

Guidelines for the Clinical Trials Support Grant

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Version history

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

The Cancer Institute NSW (the Institute) is the NSW government's cancer control agency. The Institute is driving innovation in cancer care by working in partnership with leaders in the field to deliver the best cancer results for the people of NSW. The Cancer Institute NSW Clinical Trials Support Grant (CTSG) will fund evidence-based, scalable and sustainable projects that can be embedded in the health system in order to improve equitable access to cancer clinical trials across the state.

1.2 The Cancer Institute NSW Clinical Trials Programs

The Cancer Institute NSW is committed to advancing cancer clinical trials through financial and educational support.

We aim to:

- make NSW a leading destination for clinical trials and achieve optimal health outcomes for cancer patients in NSW
- increase access to cutting-edge clinical trials
- increase patient understanding and participation in cancer clinical trials
- invest in clinical trial infrastructure across NSW, enabling the safe and efficient conduct of cancer clinical trials.

The key actions of the Cancer Institute NSW's Clinical Trials Program include building the capability of the cancer control workforce, investing in research infrastructure and improving the cancer clinical trial landscape for patients and the clinical trial workforce.

2. Clinical Trials Support Grant (CTSG)

2.1 Purpose

This unique grant will support evidence-based projects that are focused on benefitting access to cancer clinical trials with the potential to be embedded and scaled up in the health system and are sustainable past the funding period. Projects must focus on supporting at least one of the objectives:

- Development of networks or services to improve access to clinical trials, such as early phase cancer clinical trials
- Improve capacity and capability of the clinical trials workforce
- Improve awareness of clinical trials in the primary care sector
- Improve awareness and address barriers to cancer clinical trials for at least one community identified as a 'focus population' in the NSW Cancer Plan.

The communities who are disproportionately affected by cancer include:

- Aboriginal communities
- multicultural communities
- people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds
- regional, rural and remote communities
- older people

- sexuality and gender diverse people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people, known as LGBTIQ+ communities)
- people with a mental health condition
- people who are engaged with the justice system.

Examples of projects may include:

- Developing educational materials and tools to increase referrals to specialists and hospitals participating in cancer clinical trials
- Identifying barriers and challenges in accessing clinical trials for a focus population and developing appropriate solutions
- Identifying efficiency gaps in a clinical trial unit's workstream and developing an appropriate tool to address the gaps
- Co-designing appropriate resources for Aboriginal people to improve awareness of and participation in cancer clinical trials and/or the healthcare sector.

The CTSG aims to support high achieving teams who have appropriate knowledge of the cancer clinical trial landscape and the ability and capacity to:

- Identify appropriate projects that will impact cancer clinical trial services and/or patient access to clinical trials
- Consider a scalability plan to roll out initiatives across NSW
- Consider a sustainability plan to ensure continued application of the project outcomes past the funding period
- Have an evaluation approach that includes both process measures and outcome measures
- Assemble a team with the relevant skills and a track record of working together for the entire program which will, by definition, be multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional.

2.2 Funding Available

Total funds of up to \$250,000 (ex-GST) per approved project are available. The funding must be spent in NSW. The project may take up to 18 months, including its evaluation.

2.3 Conditions of Funding

2.3.1 Commencement Date

Successful applicants must commence the grant by 1 July 2024.

2.3.2 Program Logic

A program logic model is a schematic representation that describes how a program is intended to work by linking activities with outputs, intermediate impacts and longer-term outcomes. Provide a program logic within two months of an awarded grant. For more information, refer to [Developing and Using Program Logic: A Guide](#).

2.3.3 Risk Management Plan

Provide a risk management plan outlining identified risks and mitigation strategies within two months of an awarded grant.

2.3.4 Supporting Documentation

Provide confirmation of any in-kind support (e.g., letter) or information regarding any existing project funding with your application. Please note that approval of this grant does not assume additional support (e.g., funding, data) by the Cancer Institute NSW or NSW Health. All support from the Cancer Institute NSW or NSW Health must be confirmed prior to the commencement of this grant.

2.3.5 Project Milestones

Project milestones provided in the application will be included in the funding agreement and used to monitor progress. The Institute may pause payments or cease funding if satisfactory progress is not being made within the agreed timeframes.

2.3.6 Reporting Requirements

Chief Investigator(s) must provide an annual progress report and final report for the grant using the provided template. These reports must demonstrate the actualisation of the agreed project milestones, and report on any new leveraged funding and/or partnership opportunities. The progress reports may be used by the Funder for grant scheme auditing or evaluation purposes. The Institute will not provide funding if satisfactory progress reports are not submitted.

3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Located in NSW

The Chief Investigator and Administering Institution must be located in NSW. All grant funding must be spent within NSW.

3.2 Chief Investigator

Chief Investigator must be a current Chief Investigator of a Cancer Institute NSW Translational Cancer Research Capacity Building Grant. They must be employed at an institution within NSW for the duration of the grant.

The Chief Investigator can only be named on one CTSG application for each grant round.

3.4 Administering Institution

Applications must nominate a single Administering Institution who will be responsible for the management of the grant and will enter into a funding agreement with the Cancer Institute NSW. The Administering Institution must have policies and procedures in place for the administration of public funds; for the management of Intellectual Property; and the proper conduct of research in relation to ethics. Additionally, the Administering Institution must have good scientific practice and will provide appropriate infrastructure to allow the research supported by the grant to be undertaken.

The Administering Institution and their nominated institutional contact must be registered with the Cancer Institute NSW. Refer to the list of [Registered Administering Institutions](#) and the [Administering Institution Contact Registration Form](#).

3.5 Consumer Involvement

The Cancer Institute NSW is committed to engaging with the NSW community and consumers of cancer services to ensure its programs best meet the needs of people affected by, or at risk of, cancer. Each application must demonstrate appropriate consumer involvement, particularly with the focus population, and engagement across the development of the grant and its funding period.

4. Assessment

Applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria based on the weighting below.

4.1 Significance (20%)

The primary aim of the CTSG must have appropriate emphasis on at least one of the grants objectives:

- Development of networks or services to improve access to clinical trials, such as early phase cancer clinical trials
- Improve capacity and capability of the clinical trials workforce
- Improve awareness of clinical trials in primary care sector
- Improve awareness and address barriers to cancer clinical trials for at least one community identified as a 'focus population' in the [NSW Cancer Plan](#).

The communities who are disproportionately affected by cancer include:

- Aboriginal communities
- multicultural communities
- people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds
- regional, rural and remote communities
- older people
- sexuality and gender diverse people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people, known as LGBTIQ+ communities)
- people with a mental health condition
- people who are engaged with the justice system.

The significance of the project should be demonstrated by:

- Addressing a major evidence-practice gap of critical importance in the cancer clinical trial sector
- A feasible implementation plan (rationale, design, methodology) with anticipated outcomes to accomplish the aims of the grant
- Consumer engagement throughout the entirety of the implementation program.

4.2 Scalability (20%)

The applicants must demonstrate a scalability plan to roll out initiatives to multiple sites within NSW. Considerations include:

- Pathways for scaling up project findings across NSW
- Likely level of adoption or uptake of project
- Likely required timeframes required to achieve desired results.

4.3 Sustainability (20%)

The applicants must demonstrate that the team has a sustainability plan after the completion of the grant funding. Considerations include:

- Evidence of established strategic partnerships and stakeholder engagement strategies to ensure successful expansion.

4.4 Evaluation and Outputs (20%)

The applicant must demonstrate that the team has a plan for the evaluation of the implementation program and the resulting outcomes. Considerations include:

- A clear process for monitoring the progress of the project, including achievable key milestones and outcome indicators that can be delivered during the grant
- The potential to impact on health service improvements
- The anticipated ability to leverage future funding.

4.5 Team Track Record (20%)

The named Investigators as individuals and as a diverse research team, should demonstrate:

- A track record in managing and successfully implementing projects
- A high degree of established collaborations amongst team members with reference to the length of collaboration and achievements
- A clear plan on how the research team will promote and sustain a collaborative approach for the duration of the grant funding
- Capability to undertake the proposed implementation program in the grant timeframe and to continue.

5. Selection Process

5.1 How to Apply

Applicants must include the following in their Cancer Institute NSW Clinical Trials Support application:

- Application Form
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) from Chief Investigator and all co-investigators
- Relevant support letters
- NSW [Aboriginal Health Impact Statement](#) (if applicable)

A Program Logic Model and Risk Management Plan must be submitted within two months after grant is awarded.

5.2 Submission

Applications open 31 May 2024 and must be submitted via email CINSW-Grants@health.nsw.gov.au by **10am 14 June 2024**. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator and the Administering Institution to ensure that the application is complete and accurate prior to submission.

5.3 Eligibility Assessment

Submitted applications will be reviewed to ensure they adhere to all eligibility requirements, including satisfactory completion of the obligations from previously funded Cancer Institute NSW grants.

5.4 Independent Review Process

The Institute utilises an independent Grants Review Committee, including at least one consumer representative. The Grants Review Committee adheres to the Cancer Institute NSW policies to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of applications. The Institute requires its Grants Review Committee members and any additional independent assessors to declare any conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest will be managed by the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Grants Review Committee.

The Grants Review Committee will assess applications based on an assessment of merit against the stated assessment criteria. Applications may be reviewed by additional independent assessors if required.

The Grants Review Committee will put forward recommendations for awarding of the grant to the Cancer Institute NSW for consideration.

5.5 Approval and notification process

The Cancer Institute NSW will consider all recommendations for funding by the Grants Review Committee and the Chief Executive will approve funding for the grants to be awarded. Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome by **19 June 2024**.

6. Funding for Successful Grants

6.1 Funding Agreement

If the application is successful, the Administering Institution and the Cancer Institute NSW will enter into a Funding Agreement. All parties must accept the terms of the Funding Agreement and the Administering Institution must sign the Agreement before payments are made. It is recommended that all parties familiarise themselves with the Institute's [Competitive Grants Agreement](#) prior to submission of an application. **The Agreement must be fully executed by 4pm 21 June 2024.**

6.2 Use of funds

Funds awarded must be used for the purposes as detailed in the Funds section of the Funding Agreement and the application approved by the Cancer Institute NSW. Funds awarded cannot be used for any purposes associated with basic (i.e., desk, stationery, phone) or overhead infrastructure costs (i.e., institutional overheads of administrative levies). Funds should not be used to support research conducted outside of NSW. Projects out of scope include the development of a technology platform and projects that are limited to engagement and promotion of clinical trials. Both financial and performance audits may be conducted on behalf of the Institute to confirm the use of the monies.

6.3 Variations

Any requests for a variation to a grant, such as time extensions, changes of scope, changes of investigators, need to be submitted by the Administering Institution Contact to the Grants Team via email at CINSW-Grants@health.nsw.gov.au. A variation can only be processed within the funding period of the existing funding agreement. Approval of a variation request is at the Cancer Institute NSW's discretion. Please refer to the [Variation Request Guide](#) for further information.

6.4 Acknowledgement and participation

Investigator(s) should acknowledge the funding provided by the Cancer Institute NSW, please refer to the Institute's [Funding Acknowledgment Guide](#). Investigator(s) may be required to be available for media interviews, briefings related to the grant, to participate in, and present at forum(s) at the request of the Cancer Institute NSW.

6.5 Enquiries and Complaints

Enquiries and complaints can be directed to the Grants Team at CINSW-Grants@health.nsw.gov.au. Complaints handling will be managed in compliance with the NSW Health Complaints Management Policy [PD2020_013].