

26 The purpose of the program is to advance the progress of
27 research and cures for pediatric rare diseases by awarding
28 grants through a competitive, peer-reviewed process.

29 (b) Subject to an annual appropriation by the Legislature,
30 the program shall award grants for scientific and clinical
31 research to further the search for new diagnostics, treatments,
32 and cures for pediatric rare diseases.

33 (2) (a) Applications for grants for pediatric rare disease
34 research may be submitted by any university or established
35 research institute in the state. All qualified investigators in
36 the state, regardless of institutional affiliation, shall have
37 equal access and opportunity to compete for the research
38 funding. Preference may be given to grant proposals that foster
39 collaboration among institutions, researchers, and community
40 practitioners, as such proposals support the advancement of
41 treatments and cures of pediatric rare diseases through basic or
42 applied research. Grants shall be awarded by the department,
43 after consultation with the Rare Disease Advisory Council,
44 pursuant to s. 381.99, on the basis of scientific merit, as
45 determined by the competitive, peer-reviewed process to ensure
46 objectivity, consistency, and high quality. The following types
47 of applications may be considered for funding:

- 48 1. Investigator-initiated research grants.
- 49 2. Institutional research grants.
- 50 3. Collaborative research grants, including those that

51 advance the finding of treatment and cures through basic or
52 applied research.

53 (b) To ensure appropriate and fair evaluation of grant
54 applications based on scientific merit, the department shall
55 appoint peer review panels of independent, scientifically
56 qualified individuals to review the scientific merit of each
57 proposal and establish its priority score. The priority scores
58 shall be forwarded to the council and must be considered in
59 determining which proposals shall be recommended for funding.

60 (c) The council and the peer review panels shall establish
61 and follow rigorous guidelines for ethical conduct and adhere to
62 a strict policy with regard to conflicts of interest. A member
63 of the council or panel may not participate in any discussion or
64 decision of the council or panel with respect to a research
65 proposal by any firm, entity, or agency that the member is
66 associated with as a member of the governing body or as an
67 employee or with which the member has entered into a contractual
68 arrangement.

69 (d) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,
70 the balance of any appropriation from the General Revenue Fund
71 for the Andrew John Anderson Pediatric Rare Disease Grant
72 Program that is not disbursed but that is obligated pursuant to
73 contract or committed to be expended by June 30 of the fiscal
74 year in which the funds are appropriated may be carried forward
75 for up to 5 years after the effective date of the original

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2024

76 | appropriation.

77 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

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