

Academy of Oncology Nurse and Patient Navigation Tools for Advancing Navigation Grant

Key Dates

RFA Posted:	March 22 2025
Application Deadline:	April 14, 2025
Peer Review:	Spring 2025
Notification of Awards:	May, 2025
Award Start Date:	July 1, 2025

Purpose

This proposal is geared towards the creation, enhancement, or expansion of tools resulting in the optimization, elevation, and efficiency for the field navigation. Through this funding mechanism we aim to elevate the roles of oncology navigators in relation to patient outcomes optimization within the healthcare setting. Navigator utilization continues to present an opportunity to optimize patient outcomes while challenges persist. Proposed tools will be tied to patient outcomes including increasing access to navigation services, addressing barriers to cancer care, and improving treatment adherence. There will be two themes for applicants to respond to:

- Theme 1: Benchmarking, Process Improvement, and KPIs
 - Sub theme (examples): Caseload or workflow optimization, process mapping, patient care transitions, risk assessment, and potential EMR/EHR agnostic standalone reports and dashboards, et cetera
- Theme 2: Navigation Billing and Coding Implementation Solutions
 - Sub theme (example): Frameworks and models for institutions of various sizes

Proposed projects may include existing tools (references including but not limited to: the AONN+ Acuity tool, ACCC onboarding and Propose, Thrivr, OncoNav, etc.), development of new tools, propose standardization, or EMR/EHR connections as proof of concepts or pilot development and deployment. Data sources may be required examples and may include but are not limited to electronic health records, community engagement data (including social determinants of health), at-risk notifications for vulnerable patients requiring navigation, and patient reported data and outcomes.

Healthcare leaders and project leaders at all career levels and across all disciplines are eligible to apply.

Success for the awardee or collaborative team is identified as creating, enhancing or expanding novel approaches to identify, solve, or inform navigation care delivery, performance, and patient metrics, and aid the reimbursement for navigation services. At the end of the award, the awardee or collaborative team is expected to have made a substantial contribution which will greatly improve knowledge and care for patients suffering from cancer while simultaneously reducing patient burden

and optimizing the multidisciplinary integration of navigation.

A successful proposal will include:

- Specific Aims, Impact, Significance and Innovation, (which may include a Hypothesis, Methods, and Approach) as outlined below in the Application Submission section,
- Expected Outcomes and Deliverables, a Timeline and Milestones.

Background

The navigator role continues to evolve year over year. As the field of navigation is becoming more common in practice and receiving federal recognition through reimbursement, there have been critical gaps around the tools and resources navigators need within their daily practice. While many efforts have taken place over the past few years by various organizations, an interconnected and modern framework is needed to interface standards, datasets, protocols and baselines to improve healthcare quality and outcomes through navigation. Applicants are encouraged to be informed of the [Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice](#) as well as the 8 domains of the [Patient Navigation Sustainability Assessment Tool](#) for additional background and inspiration to further promote or enrich the guidelines therein.

Award Characteristics

Duration: One year. All work must be completed within this timeframe. No-cost extensions will be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Award Amount:

- Up to \$500,000 including 10% institutional indirect costs if applicable
- The total award pool will be split among meritorious projects. Applicants are encouraged to accurately budget out the minimum needed to accomplish the work so that more projects may be funded. For instance, if your project requires \$125,000 then the likelihood of being successfully funded may increase allowing for more projects to be funded out of the total \$500,000 available for granting.
- The Executive Committee reserves the right to determine the final award amount for competitive projects based on need and potential impact.

Number of Awards: One or more.

Appropriate Budget Items:

- Salary and fringe benefits of the Principal Investigator, collaborating investigator(s), and other participants with faculty appointments.
- Project-related expenses, such as salaries of technical personnel essential to the conduct of the project, supplies, equipment, travel, and publication costs are allowed within reason.
- 10% institutional indirect costs from award funds when applicable.

Application Submission

Applications must be submitted using the AONN+ online submission portal

<https://www.aonnonline.org/grants>

The application requires the following documents.

1. Proposal (5-page limit including figures and tables, not including literature cited) Include the following sections and information:
 - **Specific Aims**
 - **Impact, Significance, and Innovation**
 - **[If Applicable]Hypothesis, Methods, and Approach**
 - Includes information on the dataset(s)
 - **Expected Outcomes and Deliverables**
 - **Timeline and Milestones**

Format

- Only Portable Document Format (PDF) and Word Document (DOCX) files will be accepted.
 - Document must be single-spaced.
 - No more than 15 characters per inch (cpi) or an average of no more than 15 characters per inch (includes symbols, punctuation and spaces).
 - No less than ¾" margins allowed.
 - 60 lines per page are the maximum allowed (The average number of lines per page using the font and point size below will be approximately 50-55 lines)
 - Arial Font style, 12-point font size for Windows users; Helvetica Font style, 12-point font size for Macintosh users
 - Figures, charts, tables, graphics and legends may be smaller in size but must be clear and legible
 - 5-page limit
 - There are many example templates available online for you to choose from.
2. Literature Cited (no page limit)
List all literature citations for your Proposal. There is no page limit for literature references cited.

Citation references should be limited to relevant and current literature; be concise and select only those references cited in the Proposal. Standard abbreviations are acceptable with two exceptions: full titles and full paging must be provided. Use of [EndNote](#), [Mendeley](#), [RefWorks](#) or similar programs is encouraged.

Each reference must list:

- Authors in the same order as they appear on the paper (list all or up to 15)
 - Title
 - Name of the book or journal
 - Volume number
 - Page numbers
 - Year of publication
3. **Biosketch (5-page limit)**
Use of the [NIH General biographical](#) sketch is not required for a successful grant, but may help with reviewer's confidence of your team's ability to complete the project.
4. **[Data Access Approval Letters](#) (no page limit)**
Include letters declaring approval of access from Data Owners or Data Access Committees for all datasets proposed in your work. Please also include Institutional Review Board approval letters if required..
5. **[Budget Justification Form](#) (2-page limit)**
The Budget Justification form requests minimal narrative explanation of expenses proposed for the project. With your expectation to attend the 2026 AONN+ annual summit, you may include \$1,000-\$3,000 in travel costs in your budget justification. A proper budget breakdown should include: Personnel costs, Equipment costs, Travel (Conference attendance), Consultants, and Sub-contracts as well as the 10% indirect costs if your institution will use it. Reference the [NIH guidelines](#) for an example. Please submit in a .docx or .pdf. You may copy graphs and tables from excel.

Peer Review Criteria

Applicants should never contact reviewers regarding their applications. Discussing scientific content of an application or attempting to influence review outcome will constitute a conflict of interest in the review. Reviewers must notify the AONN+ if contacted by an applicant.

Reviewers will comment on the following criteria, which should be fully addressed in the proposal.

Impact, Significance, and Innovation: Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies to address the question? If the project is completed, will it add to the knowledge around care delivery of oncology navigation programs or will the project create tools to enhance the access and adherence of resources and standards of care for the navigation community? How does the proposed work enhance....

Hypothesis and Approach: Is the hypothesis testable? Does the approach include enough detailed information on the proposed solution? Does the solution solve or address one of the themes identified in the Purpose section?

Investigator(s): Is the investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the principal investigator and other listed personnel and staff of the project? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)?

Access: Does the investigator have the necessary access or approval to conduct the proposed work?

Note: As applicants have 5 pages for the application, reviewers are aware of this and will be instructed to focus on innovation and addressing the identified themes.

Eligibility

These grants are open to experienced professionals in all fields. Work and experience in the field of oncology navigation is strongly preferred. Collaboration with other scientists (in any field) is optional. Applicants are to provide proposals that adhere to the above broad objectives, while specifically addressing the outlined goals.

Faculty/staff members must be committed to conducting research at time of application. There is no field of study restriction. Applicant must demonstrate ability to complete the project proposal with the allotted time and money made available by the grant.

Other than the requirement that the Principal Project Leader be independent, eligibility for AONN+ are not restricted by experience level or seniority. While no minimum percent effort is specified, the leader must demonstrate that adequate time will be devoted to ensuring successful completion of the proposed project. Percentage of effort must be documented for each named collaborating investigator.

The AONN+ tools advancing navigation awards are limited to non-profit or public institutions, such as: medical, osteopathic and dental schools, veterinary schools, schools of public health, pharmacy schools, nursing schools, universities and colleges, public and voluntary hospitals and other non-profit institutions that can demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research. Applications will be accepted from federal employees and Veterans Administration employees.

At the time of application, the principal investigator must have one of the following designations:

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent resident
- Pending permanent resident. Applicants must have applied for permanent residency and have filed form I-485 with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and have received authorization to legally remain in the United States (having filed an Application for Employment Form I-765).
- E-3 Visa - specialty occupation worker
- H1-B Visa - temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- J-1 Visa - exchange visitor
- O-1 Visa - temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences

- TN Visa - NAFTA Professional
- G-4 Visa - family member of employee of international organizations and NATO
- Hold a faculty position at a foreign University which meets foreign equivalency determinants for a non-profit in the United States.

Relevant Policies

Awards are not intended to supplement or duplicate currently funded work. Rather, it is expected that submitted applications will describe projects that are clearly distinct from ongoing research activities in the applicant's laboratory or work stream. Minor variations from existing research projects are not sufficient to constitute independent and distinct projects. Additional policies may be applied in the award agreement, if awarded.

Awards are non-transferable to other institutions. The grantees will maintain fiscal responsibility for the entire award.

Award Selection and Other Policies

Final funding recommendations will be approved by the Executive Committee.

Awardees will be required to attend the 2026 AONN+ annual meeting and submit an abstract poster.

Interim Assessment: Awardees must report progress on a semi-annual (twice a year) basis. Progress reporting may take the form of written reports, video internet based, and/or face to face visits. Reporting will be focused on achievement of stated milestones as indicated in the project timeline.

Final Assessment: Upon completion, the awardee will be evaluated on the successful completion of the experiments outlined in the specific aims and stated milestones as well as abstracts, publications, and tools produced. Final assessment may be in the form of written reports, video internet based, and/or face to face meetings.

Applicant

- Proposal (5 pages)
- Literature Cited (no page limit)
- Biographical Sketch/Bibliography (5 pages)
- Data Access Approval Letter(s) (no page limit)
- Budget Justification Form (2 pages)
- Institutional Review Board Authorization (if needed)