The NCCN Foundation Young Investigator Award Program

2015 Request for Proposals

The NCCN Foundation® invites proposals from young investigators with innovative ideas and an interest in improving the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of care provided to cancer patients. Research projects may pertain to 1) the application of the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines as defined on page two or 2) address new prevention, detection or treatment approaches for cancer and its translation into clinical care.

Background:

NCCN Foundation (the “Foundation”) was established in 2009 by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN®), a Section 501(c)(3) public charity dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of care provided to patients. NCCN operates as a not-for-profit alliance of 25 of the world’s leading cancer centers (“NCCN Member Institutions”). Through the leadership and expertise of clinical professionals at NCCN Member Institutions, NCCN develops resources that present valuable information to the numerous stakeholders in the health care delivery system.

The Foundation strives to continue NCCN’s mission by seeking philanthropic support to engage in activities including, but not limited to, developing a research grant program to encourage and assist physicians, scientists, nurses, and others in conducting innovative and collaborative research in clinical oncology at NCCN Member Institutions. In order to expand upon the body of knowledge available regarding the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, the Foundation focuses on funding research projects that further its charitable and educational purposes and support researchers in fields for which it is often difficult to obtain funding.

The Young Investigator Awards

The NCCN Foundation Young Investigator Awards (YIA) represent an ongoing program to provide two-year grants of $75,000 per annum for research expenses to promising young investigators across a broad range of oncology specialties and areas of interest. In past years, four to six awards have been granted. Within the total budget of $75,000 per year, non-research related expenses will be covered to a maximum of 8%. The awards may include funds up to $3,000 for IRB review and continuing review. A separate administrative allowance for awardees, in addition to the $75,000 per annum award, will be provided for travel (up to $500) for lodging and registration expenses to attend the NCCN Annual Conference which is mandatory in order for the investigators to present their research results at the general poster session.
The award is open to physicians, scientists, nurses and others working in an oncology laboratory, clinical research or clinical setting, or cancer control program in one of NCCN’s 25 Member Institutions, who (1) have a first full-time appointment as an Assistant Professor, Instructor, or an equivalent level, and (2) are MD’s, PhD’s or, for nurses and others, have an advanced degree. The award may be used to fund salary and benefits of the grant recipient, postdoctoral or clinical research fellows and/or research assistants, data collection and entry, patient costs, analysis, computer costs, necessary purchased services, surveys, and supplies.

Each NCCN Member Institution can nominate up to two applicants who may submit research applications relating to one or both of the categories of investigation summarized below:

(a) Research pertaining to the NCCN Guidelines
(b) New prevention, detection or treatment approaches for cancer and its translation into clinical care.

A primary focus of the Foundation YIA will be to identify and fund top investigators in the early stages of their careers interested in participating and contributing to cancer care research and/or elucidating how the NCCN Guidelines are implemented in practice. Successful candidates will identify and work closely with an appropriate institutional mentor. Candidates will be expected to develop a timeline for their two-year YIA. Following completion of research, abstracts will be published in print and/or online in the JNCCN—Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. Awardees will be expected to present their findings within their own institution through educational opportunities such as grand rounds and tumor boards.

The Foundation recognizes the growing need for evidence-based research in the areas of clinical treatment and management (including new diagnostics and molecular markers), health systems and delivery of care, quality of life for cancer patients, and patient education. A hallmark of NCCN’s programs has been strong attention to excellent data collection, analysis and outcomes measures. Successful YIA applications will be expected to bring this same high level of rigor to their research and clinical practice programs.

Important Dates:
- The Application Deadline is January 30, 2015 by 5:00 PM (EDT)
- Committee Review will take place in late February 2015
- Grants will be announced at the NCCN Annual Conference, March 2015

Eligibility Requirements
Applicants must have:
- Medical degree--MD, DO or international equivalent or
- Scientific degree--PhD or international equivalent or
- Nursing degree--Masters and above or international equivalent
- Primary affiliation/work site must be at an NCCN Member Institution for the duration of the award period
• Candidates must be in their first full-time appointment at an NCCN Member Institution and must remain in good standing for the duration of the award period
• Candidates must not have other funding that duplicates the focus and purpose of this award
• Mentor in the proposed research field
• Institutional commitment to support the research project

The Foundation and its Grants Scientific Review Committee reserve the right to evaluate and determine applicants' eligibility based on the information and justifications included in the application materials.

Application Process
Each NCCN Member Institution may nominate two (2) candidates per institution.

All applications must be submitted in accordance with the requirements and instructions of this Request for Proposal (RFP). Proposals will provide concise documentation of the research plan. The proposal is expected to contain sufficient information to allow the reviewers to fully assess the scientific rigor of the proposed study. A full protocol may be submitted as an attachment to a proposal.

Proposals are required to be submitted electronically to the NCCN research portal at https://www.mednetstudy.com/sgs/nccn/, and include a letter of support from the governing groups of the institution verifying:

1) Office of Sponsored Research approval
2) Department Chair/Division approval
3) Institutional budgetary review and approval
4) Mentor’s Letter of Support
5) The priority status of the research stating if there are any competing trials. If there are competing trials, please verify that this trial will have a higher priority.
6) Documentation to support feasibility with at least one of the following:
   • Letter from institution’s Feasibility Committee if applicable
   • Documentation by previous studies and accrual (if available, publications and abstracts)

Letters should be addressed to Robert W. Carlson, MD, CEO, National Comprehensive Cancer Network, 275 Commerce Drive, Suite 300, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

When entering applications into the online system, the following information will be needed:

A. Title/Tumor Type
B. Investigators and institutional affiliations
C. Hypothesis with primary and secondary objectives
D. Background Information
E. Research design
F. Study population
   i. Stage
   ii. Major inclusions/exclusions
G. Treatment plan
H. Endpoints/Statistical analysis
I. Feasibility
   i. Estimated time of completion/monthly accrual
   ii. Previous experience with trials that had similar tumor type, phase of study or prior therapy
   iii. Collaborators’ experience, including affiliates
   iv. Competing trials - List all active, approved or in-review studies at your institution for which the same patient population is eligible
   v. Projected Accrual Dates (Month/Year)

Correlative/Pre-Clinical Studies
   A. Hypothesis (include relevant background studies)
   B. Preliminary data
   C. Study design (include methods for obtaining samples, administering forms, or performing radiologic studies)
   D. Study population
   E. Methodology
   F. Analytic plan
   G. Feasibility
      i. Accrual
      ii. Specimen acquisition

Budget using NCCN template (please use attached template)
   A. Breakdown by major cost categories.
   B. Justification of major costs with enough detail to demonstrate how funding for major elements in the study will be allocated.
   C. For combined clinical and correlative studies, separate budgets for each component should be submitted.
   D. Salaries are capped at the current NIH salary cap
   E. No travel or publication costs will be covered

Ancillary Documentation
   A. An NCI format BioSketch of the Principal Investigator and Mentor
   B. An appendix of supportive literature may be provided

Submission
   • All proposals must be submitted electronically using the directions below and are due by 5:00 PM (EST) on January 30, 2015. No exceptions will be granted.

1. Access the website at https://www.mednetstudy.com/sgs/nccn/
2. Register for a user account by selecting the ‘Registration for New Investigators Only’ link displayed on the sign on page
3. Locate your Institution / Hospital from the pick list, apply all required (*) data into the data entry area and save
4. Access your email account to obtain your User ID and Password
5. Re-access the website and apply your User ID and Password (case sensitive)
6. Complete the website training (available in word document or video)
7. Submit your study

- For technical issues with submission, please call the MedNet helpdesk at 866-258-2735.
- For all other questions, please contact foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org.

Selection Process
The NCCN Foundation Grants Scientific Review Committee will select recipients for YIA’s based on the following criteria:
- Scientific Soundness
- Study Design
- Feasibility
- Statistics
- Budget

Administration
The Foundation will support the review, selection and granting of the YIAs in consultation with the NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP). ORP standards will be used by the YIA Grants Scientific Review Committee to review and score proposals received in response to this RFP. Review Committee members will be drawn from NCCN Member Institutions and have expertise in the broad spectrum of research areas for the YIAs. Their expertise will be supplemented by NCCN senior staff with background in guideline development, clinical research, and outcomes research. Individual Review Committee members will recuse themselves from reviewing applications for their own institutions.

Please see the NCCN website for our Frequently Asked Questions information. Additional questions about this RFP, from either applicants or their institutions, should be emailed to: foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org. Replies will be sent within 24-48 hours.