

THE HOPE FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

The Hope Foundation SEED Fund for SWOG Early Exploration and Development 2023 Announcement

OVERVIEW

The mission of SWOG Cancer Research Network is to significantly improve lives through cancer clinical trials and translational research. SWOG is a National Cancer Institute-supported network of more than 5,000 cancer researchers at more than 650 institutions in the U.S., Canada, and beyond. Additional educational and cancer research support is provided by SWOG's non-profit, philanthropic partner, The Hope Foundation for Cancer Research.

Awards are made from The Hope Foundation SEED Fund to encourage preliminary research that will potentially translate to future clinical trials or trial-associated projects (translational medicine studies) within SWOG and the National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN). These awards may assist investigators with projects that support the following types of studies: pre-clinical data, secondary data analysis from clinical trials, pilot and feasibility studies (including early-stage clinical trials), small, self-contained research projects, or development of research methodology/technology. Direct application to future SWOG research, larger in scope, is critical and will be a metric of success for this funding program. Another metric of success will be the ability to obtain extramural funding based on studies done during the tenure of the support of this grant.

Awards will be issued through a competitive, peer-review process that includes SWOG Executive Officers and Hope Foundation leaders, as well as externally nominated reviewers, as necessary.

Individual projects may be funded for up to \$50,000 (direct costs) and may be spent over a 1- or 2-year award period. Indirect costs are limited to a rate of 25%. The number of awards and duration of program is contingent upon available funding at SWOG and The Hope Foundation.

OBJECTIVES

The Hope Foundation SEED Fund encourages well-defined projects which have strong potential to direct future SWOG research and which realistically can be completed in 1-2 years.

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Because the research proposal is of limited scope, a SEED grant application will not contain extensive detail or rise to the level of discussion found in a SWOG/Hope Impact award proposal. Accordingly, reviewers will evaluate the direct correlation to future SWOG research potential, emphasizing conceptual framework and general approach to the problem, placing less emphasis on methodological details and certain indicators traditionally used in evaluating the scientific merit of Impact applications including supportive preliminary data. Appropriate justification for the proposed work can be provided through literature citations, data from other sources, or from investigator-generated data. Preliminary data are not required, particularly in applications proposing pilot or feasibility studies.

KEY DATES

Deadlines: July 1 and December 1 at 5pm ET

Awards Announced: September 1 and February 1

Award Period:

July submission: October 1- September 30

December submission: March 1- February 28

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any SWOG member investigator eligible for NIH funding is encouraged to submit to this program. Awardees are expected to present their work at one or more semiannual SWOG group meetings and to adhere to Group policies and procedures as applicable to the project.

Though funding is awarded for Investigator-initiated projects, funding will be administered directly through an institution. Eligible institutions include:

- Non-profit organizations
- Public or private institutions, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, and laboratories
- Units of state and local governments
- Eligible agencies of the federal government
- Domestic or foreign institutions/organizations

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APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

This SEED fund program requires the following application materials:

- Cover Letter (< 2 pages) that introduces project and PI/PD relationship to SWOG
- Specific Aims Page (1 page, 1-inch margins, Arial 11 font)
- Budget for Entire Proposed Period (utilize [Hope's template](#))
- Brief Budget Justification (salary for PI not allowed)
- Biographical Sketch for Key Personnel (4 pages approx)
- Other Support Form
- Research Plan (3-page limit inclusive of tables, graphs)

Applicants may submit more than one application, provided that each project is scientifically distinct.

SUBMISSION

Completed submission materials should be uploaded as a **single PDF** using the application form found [here](#).

Additional submission details:

- The Error Correction Window for the SEED application is 48-hours from time of submission.
- Should the due date fall on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is automatically extended to next business day.
- In case of emergency situation or extreme weather, documentation of institutional closing should be sent along with application, which must be received by 5pm local time on the first business day that the Institution is open.

Late submissions will not be accepted but will be referred to the next award cycle.

SCORING CRITERIA

All applicants that are reviewed by the full study section will receive an Overall Impact score and brief written critique.

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The scoring criteria and definitions of the SEED Program coincide with the current NIH peer review process, with range of scores from 1 (best) to 9 (worst). The 5 core NIH criteria will be used, with additional criteria gauging *feasibility and pertinence to SWOG's mission*.

Overall Impact. Reviewers will provide an overall impact/priority score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to directly inform future projects within SWOG, in consideration of the following five core review criteria, and additional review criteria (as applicable for the project proposed).

Core Review Criteria. Reviewers will consider each of the six review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit and give a separate score for each.

Significance. Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

Investigator(s). Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? Have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project? If the applicant is a basic scientist, is a clinician sited as the co-PI?

Innovation. Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

Approach. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks,

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and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

Environment. Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

Additional Criteria:

Feasibility. Is the project feasible within SWOG's framework? Does the project directly support the strategies and goals of SWOG's Committees? Will this project be concluded within projected timeframe?

Relationship to SWOG. Will the project as proposed inform future SWOG trials or SWOG-specific projects? Will the outcomes compliment or strengthen the current SWOG portfolio? Is the PI committed to continued work within SWOG and the relevant Committees?

PAYMENT

Payment will be remitted as described in the executed Award Notice from The Foundation. Certain contingencies for release of funds may exist, including provision of Just In Time data, confirmation of SWOG samples/bank inventory, IRB approval, or updated Other Support forms, as applicable. Funding is non-federal.

PROGRESS REPORTING

Awardees are expected to present their progress reports as an oral presentation at one or more semi-annual SWOG meetings upon request, and with an annual 2-page progress and financial report.

Please note: In compliance with the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, components of this program (travel, meals, research payments, educational materials) may require reports of payment or transfer of value provided to all US licensed physicians. The Foundation will alert grantees should regulations mandate reporting.

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All inquiries related to this award may be directed to:

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