



NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CANCER NETWORK

**FOUNDATION**

Guiding Treatment. Changing Lives.

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**The NCCN Foundation®**

**2022 Young Investigator Award (YIA) Program**

**The NCCN Foundation®**

**3025 Chemical Road, Suite 100  
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462**

**October 27, 2021**

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## **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND**

The NCCN Foundation® was established in 2009 by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN®), a Section 501(c)(3) public charity whose mission is to improve and facilitate quality, effective, efficient, and accessible cancer care so patients can live better lives. NCCN operates as a not-for-profit alliance of 31 leading cancer centers devoted to patient care, research, and education (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 NCCN 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 early career physicians, scientists, nurses, and other investigators in conducting innovative and collaborative research in oncology at NCCN Member Institutions. In order to expand upon the body of knowledge available regarding the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, the NCCN 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.

## **PROGRAM PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

Through its Young Investigator Award (YIA) Program, the NCCN Foundation invites proposals from young investigators with innovative ideas and an interest in improving the quality, effectiveness, efficiency and accessibility of care provided to patients with cancer. A primary focus of the NCCN Foundation YIA Program is to identify and fund top investigators in the early stages of their careers interested in participating and contributing to cancer research. On average, four to six awards are awarded per year.

The awards provide two-year grants of \$150,000 for research expenses to promising young investigators across a broad range of oncology specialties and areas of interest. 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. Within the total budget of \$150,000, indirect expenses will be covered to a maximum of 8%. The award may include funds up to \$3,000 for IRB review and continuing review. In addition to the \$150,000 award, a separate administrative allowance will be provided for travel (up to \$575), lodging, and registration expenses to attend the 2024 NCCN Annual Conference. Attendance is mandatory in order for the awardees 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 31 Member Institutions, who:

- 1) Have a first full-time appointment as an Assistant Professor, Instructor, or an equivalent level, and
- 2) Are MDs, DOs, PhDs or, for nurses and others, have an advanced degree.

Each NCCN Member Institution can nominate one young investigator who may submit a research proposal. **Member Institutions that received an NCCN Young Investigator Award during the 2021 cycle are not eligible to apply for the 2022 cycle. However, Member Institutions will still be required to appoint a representative to the Proposal Review Committee.**

A hallmark of NCCN's programs has been strong attention to excellent data collection, analysis and outcomes measures. Successful YIA proposal submissions will be expected to bring this same high level of rigor to their research and clinical practice programs. Successful candidates will identify and work closely with an appropriate institutional mentor for their two-year YIA. Following completion of research, abstracts will be published in print and online in *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.

#### **PROGRAM TIMELINE**

- NCCN Member Institution Deadline for nomination of one candidate is **Wednesday, December 1, 2021.**
- Proposal Submission Deadline is **Wednesday, January 26, 2022 by 5:00 PM (ET).**
- NCCN Member Institution Deadline for mandatory submission of one Proposal Review Committee member is **January 26, 2022.**
  - *Proposal Submissions from Member Institutions that do not contribute a Proposal Review Committee member will not be considered for funding.*
- Proposal Review Committee will meet via a virtual meeting in **March 2022.**
- The Award period starts **July 1, 2022 and ends on June 30, 2024.** It is anticipated that eighteen months will be used for the implementation of the scope of work (July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023) and six months will be used to compile and finalize the study data and comply with all reporting requirements (January 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024).
- Presentation of research results will occur at the NCCN Annual Conference in **March 2024.**

#### **2022 SPECIFIC AWARD**

**Unrestricted funding remains the top priority to allow our young investigators to ask questions pursuant to their interests and launch career trajectories while more globally improving the lives of patients with cancer. We encourage prospective, retrospective, preclinical, and clinical research in a topic of the applicant's choosing.**

**For 2022 we do anticipate funding for a single award focusing on health equity research to address at-risk, vulnerable, or underrepresented populations. Please see attached guidance for health equity focused nominations.**

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Nominees 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 **OR**
- Pharmacy degree-PharmD or international equivalent **AND**
- Primary affiliation/work site at an NCCN Member Institution **for the duration of the award period AND**
- First full-time appointment at an NCCN Member Institution and remain in good standing for the duration of the award period **AND**
- Mentor in the proposed research field **AND**
- Institutional commitment to support the research project

## NOMINATION PROCESS

Each eligible NCCN Member Institution may nominate one candidate per institution by **Wednesday, December 1, 2021**. Instructions for proposal submissions will be sent directly to nominees by NCCN.

NCCN Member Institutions may submit the nomination of their candidate to [foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org](mailto:foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org). The following information is required:

- 1) Name & Degree
- 2) Academic Appointment or Rank
- 3) Institution
- 4) Title
- 5) Email Address

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

All proposal submissions must be submitted in accordance with the requirements and instructions of this Request for Proposals (RFP). Proposals will provide concise documentation of the research plan and are expected to contain sufficient information to allow the reviewers to fully assess the scientific rigor of the proposed study.

The proposal should contain detail regarding the following areas:

### Contact Information:

Nominee:

- A. Name & Degree
- B. Academic Appointment or Rank
- C. Institution
- D. Department
- E. Specialty or Subspecialty
- F. Address, phone number, email address

Statistical Co-Investigator:

- A. Name & Degree
- B. Title
- C. Institution

Institutional Office of Sponsored Research/Contract Personnel:

- A. Name
- B. Title
- C. Address, phone number, email address

**Research Proposal:**

Clinical Trials (Maximum 6 pages; one-inch margins & 12-point Times New Roman font)

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

Outcomes/Translational and Correlative/Pre-Clinical Studies (Maximum 6 pages; one-inch margins & 12-point Times New Roman font)

- A. Title
- B. Tumor Type
- C. Investigators and institutional affiliations
- D. Hypothesis (include relevant background studies)
- E. Preliminary data
- F. Study design (include methods for obtaining samples, administering forms, or performing radiologic studies)
- G. Study population
- H. Methodology
- I. Analytic plan
- J. Feasibility

- i. Accrual/Project completion in timeframe specified above
- ii. Specimen acquisition

A full protocol may also be submitted in addition to the proposal information specified above.

**Required Letters of Support from 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

Letters should be addressed to:

Robert W. Carlson, MD, CEO  
National Comprehensive Cancer Network  
3025 Chemical Road, Suite 100  
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

**Ancillary Documentation:**

- 1) An NCI format Bio-Sketch of the Principal Investigator and Mentor
- 2) An appendix of supportive literature may be provided
- 3) If support will be sought/provided by other sources, please identify all sources of additional support and documentation of commitment.

**BUDGET**

Nominees must submit the budget in the NCCN budget format (template attached) and are required to disclose additional sources of funding for this research and demonstrate that funding does not overlap this award. The following information is required.

- 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, which are capped at the current NIH salary cap
- E. No travel or publication costs will be covered unless pre-approved by NCCN

**SUBMISSION**

Proposals and supporting documents are required to be submitted to [foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org](mailto:foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org) by **Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 5:00 PM (ET)**.

## **PAYMENT OF FUNDS**

The Award total of \$150,000 will be disbursed as follows:

- First payment of \$50,000 will be paid on or after July 1, 2022, subject to receipt by NCCN of all required items, which will be identified in the Study Start-up Letter.
- Second payment of \$50,000 will be paid subject to satisfactory progress at the end of the first year and upon submission of a satisfactory finance and progress report.
- Final payment of \$50,000 will be paid upon submission of a final study report and final expenditure report.

## **UNSPENT FUNDS**

Any unspent portion of the grant funds must be returned to the NCCN Foundation within thirty (30) days of the expiration of grant end date.

## **Grant Period**

Whereas the NCCN Foundation is subject to the terms and conditions of the funders' agreements supporting this program, funded projects are required to be completed within two years from July 1, 2022.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Awardees are required to submit an annual financial report for each year of the grant funding and quarterly progress reports. The reporting schedule will be stipulated upon NCCN's notification of the activation of the study.

## **YIA PROPOSAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**All NCCN Member Institutions with either an active YIA in 2021 or that nominates one candidate to apply for 2022 YIA funding must also provide a YIA Proposal Review Committee member by January 26, 2022. YIA Proposal submissions from Member Institutions that do not contribute a Review Committee member will not be considered for funding. The Review Committee member must attend the YIA Review Meeting in order for the nominee from their institution to be considered.** The YIA Proposal Review Committee members will have expertise in the broad spectrum of research areas for the YIAs. Please note that reviewers may be asked to review proposals outside of their expertise. Individual Review Committee members will be recused from reviewing/discussing proposal submissions from their own institutions.

## **REVIEW COMMITTEE PARTICIPANT:**

The following information regarding the YIA Review Committee participant must be submitted by the Member Institution:

Review Committee Member:

- A. Name & Degree
- B. Academic Appointment or Rank
- C. Area of Expertise
- D. Address, cell phone number, email address



## **PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The YIA Proposal Review Committee will select recipients for YIAs based on the following criteria:

- Scientific Soundness
- Study Design
- Feasibility
- Statistics
- Budget
- Timeline – work **must** be finalized and final reporting submitted within the 2 year grant period

## **AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

The NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP) will provide oversight for the review, selection and awarding of the YIAs. ORP standards will be used by the YIA Grants Proposal Review Committee to review and score proposals received in response to this RFP.

## **RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT**

During the Award period, the Investigator must not be absent from participation in the Project or from the Institution for extended periods of time during the Award Period, such as for a sabbatical leave or leave of absence, without prior written approval from the NCCN Foundation.

## **HELPFUL RESOURCES**

- NCCN YIA Cover Sheet (attached, required)
- [foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org](mailto:foundationproposals@nccnfoundation.org), email additional questions about this RFP, from either nominees or their institutions.
- Frequently Asked Questions (attached)