



## ACS Leadership in Oncology Navigation (ACS LION™) Equity Support

### Request for Applications | ACS LION- ES

#### I. Background and Overview

The American Cancer Society Leadership in Oncology Navigation (ACS LION™) is a standardized training and credentialing program that helps patient navigators deliver essential nonclinical support to individuals, caregivers, and families facing cancer. Now available, the program meets the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) training requirements for "Principal Illness Navigation" reimbursement, as introduced in the 2024 CMS Physician Fee Schedule, and is aligned to professional oncology navigation (PONT) standards.

To date, navigation has been inconsistently available, and types and depth of services have varied. Training and credentialing will help build a standardized professional knowledge base and positively impact oncology patients by expanding access to high-quality navigation programs and services. Standardized training will also help reduce barriers and health disparities among various patient groups.

Additionally, Patient Navigation by trained professionals in clinical and community-based settings is a key component to improving cancer outcomes in the US, helping to ensure every cancer patient has access to timely, quality, and culturally competent care.

In 2023, the White House issued a Fact Sheet to announce new actions and commitments to end cancer as we know it. The new ACS nonclinical cancer navigation curriculum and credentialing program were included in this news, along with commitments from other nonprofits, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.

ACS will use our voice and credibility as the leading cancer non-profit and early champion of Patient Navigation to create and launch scalable navigation efforts through training and credentialing, implementation support, and capacity building.

Additionally, ACS will support access to the program through program access assistance opportunities, as a core value of our organization is that everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, find, treat, and survive cancer. This includes access to high-quality patient navigation across the cancer continuum.

Through this equitable program access assistance opportunity, ACS is offering ACS LION™ training access to a limited number of individuals at no charge. This approach is also to reduce financial barriers to obtaining access to the program on a limited basis for those who meet the eligibility requirements. This program access assistance will be in the form of an access code to be entered into the registration process instead of a payment for the program training access.

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 1.5 million volunteers dedicated to saving lives, celebrating lives, and leading the fight for a world without cancer. From breakthrough research, free lodging near treatment centers, a 24/7/365 live helpline, free rides to treatment, and convening powerful activists to

create awareness and impact, the Society is the only organization attacking cancer from every angle. For more information about the American Cancer Society, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

## II. Program Eligibility

<b>Geographic Scope</b>	United States and U.S. Territories
<b>Applicant Eligibility Criteria</b>	<p>The ACS LION™ program is designed for individuals providing non-clinical navigation services to cancer patient populations. The program access assistance opportunity is to help eliminate financial barriers to credentialing programs for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Additionally, there are various barriers for patient populations to obtain access to high-quality health care and patient navigation services. These barriers are complex and have many social, economic, and cultural influences that intertwine and impact each other.</p> <p>To ensure we are supporting an equitable approach to patient navigation training program access assistance, we ask that applicants are part of a program that has values and outcomes focused on these barriers to care for under-empowered, vulnerable, and disadvantaged patient populations. This can be determined by the varied race, ethnicity, gender, disability, social class, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religions, gender identity, primary spoken language, and geographic region of the patients served.</p> <p><b><u>Organization Eligibility</u></b> Your organization is one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Medical Center/System with Cancer Programs or Cancer Care Clinics</li> <li>• Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) providing cancer navigation services</li> <li>• Free and Charitable Clinics providing cancer navigation services</li> <li>• Non-Profit Health Systems with Cancer Programs or Cancer Care Clinics</li> <li>• Other Non-Profit Community Organizations that conduct direct preventive cancer screening or care for low-income, uninsured, underinsured, and medically vulnerable populations.</li> </ul> <p><i>Please note, for-profit organizations are not eligible</i></p> <p><b><u>Individual Eligibility</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants are employed full-time. <i>(An individual does not have to be full-time to gain access to the program, yet they do for program access assistance requirements)</i></li> <li>• Participants are serving diverse patient populations such as varied races, ethnicities, gender identities, disabilities, social classes, socioeconomic status, sexual orientations, religions, primary spoken languages, and reside in both rural and urban regions. Additionally, participants hold a commitment to improving the cultural competence of cancer care as patient navigators.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners participating in the credentialing training and assessment process must be at least 18 years of age.</li> <li>• Learners must reside and work within the United States or its territories (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) while participating in the ACS LION program and associated assessments.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Technology Requirements:</u></b> Learners should use a desktop or laptop computer to complete all ACS LION program requirements. Tablets and cell phones are not supported.</p> <p>Additional technology requirements must be met for the proctored program assessment, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a webcam</li> <li>• a functioning microphone (headphones are not permitted)</li> <li>• agree to download the Guardian browser (secure internet browser that connects learners to their ProctorU proctoring sessions; must be downloaded in advance)</li> <li>• a strong and stable internet connection to support screen sharing and remote proctoring software. To check your speed, please visit <a href="https://www.speedtest.net/">https://www.speedtest.net/</a></li> <li>• More information on the technology requirement and what learners can expect within the online proctoring process are available here: <a href="https://support.proctoru.com/hc/en-us/articles/9951434736525-Exam-Day-What-to-expect-Guardian">https://support.proctoru.com/hc/en-us/articles/9951434736525-Exam-Day-What-to-expect-Guardian</a></li> </ul> <p><i>The ACS reserves the right to verify all eligibility criteria. If an applicant is found to have falsified or misrepresented their eligibility, it is grounds for revocation of eligibility and/or certification status.</i></p>
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III. Requirements

<p><b>Area of Interest for this RFA</b></p>	<p>The ACS LION – Equity Support vision is to ensure individuals and organizations can provide high-quality standardized navigation through our training and credentialing program for their patient navigation teams. The goal of the ACS LION program is to ensure the nation’s professional navigators are receiving high-quality training that supports the advancement and sustainability of the profession, resulting in comprehensive care for people with cancer and their families. ACS is playing a lead role in the implementation of navigation across the country and ensures it is being done in a way that reflects the needs and preferences of people with cancer and their families.</p>
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	<p>The evidence is clear: navigation improves outcomes at the patient, caregiver, and health system level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We know, through ACS research and our own implementation, that patient navigation is an evidence-based intervention that can significantly reduce barriers.</li> <li>• We know it supports cancer patients and their families in managing a cancer diagnosis, particularly among historically marginalized communities.</li> </ul> <p>Recent updates to the 2024 Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Physician Fee Schedule offer professional non-clinical navigators a sustainable way to get reimbursed for the critical services they provide.</p> <p>Training and/or certification of navigators is required under the Final Rule for PIN services. ACS sees an important opportunity to use our voice, our credibility, and our subject matter expertise to help those navigators get trained in the CMS-required competencies and PONT Standards and credentialed so they can assure everyone, including Medicare, they are aligned to best practices in navigation. Learners who successfully complete the program (including the program assessment) will receive the ACS LION™ credential.</p> <p>By earning this credential, learners are joining other dedicated healthcare professionals in improving access to care through patient-centered support. Program benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater credibility as a formal endorsement of your knowledge of your patient navigation expertise</li> <li>• Improved knowledge and skills of the complex cancer care system</li> <li>• Enhanced understanding of how to tailor support by patient needs</li> <li>• Preparation for greater responsibility and professional development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target audience</b></p>	<p>The ACS LION Equity Support opportunity is offering ACS LION™ training and credentialing program enrollment to a limited number of individuals at no charge. This approach is also to reduce financial barriers to obtaining access to the program on a limited basis for those who meet the eligibility requirements. All approved applicants will receive an enrollment code for up to 5 learner seats in the program. As organizations apply, we want to remind you to request only access for those performing the patient navigation services.</p> <p>The ACS LION™ training and credentialing program is designed for individuals providing non-clinical navigation services or any organization employing individuals providing non-clinical navigation services. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health systems or community-based organizations that employ professional non-clinical navigators.</li> </ul>

- Health systems or community-based organizations that employ staff who perform non-clinical navigator duties.
- Government-run health delivery (e.g., community health departments, state health departments).

*Note that clinical navigators like oncology nurse navigators and clinical social work navigators may also perform non-clinical navigation services and are thus eligible for this program.*

**Eligible job titles may include but are not limited to:**

- Administration or Health System Leader
- Advanced Practice Provider
- Cancer Nurse Navigator
- Cancer Social Worker
- Case Manager
- Chronic Disease Navigator
- Clinical Allied Health Professional or Coordinator
- Community Health Worker
- Non-Clinical Allied Health Professional or Coordinator
- Non-Clinical Coordinator
- Non-Clinical Navigator
- Peer Educator or Patient Advisor
- Prefer not to answer
- Registered Nurse

**Technology Requirements:**

Learners should use a desktop or laptop computer to complete all ACS LION™ program requirements. Tablets and cell phones are not supported.

Additional technology requirements must be met for the proctored program assessment, including but not limited to:

- a webcam
- a functioning microphone (headphones are not permitted)
- agree to download the Guardian browser (secure internet browser that connects learners to their ProctorU proctoring sessions; must be downloaded in advance)
- a strong and stable internet connection to support screen sharing and remote proctoring software. Too check your speed, please visit <https://www.speedtest.net/>
- More information on the technology requirement and what learners can expect within the online proctoring process are available here: <https://support.proctoru.com/hc/en-us/articles/9951434736525-Exam-Day-What-to-expect-Guardian>

	<p><u>Minimum and recommended requirements</u> for a learner’s camera, operating system, RAM, microphones, and browsers are detailed on the ProctorU website.</p> <p>It is also strongly suggested that learners use a personal desktop or laptop (not a work computer) for the program assessment. Employer-issued computers may have stringent security settings and/or firewalls that prevent compliance with proctoring requirements.</p>
<b>Funding Amount</b>	The access support code to enroll in the training and credentialing program is valued at \$495, which includes the training and up to two attempts to take the proctored program final assessment to be credentialed. Program access and participation is granted for 90 days upon enrollment. <i>Each program/organization location is allowed up to FIVE learner seats to be awarded. Each awarded program/organization will be allotted access codes shared via email to their primary contact listed on their application for the ACS LION™ Program.</i>
<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFA release date: <b>August 30, 2024, at 8:00am Central Time</b></li> <li>• RFA closing date: <b>September 30, 2024, at 11:59pm Central Time</b></li> <li>• Scoring Rubric Review period: October 7, 2024, through October 31, 2024</li> <li>• Awardees notified: Between November 1 and November 7, 2024.</li> <li>• Access codes sent to awardees by: November 8th, 2024</li> <li>• Awardees take the ACS LION training program and final assessment between November 8th, 2024, to February 7th, 2025</li> <li>• Timeframe to collect data from those ACS LION credentialed: February 10, 2025 – August 10, 2025</li> </ul>
<b>How to Submit</b>	The ACS LION-ES application should be submitted via this form: <a href="https://forms.office.com/r/a6Z8G6Rczi">https://forms.office.com/r/a6Z8G6Rczi</a> <b><i>Application form does not open until August 30, 2024, at 8:00am Central Time</i></b>
<b>Questions</b>	For questions regarding this RFA, please direct them in writing to ACSLION@cancer.org
<b>Mechanism by Which Applicants Will Be Notified</b>	All applicants will be updated with application review decision via email between November 1 and November 7, 2024. This update will be sent to the contact listed as the primary person for ACS LION-ES communication as noted on the application.

#### IV. Application Requirements

Oncology program information for the area served (or going to be served with a new program) by the patient navigator going through the training. *For example, if the patient navigator or team only navigates patients diagnosed with breast cancer, the caseload would only reflect data from patients with that disease site, not the cancer program.*

Before applying, please review the information below required at the time of submission.

#### **Data Ask:**

1. New cases: The number of patients receiving navigation services for the first time during that month (list the number)

2. Number of open cases: The total number of patients continuing to receive navigation services during that month (list the number)
3. The month's total caseload: The sum of new and open cases (list the number)
4. Number of navigated patients who did not complete a scheduled appointment (list the number)
5. Top 3 barriers to care
6. Aggregate-level demographics of the patient population served:
  - Race
  - Ethnicity
  - Gender identity
  - Age
  - Cancer disease site
  - Zip codes of the served population (needed for understanding equity, urban/rural locations, and potential barriers to care)
  - Health Insurance Type
7. Professional titles and/or roles of the individuals you are requesting learning access for. The maximum one organization can request is FIVE learner seats.
8. Ability to have all requested learners complete the ACS LION training program and final assessment between November 8th, 2024, to February 7th, 2025
9. Agreement to collect and report data listed above from February 10, 2025 – August 10, 2025, and submit it to the ACS LION™ team by August 15, 2025. A reporting template will be provided by ACS to collect this data.

### **ACS Definitions**

**New cases:** The number of patients receiving navigation services for the first time during that month

**Open cases:** The total number of patients continuing to receive navigation services during that month

**Total caseload:** The sum of new and open cases

Note: While a single patient can be included as an open case and part of the total caseload repeatedly over several months, each patient can only be counted as a new patient once.

**Barriers to care:** Social determinants of health, which are complex and long-standing inequities that can impact a person's ability to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.