

National Research Grant Round 2026

Expression of Interest Guidelines Clinical Trials Access Project Grant

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Introduction

Document purpose

The aim of the Cancer Society’s National Research Grant Round is to fund high-quality research across the cancer continuum, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and supportive care. This guide is for those who wish to apply for a Project Grant.

About the Cancer Society of New Zealand

The Cancer Society’s vision is “Working together towards a future free from cancer”.

The Cancer Society’s mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer. We support anyone, anywhere, with any cancer. Our focus areas include:

Providing community support to people affected by cancer, their families/whānau and carers.

Advocating for better outcomes: we drive change that achieves equitable outcomes across the cancer continuum.

Supporting research and innovation: by increasing investment in research, and driving targeted, equitable and evidence-based outcomes.

Partnering for impact: by working collaboratively with organisations that share similar goals to the Cancer Society.

The Cancer Society is reliant on funding support from the communities in which it works

Research and Innovation at the Cancer Society

The Cancer Society’s Research and Innovation Strategy highlights our big dream to build the research foundations for a comprehensive national cancer network that connects people, knowledge, and resources to enable coordinated research activity and increase access and equitable health outcomes. This network will be equity-led, uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embed Māori leadership

Priority populations

Our strategy prioritises Māori, Pacific peoples and those living in rural areas, as these populations experience the greatest inequities in cancer outcomes across Aotearoa.

Our Strategic Priorities:

- **Strengthening the cancer research workforce** by supporting early-career researchers, clinical professionals, and medical and allied health students to engage in research.
- **Elevating lived experience in research and innovation** to ensure the research we support reflects real-world needs.
- **Increasing access to clinical trials** by increasing support for, and engagement with activities that integrate research into care.

About this grant

The Clinical Trial Access Project Grant is intended to enable the conduct of more clinical trials in New Zealand and to improve access for people with cancer. Applications may be submitted for research and development activities at any stage of the clinical trial pathway, provided there is a clear and credible link to the future initiation of a clinical trial. Applications that are closest to implementation, particularly those that are expected to lead directly to the opening of a clinical trial or pilot clinical trial in New Zealand, will be scored more favorably. In other words, the grant is open to a broad range of enabling work, and proposals with a clear, near-term pathway to trial activation will be considered most strongly aligned with the purpose of the grant.

Contact information

Please contact the Cancer Society's Research & Innovation team with any questions during the grant application process at research@cancer.org.nz.

1. Eligibility

Description	Maximum value of the award	Maximum grant duration
<p>The Clinical trial access project grant for 2026 is designed to increase access to clinical trials for people with cancer in New Zealand by supporting the development, initiation, or reach of investigator-initiated clinical trials.</p>	<p>The indicative budget for this grant round is up to \$300,000.</p>	<p>36 months</p>

This funding aims to focus opportunity and address key gaps that limit access to clinical trials, particularly where international study funding does not include New Zealand sites. Grants of up to \$300,000 may be used to:

- Enable the opening of New Zealand sites in investigator-initiated clinical trials where local conduct is not otherwise funded.
- Support pilot or feasibility studies that generate the evidence needed to progress to larger clinical trials.
- Fund planning and development activities necessary to establish protocols, design infrastructure and processes, and validate methodologies that will lead to the launch of a clinical trial.

Grant applications will be considered from any appropriately qualified person, provided the principal investigator is a resident of New Zealand or intends to become one.

A principal investigator may only submit one grant application in each Grant Round. A researcher who has submitted an application as principal investigator may also be named as an associate investigator in one additional application in the same round.

Please note the Cancer Society only funds ‘direct costs’ of the research and does not pay any ‘indirect costs’ of the research, such as institutional overhead recovery.

2. Application process and timelines

All grants will be awarded by open competition for all individuals who meet the above eligibility criteria. Applications will be assessed by the Cancer Society’s National Scientific Advisory Committee (NSAC). The final funding decision will be made by the Cancer Society’s National Board. Applications will be assessed through several stages:

22 June 2026	Open for applications
3 August 2026	Deadline for Expressions of Interest (1 pm, submitted via the grant portal)
August 2026	NSAC meeting to assess Expressions of Interest
7 September 2026	EOI Results, Requests for Full Proposals Sent
12 October 2026	Deadline for Full Proposals (1 pm, submitted via the grant portal)
October 2026	Applications sent for external peer review
22 December 2026	Applicants receive peer review comments and are given the opportunity to provide a rebuttal (no more than one page in total)
18 January 2027	Deadline for rebuttals (1 pm, submitted via the grant portal)
February 2027	The NSAC meet to review the applications and make a recommendation to the Cancer Society’s National Board.
March 2027	The Cancer Society’s National Board takes into account the NSAC’s recommendation and makes a final funding decision

The Cancer Society may refuse to consider an application if it considers actions of the applicant to be contrary to the interests of the Cancer Society or may bring the Cancer Society into disrepute.

Submission

The EOI application form should be completed and submitted on the grant portal by **3 August 2026**.

Reporting

Applicants successful in receiving funding through the Grant Round will be required to submit annual progress reports, a final report and a one-year post-project report to capture outcomes that will lead to long-term impact. Reports will include a lay person's summary, which may be used to inform the public about the work we support, an update on the project's timelines and milestones, whether they are met, partially met or delayed, and an explanation for any delays. The Cancer Society recommends writing lay summaries at the **reading age of twelve years old**. Annual reports in Te Reo Māori must also provide the English translation. Funding for the subsequent year will only be released upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report.

The Cancer Society acknowledges that some clinical trials may include activities that extend beyond the 36-month grant period. Applicants will be asked to identify these activities in the application form. On a case-by-case basis, successful grant recipients may be asked to provide marginal reporting on these activities to help capture the impact of the research funded by the Cancer Society through this grant.

Privacy provisions

The information requested in an application will be used for assessing that application and, in a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for Cancer Society statistical purposes. All research applications will be stored in a secure place. Security and confidentiality will be preserved for any application declined. Personal information contained in the application may be made available to external referees and members of the Cancer Society National Scientific Advisory Committee reviewing the application. When an application is successful, the Cancer Society reserves the right to publish the applicants' names, details of the Host Institution, lay summary and funding awarded. You can find the Cancer Society's privacy policy online [here](#).

3. Assessment criteria

Applicants should address the following criteria in their application:

- **Strong rationale for research:** it addresses important questions, likely to result in significant benefit for people affected by cancer, or to advance the scientific understanding of cancer.
- **Research team:** right mix of expertise for the project.
- **Research design:** excellent and appropriate research design.
- **Equity:** clear identification of how the research will contribute to equitable cancer outcomes for all New Zealanders, where applicable. For further information on the Cancer Society's equity objectives, please refer to the [Research and Innovation Strategy 2026 – 2031](#).
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** The proposal should demonstrate commitment and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and responsiveness to Māori. For an example of the type of considerations you could consider, please consult this document: [Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Health Research in Aotearoa](#).
- **Research impact:** the expected outcomes of the proposed research will add value and contribute to achieving the “big dream” and ultimately the Cancer Society’s vision. For further information on the “big dream”, please refer to the Cancer Society’s [Research and Innovation Strategy 2026 – 2031](#).

4. Grant Portal

Applications must be submitted through the Cancer Society Grant Portal. User guides for the Grant Portal can be found [here](#). If you are having any issues accessing or using the portal, please contact the Research & Innovation team at research@cancer.org.nz.

A note on word limits for each section of the application form

Lay Summary of Research: 150 words

Aims & Objectives: 200 words

Rationale: 450 words

Research Design: 350 words

Equity: 225 – 250 words

Te Tiriti o Waitangi: 200 words

Research Impact: 200 words