

# THE HOPE FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

## The SWOG/Hope Foundation Impact Award 2025 Announcement

### OVERVIEW

SWOG Cancer Research Network's mission is to improve the practice of cancer medicine in preventing, detecting, and treating cancer, and to enhance the quality of life for cancer survivors, primarily through design and conduct of clinical trials. SWOG is a National Cancer Institute-supported network of cancer researchers at more than 1,300 sites 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.

The **SWOG/Hope Foundation Impact Award** is a funding program from The Hope Foundation that encourages novel and innovative SWOG research by supporting early and conceptual stages of these projects. **The work proposed should use resources from completed SWOG trials or be directly translatable to clinical trials in SWOG and the NCTN in the foreseeable future.**

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

Individual projects are funded for **up to \$250,000 (total cost)** and may be spent over a 2-year award period. Funding for smaller feasibility projects that are critical to the conduct of future SWOG trials are also encouraged. **Indirect costs are included in the total award and 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

Achieving SWOG's mission of changing the practice of cancer medicine in clinical trials requires innovative ideas, techniques, and perspectives. SWOG and The Hope Foundation understand that novel ideas might not align with current thinking or may not yet be supported by substantial preliminary data. The Impact Award Program is intended to foster novel scientific ideas, agents, targets, and technologies that have the potential to

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substantially advance the practice of clinical cancer research within the Group. For example, a project may seek to identify new predictive biomarkers for prevention, supportive care or therapeutic studies, assess the feasibility of an agent, device or measurement tool, identify resistance mechanisms, develop new technologies for monitoring therapeutic response, or develop and test novel methodologies to assist with the conduct of health care delivery studies.

These studies may involve considerable scientific risk but may potentially lead to a breakthrough in a particular area, or to the development of novel techniques, agents, methodologies, models, or applications that could have a major impact on cancer research. It is expected that support via this mechanism will lead to subsequent extramural support from other sources, a metric of success for this grant awarding program. In addition, publications citing SWOG and The Hope Foundation, subsequent professional promotion or other related successes will be further metrics. Grantees must be willing to provide ongoing and long-term reporting on individual project outcomes.

### KEY DATES

LOI Deadline: January 15 at 5pm ET

Full Application Deadline: Determined upon invitation

Award Period: June 1-May 31

### ELIGIBILITY

Any SWOG member investigator eligible for NIH funding is encouraged to submit to this program. Awardees will be 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.

Basic Science applicants are required to partner with a clinician as a Co-PI.

Applications involving the use of specimens or data from a SWOG trial must include statements of support from the appropriate Committee Chair (or TM Chair from Committee) and Committee Statistician. In addition, when applicable a TM Proposal Submission form

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must be completed and submitted with the application materials. Templates are provided at [the program page](#).

Though funding is awarded for Investigator-initiated projects, funding will be awarded directly to 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

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- LOI: See instructions at [the program page](#).

If invited to submit full application:

- Cover Letter that introduces project and **PI/PD relationship to SWOG**
- Abstract, limited to 250 words
- Budget, including:
  - o Budget for entire proposed period
  - o Budget justification
  - o Key personnel
- Biographical Sketch for no more than 3 Key Personnel *inclusive of PI or Co-PI*  
**(Must not exceed 5 pages each)**
- Other Support
- Research Strategy (6-page limit for Significance, Innovation and Approach, inclusive of charts. References DO NOT count toward this limit.)
- Specific Aims (1-page limit)
- Statements of Support:

If a project involved the use of specimens or data from a SWOG trial, brief statements of support are required from the appropriate Committee Chair and Committee Statistician, as well as the completion of a TM Proposal Submission form. Templates are provided at [the program page](#).
- **Formatting:** include page number and PI name in upper-right corner of all pages; please use 11 pt, standard font

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

### SUBMISSION

Completed submissions should be uploaded to The Hope Foundation website in accordance with form and instructions available at [the program page](#).

#### *Additional submission details:*

- The **Error Correction Window** for the SWOG Impact 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 an emergency 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.**
- **Resubmissions** are allowable; **no more than three (3)** resubmissions of the same concept accepted.
- Resubmissions that were assigned an **Impact Score of less than 40** do not require submission of an LOI.

### SWOG IMPACT AWARD SCORING CRITERIA

The Hope Foundation utilizes the NIH scoring criteria and template. **This has been updated to reflect the new three factor scoring system for 2025.** This system utilizes the traditional 9-point scale for Factors 1 and 2. Factor 3 is not assigned an individual score, but will be considered in the reviewer's assessment of overall impact.

A score of 1 indicates an exceptionally strong application with essentially no weaknesses. A score of 9 indicates an application with serious and substantive weaknesses with very few strengths; 5 is considered an average score. Ratings are in whole numbers only (no decimal ratings).

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### DEFINITIONS

#### Factor 1: Importance of Research

##### Significance

- The importance of the proposed research in the context of current scientific challenges and opportunities, either for advancing knowledge within the field, or more broadly. Assesses whether the application addresses an important gap in knowledge in the field, would solve a critical problem, or create a valuable conceptual or technical advance.
- Evaluates the rationale for undertaking the study, the rigor of the scientific background for the work, if relevant, and whether this scientific background justifies the work.
- Evaluates the role this work could potentially play within the SWOG Cancer Research Network portfolio, in line with the Group's [mission and values](#).

##### Innovation

- Evaluates the extent to which innovation influences the importance of undertaking the proposed research. Note that while technical or conceptual innovation can influence the importance of the proposed research, a project that is not applying novel concepts or approaches may be of critical importance for the field.
- Evaluates whether the proposed work applies novel concepts, methods or technologies or uses existing concepts, methods, technologies in novel ways, to enhance the overall impact of the project.
- Evaluates whether the proposed work moves SWOG's research forward, via new methodologies, trial designs, infrastructure or patient need.

#### Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility

##### Approach

- Evaluates the scientific quality of the proposed work. Evaluates the likelihood that compelling, reproducible findings will result (rigor) and assess whether the proposed studies can be done well and within the timeframes proposed (feasibility).

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- Evaluates whether the proposed work is appropriate within the cooperative group setting.

## **Rigor**

- Evaluates the potential to produce unbiased, reproducible, robust data.
- Evaluates the rigor of experimental design and whether appropriate controls are in place.
- Evaluates whether the sample size is sufficient and well-justified.
- Assesses the quality of the plans for analysis, interpretation, and reporting of results.
- Evaluates whether the investigators presented adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex or age, in the design, analysis, and reporting.
- For applications involving human subjects or vertebrate animals, also evaluates:
  - Rigor of the intervention or study manipulation (if applicable to the study design).
  - Whether outcome variables are justified.
  - Whether the results will be generalizable or, in the case of a rare disease/special group, relevant to the particular subgroup.
  - Whether the sample is appropriate and sufficiently diverse to address the proposed question(s).
- For applications involving human subjects, assesses the adequacy of inclusion plans as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research. Considerations of appropriateness may include disease/condition/behavior incidence, prevalence, or population burden, population representation, and/or current state of the science.

## **Feasibility:**

- Evaluates whether the proposed approach is sound and achievable, including plans to address problems or new challenges that emerge in the work. For proposed studies in which feasibility may be less certain, evaluate whether the uncertainty is balanced by the potential for major advances. Please keep in mind both the attributes and challenges of the cooperative group environment.

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- For applications involving human subjects, evaluates the adequacy and feasibility of the plan to recruit and retain an appropriately diverse population of participants. Additionally, evaluates the likelihood of successfully achieving the proposed enrollment based on age, racial, ethnic, and sex/gender categories.
- For clinical trial applications, evaluates whether the study timeline and milestones are feasible.

### Factor 3. Expertise and Resources

- **Investigator(s)**  
Evaluates whether the investigator(s) have demonstrated background, training, and expertise, as appropriate for their career stage, to conduct the proposed work. For Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) applications, assesses the quality of the leadership plan to facilitate coordination and collaboration. Within SWOG, engagement of early stage investigators is encouraged but not required.
- **Environment**  
Evaluates whether the institutional resources are appropriate to ensure the successful execution of the proposed work.

### PAYMENT

Payment will be remitted as described in the executed Letter of Award 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.

### PROGRESS REPORTING

Awardees will be 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 submitted to the president of The Hope Foundation. In addition, long-term follow-up reporting is required, up to five years.

*Please note: In compliance with the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, components of this program (travel, meals, educational materials) may require reports of payment or transfer of*

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*value provided to all US licensed physicians. The Foundation will alert grantees should regulations mandate reporting.*

All inquiries related to this may be directed to:

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