

I. Background and Overview

The American Cancer Society (ACS) is excited to announce the upcoming grant cycle of ACS Pups Assisting with Support (PAWS) aimed at expanding access to facility dogs in pediatric oncology settings. ACS PAWS is part of our commitment to improving the lives of children and teens with cancer, along with their families and care teams.

Research has shown that animal-assisted therapy can significantly alleviate symptoms such as anxiety, stress, depression, and pain among hospitalized children. It also enhances various aspects of their quality of life, including feelings of joy and calmness, positive recollections of hospital experiences, and an overall sense of well-being. Moreover, this therapy has demonstrated the ability to reduce parenting stress and is regarded as a safe and beneficial intervention for children with cancer.

The primary objective of the ACS PAWS grant program is to facilitate access to specially trained facility dogs and their expert handlers who are dedicated to working full-time with individuals affected by cancer and their families.

The grant will span from September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025.

II. Program Eligibility

Geographic Scope: United States and U.S. Territories

Applicant Eligibility Criteria:

1. Organizations eligible for consideration include children's hospitals or other hospitals with dedicated pediatric departments providing oncology services to children.
2. Applicants should either possess an existing facility dog or anticipate receiving their first facility dog during the grant period. Facility dogs are full-time employees who go to work every day with their handler and utilize special skills and training in animal-assisted therapy to help achieve specific treatment or program goals. Volunteer pet therapy programs are not eligible for consideration currently.
3. The facility dog must be actively engaged in providing visits to pediatric oncology patients and their families, either currently or with plans to do so throughout the grant period. These visits can occur within hospital settings or outpatient oncology clinics.
4. Previous ACS PAWS applicants are welcome to apply. However, current ACS PAWS grantees are not eligible.

III. Requirements

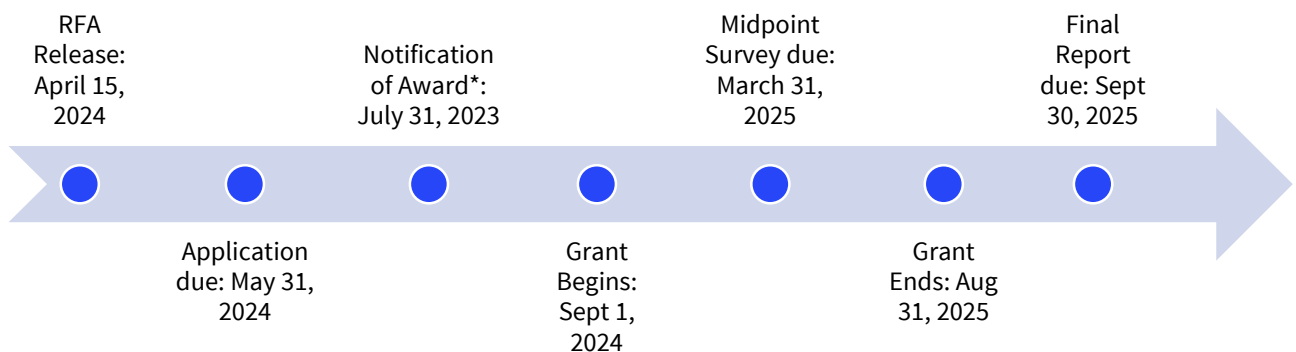
Area of Interest for this RFA:

The goal of ACS PAWS is to increase access to specially trained therapy dogs who work full-time with children and teens with cancer, the people that matter most to them, and their medical teams. The intent of the ACS PAWS grants is to provide monetary funds to children’s hospitals to support new or maintain existing facility dog programs for children and teens with cancer. It is expected that hospitals applying for funding demonstrate how they will utilize funds to build upon their existing facility dog program or launch a new one, as well as a commitment to pediatric and adolescent oncology.

Funding Requirements:

- Ten (10) grants will be awarded.
- Proposed projects will be funded for \$10,000 for the 12-month project period, including 10% indirect costs.
- 75% of grant funding will be distributed following execution of a fully signed Contract Agreement. The additional 25% of grant funding will be distributed following submission of the Midpoint Survey.
- Funds awarded must be allocated toward the maintenance and enhancement of the facility dog program. Allowable expenses may include veterinary costs, adoption fees for the dog, training for primary or secondary handlers or staff members, procurement of dog food and necessary supplies, grooming expenses, tools or materials to enhance animal-assisted therapy visits, as well as the improvement or upkeep of dog facilities such as designated respite areas, among others.
- Grants may not support clinical research projects. Projects evaluating the efficacy of animal-assisted therapy will not be considered.

Timeline and Key Dates:



**All applicants will be notified via email by the date noted.*



IV. Application Requirements

The following information will be required at the time of submission.

- Hospital information
- Pediatric oncology information, including patient demographic information
- Facility dog program information
- Agreement to collect and report data through midpoint and end of grant progress reports such as:
 - Total number of facility dog visits to children and teens with cancer during the grant period, visit frequency, and duration
 - Aggregate demographics (e.g., age, race, sex, cancer type) of children and teens served through the program
 - Patient and family satisfaction
 - Patient and family stories, quotes, and impact statements
 - Photos (ACS will provide an Image and Story Release Form for your hospital to photograph patients, their families, and staff)
- Proposed budget (Budget Template is included in RedCap application, see link below)
 - Description of how you will utilize the funds
- Contact information

How to Submit: The application will be submitted via RedCap: <https://redcap.link/acspaws>

Questions: For questions regarding this RFA, please direct them to acspaws@cancer.org



Tips for a Successful ACS PAWS Application

By following these tips, you can enhance the quality of your ACS PAWS application and increase your chances of securing funding to support your facility dog program in pediatric oncology.

- **Understand the Purpose:** Familiarize yourself with the goals and objectives of ACS PAWS. Tailor your application to align with our mission of supporting animal-assisted therapy for children and teens with cancer. Applications that do not discuss their facility dog program's intersection with pediatric oncology will not receive funding.
- **Clearly Define Program Objectives:** Outline specific goals and objectives for your facility dog program. Clearly articulate how the program will benefit children and teens with cancer, their families, and the healthcare team.
- **Demonstrate Impact:** Provide evidence of the positive impact that your facility dog program has on children and teens undergoing cancer treatment. We already know the impact of facility dogs and the benefits of animal-assisted therapy, generally. We want to hear about the impact of your program and of your dogs and handler teams, specifically.
- **Outline Program Structure:** Clearly describe how your facility dog program is structured and implemented within the pediatric oncology setting. Include details about training, handler responsibilities, and program logistics.
- **Highlight Team Collaboration:** Emphasize the collaboration between healthcare professionals, dog handlers, dogs, and other relevant partners in implementing the facility dog program. Showcase how teamwork enhances patient care and support.
- **Provide a Budget Breakdown:** Include a detailed budget that outlines the costs associated with either establishing, growing, or maintaining your facility dog program. Clearly justify each expense and explain how ACS PAWS funding will be utilized. Use the provided template.
- **Be Concise and Clear:** Keep your application concise and easy to read. Use clear language and avoid jargon or technical terms that may be unfamiliar to reviewers. Ensure that your application is well-organized and free of errors. We flag applications that have data estimates that seem unachievable.
- **Review and Revise:** Before submitting your application, carefully review and revise it to ensure accuracy and completeness. Consider seeking feedback from colleagues, the facility dog handlers, and program leads to strengthen your proposal further.
- **Submit on Time:** The application deadline is 11:59 pm EST (New York, GMT -5) on May 31st.