 2)

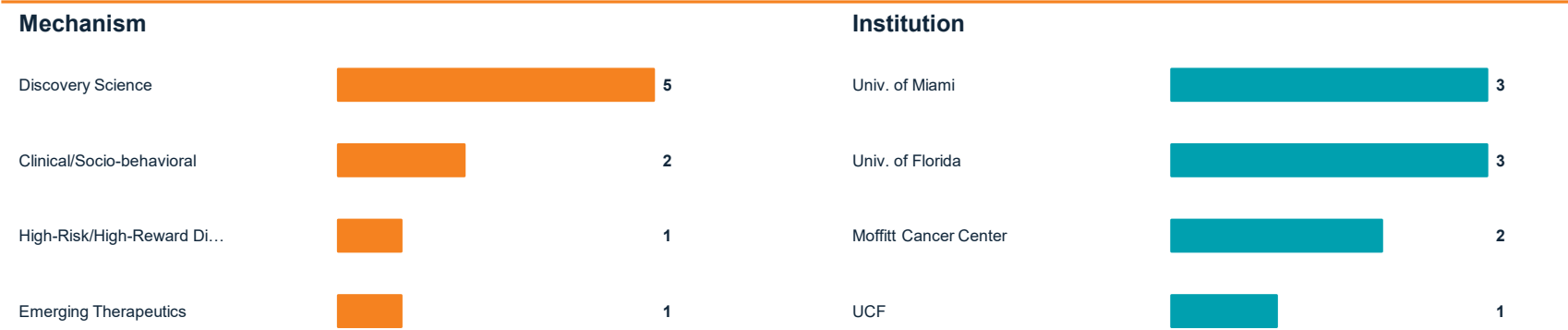
Investigator, institution, project title, mechanism, and recommended amount.

James & Esther King Biomedical Research Program

Grant	PI	Institution	Project Title	Mechanism	Amount
26K06	Michael Poch, MD	Moffitt Cancer Center	Triple threat: Using combination therapy to enhance intravesical TIL therapy for recurrent bladder cancer	Clinical/Socio-behavioral	\$1,450,500
26K07	Ravindran Caspa Gokulan, PhD	Univ. of Miami	New mechanisms of esophageal tumorigenesis by e-cigarette exposure	Discovery Science	\$580,200
26K08	Qianqian Song, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Structure-Aware Modeling of Alternative Polyadenylation for Cancer Regulation and Neoantigen Discovery	Discovery Science	\$580,200
26K09	Kristianna Fredenburg, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Characterization and therapeutic implications of ABCC1/CD206 niche in advanced-stage laryngeal cancer	Emerging Therapeutics	\$580,200

Recommended awards by mechanism, institution, and disease focus.

James & Esther King Biomedical Research Program



Representative disease-focus grouping

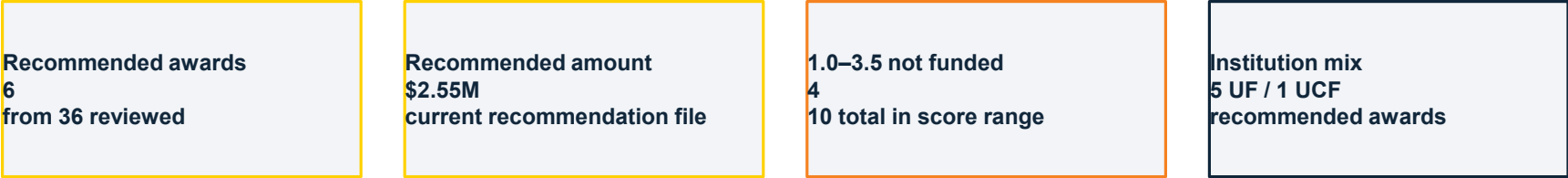
Disease focus	Count
Lung / tobacco-related cancer	5
Other tobacco-related diseases / stroke / metabolic	2
Bladder / head & neck / laryngeal	2

Live Like Bella

FY 2025–26 BRAC award recommendations

6 recommended awards totaling \$2.55M.

Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative



Awards by mechanism



Awards by institution



The recommended portfolio emphasizes pediatric brain cancers, osteosarcoma, ependymoma, neuroblastoma, leukemia, and sarcomas.

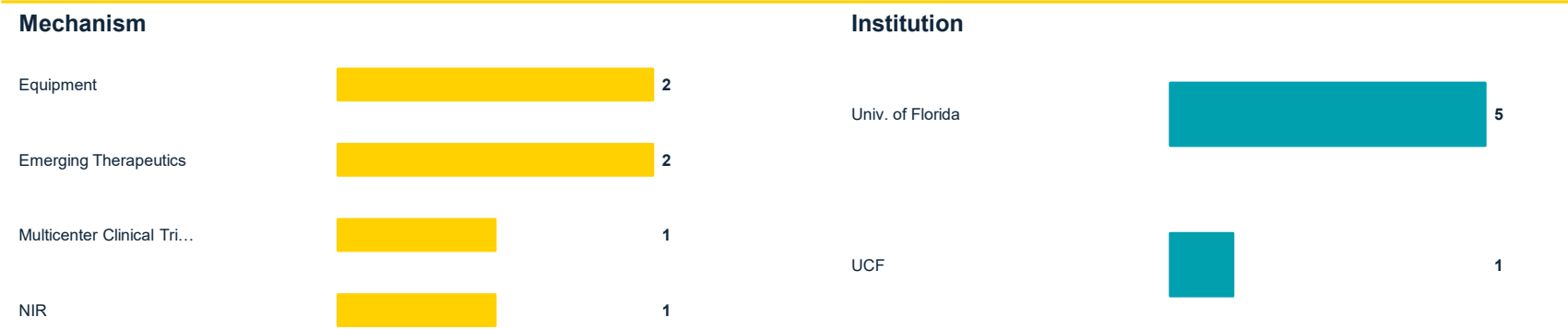
Investigator, institution, project title, mechanism, and recommended amount.

Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative

Grant	PI	Institution	Project Title	Mechanism	Amount
26L01	Hector Mendez-Gomez, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Optimizing cell:cell interaction monitoring using live-cell imaging analysis	Equipment	\$100,000
26L02	Elias Sayour, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Messenger RNA immunotherapy targeting diffuse midline glioma	Multicenter Clinical Trials	\$875,000
26L03	Matthew Sarkisian, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Targeting A Novel Mode of Neuron to Cancer Cell Crosstalk in Diffuse Midline Glioma	Emerging Therapeutics	\$587,500
26L04	Chao Xie, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Advancing Targeted Therapies for Pediatric Ependymoma using Multi-Lamellar RNA Lipid Particle Aggregates	NIR	\$299,500
26L05	Rowan Milner, DVM, PhD	Univ. of Florida	Comparative Immuno Oncology Approaches to Overcome Treatment Resistance in Pediatric Osteosarcoma Using a Canine Translat...	Emerging Therapeutics	\$587,500
26L06	Annette Khaled, PhD	UCF	Real-Time Live-Cell Imaging Platform to Accelerate Pediatric Cancer Research and Therapeutic Discovery	Equipment	\$100,000

Recommended awards by mechanism, institution, and pediatric cancer focus.

Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative



Cancer-focus grouping

Pediatric cancer focus	Award count
Brain tumors / diffuse midline glioma / DIPG / ependymoma	4
Osteosarcoma	1
Neuroblastoma / leukemia / sarcomas	1

High-Scoring Applications Not Funded

Counts reflect overall impact scores from 1.0 through 3.5.

Program	Overall impact 1.0–3.5	Recommended awards within range	Not funded within range	Interpretive note
Bankhead-Coley	53	14	39	Large high-scoring demand relative to available appropriation.
James & Esther King	9	8	1	Proposal 20030 was skipped to broaden portfolio and include Emerging Therapeutics.
Live Like Bella	10	6	4	Includes 30030, 30056, 30033, and 30031 not in final recommendation set.

Discussion framing

- The gap is most pronounced in Bankhead-Coley, where 39 applications scored between 1.0 and 3.5 but were not funded.
- JEK had one application in the requested score range not funded, but the final portfolio included one lower-scored Emerging Therapeutics proposal for strategic coverage.
- LLB had four applications in the requested score range not funded after the six recommended awards.

Data Sources and Working Assumptions

Prepared as an update to the Spring CCRAB/BRAC presentation.

Use	Source
Awarded / recommended PI, institution, title, Grant ID, amount	Program Award Recommendations workbooks for BHC, JEK, and LLB
Mechanism and overall impact score	Program Ratings_Ranked files; LLB scoring sheet
Not-funded counts	Overall impact 1.0–3.5 inclusive, minus recommended award set
Visual format	DOH PowerPoint Template 2026 styling and logo assets

Recommended wording

Use “BRAC award recommendations” unless/until the Department confirms that all recommendations have been fully executed as awards.



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