



## ACS Leadership in Oncology Navigation (ACS LION™) Equity Support Request for Applications | ACS LION– ES

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. Launched on January 1, 2024, 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 with [Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice](#). 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.

The vision of the ACS LION – Equity Support program is to empower individuals and organizations to deliver high-quality, standardized navigation through our comprehensive training and credentialing program for patient navigation teams. The goal of the ACS LION program is to ensure that professional navigators nationwide receive top-tier training that advances the profession, ultimately providing comprehensive care for people with cancer and their families, while emphasizing the importance of reimbursement for navigation services and supporting the financial sustainability of these critical roles.

The continuing expansion of [ACS' Leadership in Oncology Navigation \(ACS LION\)](#) program represents a significant step forward as ACS contributes to a multi-year effort to expand access to high-quality navigation services for patients and their families navigating treatment for cancer and other serious illnesses. This includes the release of the ACS LION Clinical Trials Navigation certificate and continuing education modules (Motivational Interviewing, Health Literacy Evaluation, and Patient Navigation Documentation) in January 2025, and the current development of additional content such as a supportive and palliative care navigation certificate. ACS is leading the implementation of navigation across the country, ensuring it aligns with the needs and preferences of cancer patients and their families. 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>	The ACS LION™ program is designed for individuals providing non-clinical navigation services to cancer patient populations. Please note that clinical navigators, such as oncology nurse navigators and clinical social work navigators, may also perform non-clinical navigation services and are therefore eligible for this program.

To ensure we are supporting inclusive access to patient navigation training and credentialing through ACS LION, we ask that applicants are part of a program that has values and outcomes focused on barriers to care for under-resourced, and underrepresented 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.

### **Organization Eligibility**

Your organization is one of the following:

- Academic Medical Center/System with Cancer Programs or Cancer Care Clinics
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) providing cancer navigation services
- Free and Charitable Clinics providing cancer navigation services
- [Non-Profit Health Systems with Cancer Programs or Cancer Care Clinics](#)
- Other non-profit community organizations providing direct cancer care for low-income, uninsured, underinsured, and medically vulnerable populations (Programs exclusively offering cancer prevention or screening services are not eligible)

*\*Please note, for-profit organizations are not eligible*

### **Individual Eligibility**

- Participants are employed full-time. *(An individual does not have to be full-time to gain access to the program, yet they do for program access assistance requirements)*
- 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.
- Learners participating in the credentialing training and assessment process must be at least 18 years of age.
- 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.

### **Technology Requirements:**

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

	<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>• webcam</li> <li>• functioning microphone (headphones are not permitted)</li> <li>• agreement to download the Guardian browser (secure internet browser that connects learners to their ProctorU proctoring sessions; must be downloaded in advance)</li> <li>• 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="#">ProctorU Support</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Minimum and recommended requirements</a> for a learner's camera, operating system, RAM, microphones, and browsers are detailed on the ProctorU website.</p> <p>It is strongly suggested learners use a personal desktop or laptop (<b>not a work computer</b>) for the program assessment. Employer-issued computers may have stringent security settings and/or firewalls that prevent compliance with proctoring requirements.</p> <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

<b>Area of Interest for this RFA</b>	<p>The evidence is clear: navigation significantly improves outcomes for patients, caregivers, and the health system as a whole. Recognizing the importance of financial sustainability, we understand the critical need and potential for reimbursement for navigation services to ensure these vital roles continue to thrive. Through ACS research and our own implementation, we know that patient navigation is an evidence-based intervention that effectively reduces barriers to care. It provides crucial support to cancer patients and their families in managing cancer diagnosis, especially within historically marginalized communities.</p> <p><i>The 2024 updates to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Physician Fee Schedule include several important changes. Among these, the reimbursement for non-clinical navigators stands out, providing a sustainable way for professional non-clinical</i></p>
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	<p><i>navigators to get reimbursed for the critical services they provide, ensuring the financial viability of these essential roles.</i></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 Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice and credentialed so they can assure everyone, including Medicare, they are aligned to best practices in navigation. Learners who successfully complete the program and 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>
<b>Target audience</b>	<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 learner seats in the program. As organizations apply, we want to remind you to request only access for those performing 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.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health systems or clinics that employ professional non-clinical navigators</li> <li>• Health systems or clinics that employ staff who perform non-clinical navigator duties</li> <li>• Government-run health delivery (e.g., community health departments, state health departments)</li> </ul> <p>Please note that clinical navigators, such as oncology nurse navigators and clinical social work navigators, may also perform non-clinical navigation services and are therefore eligible for this program.</p> <p><b>Eligible job titles may include but are not limited to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration or Health System Leader</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced Practice Provider</li> <li>• Cancer Nurse Navigator</li> <li>• Cancer Social Worker</li> <li>• Case Manager</li> <li>• Chronic Disease Navigator</li> <li>• Clinical Allied Health Professional or Coordinator</li> <li>• Community Health Worker</li> <li>• Non-Clinical Allied Health Professional or Coordinator</li> <li>• Non-Clinical Coordinator</li> <li>• Non-Clinical Navigator</li> <li>• Peer Educator or Patient Advisor</li> <li>• Registered Nurse</li> </ul>
<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. Each awarded program/organization will receive access codes shared via email to their primary contact listed on their application for the ACS LION-ES™ Program.
<b>Key Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFA release date: <b>May 9, 2025, at 8:00am CT</b></li> <li>• RFA closing date: <b>June 20, 2025, at 11:59pm CT</b></li> <li>• Scoring Rubric Review period: <b>June 23 -July 25, 2025</b></li> <li>• Awardees notified: <b>Week of August 4, 2025</b></li> <li>• Access codes sent to awardees by: <b>August 11, 2025</b></li> <li>• Awardees take the ACS LION training program and final assessment between <b>August 12 - November 10, 2025</b> (90-day window)</li> <li>• Data Collection Timeframe by individuals credentialed by ACS LION: <b>December 1, 2025 - February 28, 2026</b> &amp; submit to ACS by <b>March 13, 2026</b></li> </ul>
<b>How to Submit</b>	The ACS LION-ES application should be submitted via this form: <a href="#">ACS LION-ES 2025</a> <b>The application form will open on May 9, 2025, at 8:00 AM CT</b>
<b>Questions</b>	For any questions about this RFA, please send your inquiries in writing to <a href="mailto:ACSLION@cancer.org">ACSLION@cancer.org</a>
<b>Mechanism by Which Applicants Will Be Notified</b>	All applicants will receive an email update regarding the application review decision during the <b>week of August 4, 2025</b> . This update will be sent to the primary contact listed for ACS LION-ES communication on the application.

#### IV. Application Requirements

Oncology program information should pertain to the specific area served (or to be served with a new program) by the patient navigator undergoing training. For instance, if the patient navigator or team exclusively navigates patients diagnosed with breast cancer, the caseload data should only include patients with breast cancer, rather than data from the entire cancer program.

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

**Data required for application:**

1. New cases: Average number of patients receiving navigation services for the first time during a month
2. Open cases: Average number of patients continuing to receive navigation services during a month
3. Total caseload: Average sum of new and open cases
4. Top 3 barriers to care
5. Aggregate-level demographics of the patient population served (percentages):
  - Race
  - Ethnicity
  - Gender identity
  - Age
  - Health Insurance Type
6. Professional titles and roles of the individuals for whom you are requesting learning access.
7. Ability to have all requested learners complete the ACS LION training program and final assessment within the 90-day window between **August 12, 2025**, through **November 10, 2025**.
8. Agreement to complete a survey and data collection from **December 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026**, and submit it to the ACS LION™ team by **March 13, 2026**. A reporting template will be provided by ACS to collect this data.

**ACS Data 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.