

## QI/PI Project Grant REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – APPLICATION GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) Accreditation Services has been helping hospitals and health systems improve CV care processes and patient outcomes to achieve the highest standard of cardiac care. We believe this is best accomplished by using quality and performance improvement scientific methods.

To support cardiovascular quality initiative (QI) and performance improvement (PI) project, the ACC's Accreditation Services Foundation Committee (AFC) provides funding opportunities that support future cardiovascular quality initiatives, particularly those that highlight the importance of ACC's accreditation programs. These grants are made possibly from the endowment provided by the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care (SCPC), which was a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving CV care, preserving its legacy of innovation and excellence through ACC Accreditation Services.

Please review the application guidelines carefully, as they provide important information and support throughout the application process.

### FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The AFC QI/PI grant is intended to support direct costs associated with the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative quality improvement initiatives aligned with cardiovascular care priorities and highlight the importance of ACC Accreditation Services programs.

#### To be considered for funding, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The proposal for funding will **ONLY** be paid to United States based healthcare organizations.
- Applicants can request up to \$100,000 per proposal application submission.
- Priority in funding is given to applicants that demonstrate affiliation with an ACC accredited and/or certified facility.
  - To locate ACC Accredited facilities via the [Accreditation Map](#) and visit [Find Your Heart a Home](#) for a list of facilities that participate in ACC's quality improvement programs.

#### ✓ Allowable Expenses

Funds **may** be used to support:

- Personnel time specifically dedicated to the project (e.g., QI coordinator, data

- abstractor, analyst, project manager)
- Educational materials for patients or care teams
- Supplies or clinical tools directly related to the intervention
- Software or data analytic subscriptions essential to the project
- Modest travel expenses related to project dissemination (e.g., presenting at annual ACC Quality Summit, or another ACC-sponsored meeting)
- Printing or design costs for toolkits, forms, or posters used within the QI program

### **Non-allowable Expenses**

*Funds **may not** be used for:*

- Institutional overhead or indirect costs (e.g., general administrative fees, facilities, utilities)
- Equipment not directly tied to the project
- Salaries for staff not actively participating in the project
- General institutional operating costs
- Food and beverage expenses (unless directly tied to patient engagement and pre-approved)
- Cost for accreditation product and fees

**Note:** This grant does **not cover indirect or overhead cost**. All proposed expenses must be directly linked to the execution of the proposed QI intervention. Application must provide justification.

## **PROPOSAL TOPIC CRITERIA**

The proposal criteria allow for a detailed approach to ensuring that the QI/PI in cardiovascular care can be effectively planned, implemented, and evaluated to drive meaningful in-patient care and outcomes. In general, proposed projects will be expected to be completed within 12 months of award notification, unless otherwise explicitly stated in the posted request for proposals.

The AFC serves as the selection committee and will evaluate the merits of each proposal and recommend the projects to be funded. The committee seeks proposals that are well conceived and demonstrate sound methodology:

1. Present a project design and methodology including specific aims, significance, innovation, and approach, that can answer the proposed questions.
2. Demonstrate that the project team is knowledgeable on the topic and qualified to complete a high-quality project.
3. Include matched funds or in-kind contributions to strengthen the feasibility of conducting the project and completing it within the contracted timeline.
4. Support operational improvements, patient care and safety, and efficiency in cardiovascular care.

**Focus areas of desired projects or proposals include those that support cardiovascular care QI or PI, and patient outcomes that:**

- contribute to the evidence base for accreditation criteria
- develop or evaluate cardiovascular QI or PI that strengthens the accreditation process
- provide opportunities for education that supports QI or PI projects
- improve EMS systems of care in collaboration with community hospitals providing accreditation-related services
- provide public health education to improve community measures/outcomes related to early recognition of heart attack symptoms and appropriate action steps (e.g., [Early Heart Attack Care \(E.H.A.C\)](#))
- Support scholarly or creative work that further the principles of cardiovascular patient care QI or PI using [ACC Accreditation Services](#)

**Examples of projects addressing the above focus areas include those that:**

- Implementation of Clinical Pathways
- Telemedicine for Remote Monitoring
- Cardiac Rehabilitation Programs
- Quality Improvement Initiatives
- Community Outreach and Education Initiatives
- Risk Factor Modification Programs
- Enhanced Care Coordination and Transition Management

# Step-by-Step Instructions to Submitting Proposal Application in Cadmium ScoreCard

Only applications submitted through the site will be accepted.

## Step 1: Access the Cadmium Proposal Submission Portal

1. Go to the official submission site
  - A direct link is located on the Funding Opportunity page here: <https://cvquality.acc.org/accreditation/funding-opportunities>
  - Please note that the submission site link will only be available once the portal opens and will no longer be accessible after the portal closes. We encourage you to visit the Accreditation Services page regularly for the most up-to-date information.
2. Click **“Login”** in the top-right corner.
  - If you have an existing account, enter your email and password.
  - If you’re a new user, click **“Join Now”** and create an account.

## Step 2: Start a New Application

1. From the homepage dashboard, ensure that you see the correct event appropriate for your submission **“20XX Quality Initiative Funding - QI/PI Project Grant”** proposal request.
2. Then select **“Click here to begin a new QI.PI Project Grant Proposal Submission Application”** which prompt you to the section to start a new proposal.
  - Enter your proposal title. The title should be concise and serve as a clear identifier for your project. Please note that you will also be asked to provide a short title in the Project Overview section.
3. After entering all required details, select **“Submit.”** You will then be redirected to the main homepage to complete the remaining tasks for your application. From there, you will see your proposal title, receive a proposal submission application ID, and be able to view the submission status. Please note that if you choose to withdraw your application, it will no longer be considered for review.

## Step 3: Complete the Required Task for Application Submission

Your application will be divided into a series of tasks. Those tasked list items include:

### 1. Key Participants:

Identify and list the individuals or teams who will play a central role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the QI/PI project. Include names, titles, organizational affiliations, and specific responsibilities. This section should highlight clinical leads, project managers, data analysts, and any collaborators essential to the success of the initiative. Be sure to note any ACC-accredited facility affiliations and relevant expertise. The role of Principal Investigator carries with it full authority for the administrative, scientific, technical, and financial management of the awarded project.

As such, the individual must be a good representative responsible for the design, conduct, and reporting of their project.

## **2. Institution and Team:**

List the primary Principal Investigator and any co investigators. Include institutional details. \*A PI is the lead individual responsible for the overall design, execution, and management of a project.

## **3. Project Overview:**

Provide a high-level summary of the QI/PI initiative proposal submission for funding consideration. Include the project's primary goals, target population, anticipated outcomes, and alignment with ACC Accreditation Services.

This overview should describe the implementation strategy, timeline, and key stakeholders involved. Use this section to give reviewers a clear understanding of the project's scope and impact. \*Please note that you can upload up to 3 supporting documents on task 5.

Provide a clear and concise overview of your project.

### ***Specific Aims***

- State concisely the goals of the proposed project and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results will exert on the focus area being addressed.
- List succinctly the specific objectives of the proposal (e.g., test a stated hypothesis; create a novel QI/PI design; solve a specific problem; challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice' or address a critical barrier to clinical performance, systems development, education, dissemination of evidence, or accreditation).

### ***Significance***

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the focus area that the proposed project addresses.
- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad focus areas.
- Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventive interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

### ***Innovation***

- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current design, operations, research, or clinical practice paradigms.
- Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

- Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

### ***Approach***

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, outcomes/endpoints, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
- Include information on preliminary studies, data, and experience pertinent to this application. Preliminary data can be an essential part of an application and help to establish the likelihood of success of the proposed project.

Project Timeline – applicants must include a clear project timeline that outlines the major phases of the quality improvement initiative. The timeline should demonstrate how the project will be executed within the grant period.

Please include:

- Proposed Start Date (MM/YYYY)
- Proposed End Date (MM/YYYY)
- Key milestones (e.g., planning, implementation, data collection, evaluation)
- Any institutional or regulatory review timelines

**Note:** All projects should be completed within 12 months of the award date unless otherwise approved.

**4. Funding Amount Requested:** Enter the total amount requested and attach your budget justification using the provided template.

- Budget Justification
- Please include a brief explanation for each item listed in your proposed budget. The justification should clarify why the cost is necessary for the success of your quality improvement initiative.

### **5. Upload Supporting Documents**

Upload up to 3 supporting documents in Excel, Word or PDF formats. This will allow you to provide supporting materials that were presented in project overview section.

**6. Terms & Conditions Acknowledgement:** Check requested boxes confirming compliance with ACC's policies (e.g., no indirect/overhead costs, use of funds)

**Budget**

Indicate how the money will be spent. Provide narrative justification for all direct expenditures and a timeline for project activities. AFC awards will not pay indirect or overhead costs. The RFP funds cannot be used to cover the cost of accreditation fees.

**Progress Reporting and Payment Schedule****Reporting Requirements**

Award recipients are required to submit the following reports:

- A 6-month progress report.
- A final progress report, due within 30 days of the conclusion of the award year.

For projects with a duration of six months or less, only the final progress report is required.

Each report must include financial accounting prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). This accounting must detail the distribution of awarded funds and be signed by an authorized institutional official.

**Payment Disbursement Schedule****Payments will be disbursed in installments as follows:**

- Initial Payment (50%): Issued at the commencement of the project.
- Second Payment (25%): Released upon submission and approval of the 6-month progress report.
- Final Payment (25%): Disbursed upon completion of the project and approval of the final progress report.

For projects lasting six months or less:

- Initial Payment (50%): Issued at project start.
- Final Payment (50%): Released upon submission and approval of the final progress report.

**Unused Funds**

Any unspent or unused funds must be returned.

**Presentation of Work**

Grant awardees are required to present their work at the annual ACC Quality Summit, or another ACC-sponsored meeting as designated by the AFC, immediately following the completion of the award year. Funds can be requested in the project budget to cover the travel costs to attend the required meeting.

**Project Duration**

Projects must be completed within twelve (12) months from the signing of the funding contract unless a specific condition exists that would warrant an exception. If an

extension is required, the individual grantee must file for an extension and receive approval from the AFC. No additional funds will be provided for such an extension.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The AFC members will serve as the selection committee for the proposals. As such they are not eligible to submit project proposals, but they may serve as un-compensated advisors to projects led by others. Applications that include participation of AFC members must be clearly identified. Those participants will be recused from the evaluation and selection process. Other potential conflicts of interest with other organizations or companies should be identified in the application.

### ***Human Subjects***

If your project entails performing research involving human subjects, a part of the peer review process will include careful consideration of protections from research risks, as well as the appropriate inclusion of women and minorities. The information on the protection of human subjects that you are required to provide in this section is identical to information that you will be required to provide for IRB submission at your own institution and that is required by most Federal agencies. This information can be copied and pasted directly into your application. The applicant should include specific measures on how protected health information (as defined by the Department of Health and Human Services) will be handled in accordance with the Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

### ***Publications***

All discoveries resulting from this work should be made available to the public and scientific community through approved scientific channels such as national meetings and peer reviewed publications. Publications will acknowledge the support of the AFC. Appropriate recognition to the AFC also should be given in all advertising, printed materials, etc. It is expected that any new QI/PI tools or strategies that are developed, will be made available to the broader healthcare community. Any results, data, or materials that are developed during the course of funded projects may be used to support ongoing AFC or Accreditation Services activities.

## **Step 4: Submit Your Proposal Application – Final Step**

Once you have completed all tasks of your proposal application and reviewed your information for accuracy, you are ready to submit. This step is critical – proposals are not considered until final confirmation. After submission, you will receive a confirmation email stating that your application has been successfully submitted.