

GUIDELINES

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

Applications close Friday 5th April 2019

Background

NEMICS is a clinical network that aims to support the implementation of high quality support, information and care for people living with cancer and their carers.

The service improvement grants program has been initiated in response to requests to support small quality improvement projects that will **improve patient or carer outcomes/experience**. It targets time-limited service improvement projects that cannot be funded within existing hospital resources. The grants are competitive. Projects that lead to sustainable service improvements and have lessons that could be applied across NEMICS health services will be prioritised for funding.

Projects should align with the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways www.cancer.org.au/ocp and the Victorian Cancer Plan 2016-2020 www2.health.vic.gov.au.

Aims

This grants program aims to **improve patient or carer experience/outcomes** through supporting projects that address one or more of the following quality dimensions:

- **Patient Centeredness**
- **Safety**
- **Acceptability** (the degree to which a service meets the needs and expectations of informed consumers)
- **Appropriateness** (using evidence to do the right thing, with the right patient, at the right time, avoiding over and under utilisation and variation in the standard of care provided)
- **Effectiveness**
- **Access**
- **Efficiency**

Guidelines

Projects must address one or more of the program aims as specified above.

Activities that may be supported by the grants:

- scoping projects
- small quality improvement

Scoping projects must:

- identify a problem (provide initial data)
- gather evidence to define the problem
- outline a plan for testing strategies to address the problem
- be completed within 6-9 months (including reporting)

Quality improvement projects must:

- describe a problem (provide evidence)
- plan to implement and evaluate strategies that will address the problem
- impact patient experience/outcomes
- be completed within 9 months (including evaluation and reporting)

Funding

Applicants can access funds for the following categories:

- scoping projects: up to \$5,000
- quality improvement: up to \$15,000

The following items are not eligible for funding under this grants program:

- equipment
- recurrent EFT
- databases
- reimbursement for service improvement activities that have already been funded

Applications

Please use the designated application and abstract (consumer lay summary) forms. Provide sufficient detail to enable evaluation against the criteria detailed in table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria

Eligibility criteria (mandatory)	Weighting
Lead applicant is a health professional working in a NEMICS health service	Y / N
The project has line manager support, including agreement to release staff for the project and confirmation that project cannot be delivered within existing resources (signed)	Y / N
The project has executive sponsor support, including documentation that the project is in line with the strategic/operational direction of the health service (signed)	Y / N
Applications must demonstrate evidence of consultation with a consumer/s in project design. Projects must seek to improve patient or carer outcomes / experience	Y / N
Applications must address one or more of the quality dimensions listed under the aims and describe how the project will align care with the Optimal Care Pathways and/or Victorian cancer plan	Y / N
Application must demonstrate how project timelines will be achieved. Quality improvement projects must impact patient/carers experience/outcomes within the 9 month project timeframe (including ethics approval if required)	Y / N
Consumer impact score	
Consumer Reference Group rating of the impact of the project on patient or carer outcomes/experience. This score will heavily influence which projects are selected for funding, but will not be summed with panel rating scores.	_ / 7
A. Potential impact for cancer consumers Does the application explain the extent and significance of the problem/s? Does the application outline how consumers will benefit from improvements and the probability of achieving these benefits?	
B. Consumer involvement Does the application describe how consumers have been involved in the development of the project plan? Does the application outline plans for ongoing consumer involvement for the duration of the project?	

Selection criteria	Weighting
Panel Criteria	
A. Logic Does the application outline a logical plan to gather data to define the problem/s? (scoping projects) OR Does the application demonstrate comprehensive problem definition including evidence and analysis of causes? (quality improvement projects)	__ / 5
B. Logic Does the application outline a plan for testing strategies to address the problem/s? (scoping projects) OR Does the application outline a logical methodology to address the problem/s and evaluate outcomes? (quality improvement projects)	__ / 5
C. Deliverable Will the project be deliverable within planned timeframes and allocated resources?	__ / 5
D. Impact/benefit to patients and service To what extent will the project outcomes have potential to impact patients/carers?	__ / 5
E. Sustainability Does the application include a strategy for the sustainability of the project beyond the planned timeframe? (quality improvement projects)	__ / 5

The selection process

- Step 1** Applications are reviewed against the eligibility criteria
- Step 2** NEMICS consumers review eligibility of applications for their impact on patient/carer/ family experience and outcomes
- Step 3** Eligible applications are assessed against the selection criteria by a panel comprising health service managers, clinicians, consumers, redesign consultant and NEMICS quality and projects manager
- Step 4** All lead applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process
- Step 5** Applicants may be asked to provide additional detail prior to release of funds

Requirements of successful applicants

Claiming funds

Quality improvement successful applicants will be entitled to claim:

- 70% of the agreed amount of funds at project commencement
- 30% of agreed funds at project completion

Scoping project successful applicants will be wholly funded at project commencement.

Variation to requirements

The NEMICS program office reserves the right to vary the funding requirements. Any change to the requirements will be openly communicated for the purposes of subsequent funding rounds.

Reporting

Successful lead applicants **must provide:**

- a short mid-project report (quality improvement projects only)
- a final report within one month of project completion
- a short abstract (consumer lay summary) for publication in the NEMICS newsletter/website

It is expected that those receiving funds will share lessons learned within their health service and the wider NEMICS community. This includes sharing the lessons learned with colleagues. The successful lead applicant must also be available to present findings to a broader NEMICS audience, as requested by the NEMICS Directorate for up to 12 months following receipt of the grant.

The successful lead applicant will be encouraged to submit an abstract for the Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (VICS) Conference in 2019. NEMICS will be happy to provide funding for conference registration where applications are accepted.

Grants program evaluation

Applicants will be asked to participate in an evaluation process to inform future grants planning.

Submitting an application

Download application and abstract (consumer lay summary) forms at www.nemics.org.au

If you have any questions about the application process please contact Amy Sercombe on 9496 3213 or amy.sercombe@austin.org.au.

Please submit application and abstract (consumer lay summary) by email by Friday 5th April 2019 to amy.sercombe@austin.org.au

Questions about the service improvement grants program

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