

THE HOPE FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

SWOG / Hope Foundation VA Integration Support Program 2021 Request for Applications

OVERVIEW

SWOG Cancer Research Network's mission is to improve the practice of medicine in preventing, detecting, and treating cancer, and to enhance the quality of life for cancer survivors, primarily through the design and conduct of clinical trials. SWOG is a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-supported network of cancer researchers at over 1,000 institutions in the U.S., Canada, and beyond, and is part of the NCI's National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN). Additional educational and cancer research support is provided by SWOG's non-profit, philanthropic partner, The Hope Foundation for Cancer Research.

SWOG is committed to providing patients within the VA Health Administration system access to cutting edge cancer clinical trials and treatments throughout the NCTN. It is our hope that these funds will facilitate that process and will allow veterans to participate in life saving and life-changing therapies through clinical research.

Awards from the SWOG/Hope Foundation VA Integration Support Program support Veterans Health Administration Medical Centers' efforts to start or to significantly improve their participation in oncology clinical trials within the National Cancer Institute's National Clinical Trials Network (NCI's NCTN).

Individual awards are provided for up to \$50,000 (total cost) and may be spent over a 1-year award period. Per Foundation policy, indirect costs are limited to 25%. The number of such awards and the duration of the award program are contingent upon available funding at SWOG and The Hope Foundation. Up to two grants will be made to VA Medical Centers in the 2021 funding round.

Successful institutions must demonstrate that they have a sufficient patient population, committed investigators and staff, support from ancillary services and ability to overcome barriers to current participation in NCTN trials. Institutions must also show sufficient institutional leadership support at least in terms of the Medical Center Director, Chief of Staff, and Associate Chief of Staff for Research signing off on the application.

The SWOG / Hope Foundation VA Integration Support awards are not designed to aid VA institutions already affiliated with SWOG, though such institutions are not prohibited from applying if they can clearly show that there is a significant gap in their program or that some infrastructure support has been recently lost.

OBJECTIVES

SWOG VA integration support will address the needs of VA Medical Centers that have been unable to participate in NCI NCTN cooperative-group trials for a variety of reasons, including lack of institutional resources and staffing for the conduct of trials and the recruitment of veterans. The VA Integration funds will allow single or small consortia of VA Medical Centers to apply for funds to support identified needs that can improve Veteran access to NCTN trials in the VA healthcare system.

Specifically, support may be used to assist sites in work such as:

- Completing preliminary work and gaining experience for future application to the NCI and VA Interagency Group to Accelerate Trials Enrollment (NAVIGATE) program
- Joining SWOG
- Joining an existing VA consortium
- Developing a consortium of smaller VA programs
- Developing local procedures
- Enrolling to the NCI Central IRB
- Cover salary for a specified NCTN/cooperative-group on-site coordinator or other needed support personnel.

KEY DATES

Deadline for submission: **5pm ET on August 1, 2021***

*Should the due date fall on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is automatically extended to the next business day.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center with research experience and infrastructure and established Federal Wide Assurance number may apply to this program.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- **Cover Letter** providing introduction which describes the institution's intent to closely align with SWOG and network group trials, and willingness to carry out steps to do so; should be signed by VA Medical Center Director, Chief of Staff, and Associate Chief of Staff for Research

- **Aims Page** which describes current cancer care and research at the medical center, identified gaps, strengths, and intent to change.
For example, this could include details of the following:
 - How many cancer patients are treated in your clinic(s)? Is this stable or increasing?
 - Do you currently open Pharma or other non-NCI sponsored cancer trials? If yes, types of studies, enrollment experience, etc.
 - How many Veterans do you or could you offer an NCI Cooperative Group trial? Future enrollment goal(s)?
 - What is your current staffing to support trials and/or what are your needs to look like? Future plans?
 - Specific gaps in local support or services that could be corrected under the grant
- **Letters of Support** from Nursing, Laboratory, Pharmacy, and Imaging Services
- Completed SWOG VA Integration **Support Face Page**
- Completed **Budget Form** and narrative

SUBMISSION

Please email application pdfs to Morgan Cox, morgan@thehopefoundation.org with a cc to Johanna Horn, jo@thehopefoundation.org.

SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be scored on:

- Feasibility of proposed project plan
- Institutional support and enthusiasm to offer NCTN trials
- Populations sufficient to meet the site recruitment goals
- Potential to further develop in NCTN Experience
- Propriety of budget and budget justification

Applications may take up to 8 weeks for review upon receipt of complete submission.

PAYMENT

Payment will be remitted at start of grant period. The source of funds is nonfederal.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Final Progress report, financial and programmatic, will be required within 30 days of award period end. Templates will be provided in advance by Morgan Cox, Director of Communications & Development.

All inquiries related to this award may be directed to:

Johanna Horn, President, The Hope Foundation: jo@thehopefoundation.org

Stephen Bartlett, Chair, SWOG VA Working Group: Stephen.Bartlett2@va.gov