

THE HOPE FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

SWOG / Hope Foundation VA Storefront Support Program

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 National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) and NCI Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP). 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/NCORP. 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.

FUNDING

Awards from the SWOG/Hope Foundation VA Storefront Support Program support Veterans Health Administration Medical Centers' efforts to start or to significantly improve their participation in oncology clinical trials within the NCTN and NCORP by forming a Storefront membership. A Storefront is a model of membership consisting of several VA Medical Centers coordinated and supported by a central hub site and staff. The Storefront consortium shares an administrative core, organizational and systems expertise, along with participant accrual summed across all component sites.

The Award provides for up to \$150,000 for the first year and additional \$150,000 for the second year assuming key Year 1 benchmarks are met. 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. One grant will be awarded in the 2024 funding cycle.

Proposed Storefronts must include the designation of a lead administrative hub site, which must be an established NCTN or NCORP site, and component spoke sites – at

least two spoke sites and not more than five spoke sites at initiation. Proposed spoke sites do not need to be established NCTN or NCORP sites at the time of application.

Proposed Storefronts 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 and NCORP trials. The hub site must demonstrate a plan for facilitating consortium communication with and across the spoke sites in an effort to maximize enrollment of patients and promote collaboration.

The hub and spoke sites 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 Storefront Support awards are designed to aid VA institutions that may not necessarily have the number of potential clinical trial enrollments needed to join SWOG as an individual main member site, and/or aid sites that may not have the infrastructure or experience with NCTN and NCORP trials to join SWOG as an individual main member site.

OBJECTIVES

SWOG VA Storefront support will address the needs of VA Medical Centers that have been unable to participate in NCI NCTN and NCORP network-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 Storefront support funds will allow a small consortium of VA Medical Centers to apply for funds to support identified needs that can improve Veteran access to NCTN and NCORP trials in the VA healthcare system.

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

- An existing SWOG or NCTN/NCORP member site to become a hub site and add spoke sites to create a Storefront membership.
- Developing local procedures to manage a Storefront consortium and creating infrastructure and operational processes.
- Cover salary for a specified NCTN/network group on-site coordinator or other needed support personnel.

KEY DATES

Deadline for submission: **5 pm ET on August 1, 2024**

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center with research experience and infrastructure, who is an established SWOG or other NCTN/NCORP member, may apply to this program. Applicant sites must also have an associated VA Non-Profit Corporation (NPC).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Completed SWOG **VA Storefront Support Application** [found here](#).
- **Cover Letter** (<2 pages) providing introduction which describes the hub institution's intent to closely align with SWOG and network group trials, and willingness to carry out steps to do so, and the proposed spoke site names and locations. This letter should be signed by the hub and spoke sites' VA Medical Center Director, Chief of Staff, and Associate Chief of Staff for Research, as well as the proposed Principal Investigator at the hub and each of the spoke sites.
- **Aims Page** (<5 pages) which describes current cancer care and research at the hub and spoke medical centers, identified strengths, and gaps or challenges.

The Aims Page may also include 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 Network 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
 - Plans for communication across the hub and spoke sites; planned efforts to facilitate collaboration across sites; proposed structure for maximizing enrollment to NCTN and NCORP trials
 - End of Year 1 benchmarks
 - Any other information that may be beneficial when reviewing the hub and spoke sites for feasibility.
- **Letters of Support** from Nursing, Laboratory, Pharmacy, and Imaging Services at the hub site and spoke sites
 - **Completed Budget Form** and narrative
 - *Non-SWOG applicants must sign an Agreement of Understanding that they will become SWOG members, if awarded.*
 - *If a participating member within a LAPS or NCORP package, applicant must provide a signed release agreement from the LAPS or NCORP grantee, if awarded.*

SUBMISSION

Compiled application materials should be submitted through The Hope Foundation website in accordance with form and instructions found on [the program page](#).

SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be scored on:

- Feasibility of proposed plan
- Institutional support and enthusiasm to offer NCTN and NCORP trials
- Populations sufficient to meet the Storefront recruitment goals
- Potential to further develop in NCTN experience
- Strength of proposed structure for communication and collaboration across hub and spoke sites
- 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 Committee: Stephen.Bartlett2@va.gov