

Accreditation Guidelines for an Integrated Network Cancer Program (INCP) or National Cancer Institute-Designated Network Cancer Program (NCIN)

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Eligibility for Network Applicants

To apply for network accreditation when at least one site is CoC accredited, the following conditions must be met:

- The definition of an [INCP](#) or [NCIN](#) is met.
- All sites are owned by a single entity.
- All deficiencies from each site's last CoC site visit are resolved.
- Accreditation fees due to the American College of Surgeons are current.
- Each non-accredited site has completed a Business Associate and Data Use Agreement with the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and has an executed copy on file.

To apply for network accreditation when no applicant sites have a current CoC-accreditation, the following conditions must be met:

- The definition of an [INCP](#) or [NCIN](#) is met.
- All sites are owned by a single entity.
- Each site must [Apply for Accreditation](#) to have a [FIN](#) assigned.
- Each site must complete a Business Associate and Data Use Agreement with the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and have an executed copy on file.
- Each site must have completed at least one calendar year of abstracted data.
- Each site must have completed at least one calendar year of patient follow-up from the most current year of completed cases.

Compliance with the Network Standards

All networks are required to meet all requirements for INCP/NCINs as outlined in [Optimal Resources for Cancer Care \(2020 Standards\)](#), including, but not limited to, the Specifications by Category, located in the back of the manual.

From time-to-time, standards, as outlined in [Optimal Resources for Cancer Care \(2020 Standards\)](#), may be modified. These changes are highlighted in the [Change Log, located in QPort Resources](#)

[page](#). Additionally, standards with differing implementation timelines are outlined on the [2020 Standards Implementation Timelines](#) webpage.

Applying for INCP or NCIN Accreditation

Two or more entities interested in forming an INCP or NCIN must log in to the Quality Portal (QPort) and access, complete, and submit one INCP/NCIN online application. To access the network application, the Cancer Program Administrator (CPA), Hospital Registrar or Co-Registrar may login to QPort and select one accredited CoC site that will be participating. From the menu on the left, select the Network & Merger Applications link. The application requires the following information:

- The network effective date (January 1 of whichever year the standards were/will be implemented in the network).
- Name and contact information of the network.
 - The network name must be unique and not already in use by an individual hospital. It must be concise and reflective of the network. (It cannot be a restatement of all the names of the sites involved in the network.) Avoid complex or lengthy names. Network names are limited to 50 characters.
- Identification of sites that will be included in the network.
- Identification of network contacts, including the Cancer Committee Chair, Cancer Program Administrator, Cancer Registrar, [Cancer Liaison Physician](#), as well as designating a primary contact and billing contact for the network who will receive the annual accreditation invoice. These roles can be selected from the existing sites that will comprise the network or new contacts can be listed.
- In addition to completion and submission of the BA/DUA, the network must complete the [Network Ownership Confirmation Form](#), including Federal Employer Identification Numbers (FEIN) for each site in the network, and submit it to coc@facs.org as part of the application process.

Special considerations when applying for network accreditation when at least one site is CoC Accredited

An application for a new network with at least one existing accredited program must be submitted by July 31 before the calendar year in which the standards will be implemented as a network. For example, if a new network wishes to implement the standards during the calendar year 2025 for a site visit to occur in 2026, the network application must be submitted by July 31 of 2024.

The application will require identification of which sites in the network are currently CoC accredited, and which are not.

Special considerations for applying for network accreditation with no existing CoC accredited programs

The application must be submitted at least three-to-six months before the anticipated site visit date. It is recommended that sites apply before the end of the first quarter of the year in which the site visit will be requested to take place. Any applications submitted after July 1 of a given year risk having the initial site

visit moved to the following year as there may not be adequate time to prepare for the site visit.

Before proceeding with the network application, each site must first [Apply for Accreditation](#) to have a [FIN](#) assigned.

Business Associate/Data Use Agreement

Within the application process is the requirement to complete a Business Associate/Data Use Agreement (BA/DUA). This is an online agreement that is signed and submitted electronically. Each site within the network must have a signed individual BA/DUA on file.

Additionally, a signed network ownership form listing the name of the new network/FEIN and the name of each participating site/address/FEIN must be submitted to BAA@facs.org.

Once completed, a fully executed BA/DUA by ACS will be provided back to each site in the network. Please contact BAA@facs.org directly to review and initiate the BA/DUA.

Application Processing

- Applications are processed within 30 days or as soon as practical thereafter.
- Once the application is reviewed and approved, the primary contact will receive an email from the CoC with the following:
 - The new INCP or NCIN Facility Identification Number (FIN) and Company ID along with a list of sites within the network and their FINs.
 - Approximate date of site visit.
 - Information to access the following areas in QPort:
 - Adding network contacts (cancer committee chair, cancer liaison physicians (2), cancer program administrator, cancer registrar, billing contact and primary contacts at the network level).
 - Adding contacts to an individual site within the network.
 - Access to the Pre-Review Questionnaire (PRQ) to become familiar with the information that will be required in preparation for the network site visit.
 - Access to resources to support the accreditation process.
- A single invoice, representing the cumulative accreditation fee for all sites in the network, will be emailed to the Billing Contact. No refunds or credits will be issued for any funds previously paid by the individual sites.

Timeline for Scheduling a Network Site Visit

The initial site visit for a new network that includes existing CoC accredited programs must be scheduled approximately 6 months after completing one calendar year of cancer program activity as the network.

- An existing accredited network that applies to add an existing CoC-accredited cancer program to it will retain its next established network site visit date.
- An existing accredited network due for site visit that applies to add a non-accredited cancer program will have a site visit after completing one calendar year of cancer program activity after the addition of the new program to the network (e.g., if your network added a site on July 1, 2023, your site visit will be Q1 or Q2 2025).

A new network applying with no CoC-accredited programs within it may have its initial site visit any time during the calendar year following one calendar year of cancer program activity that meets the required standards.

A single Pre-Review Questionnaire (PRQ) is completed for the network site visit.

Network site visits must include at least one representative from each site within the network to be in attendance.

Site Visit Outcomes for Initial Network Site Visits

A site visit for an INCP or NCIN undergoing its initial network site visit may result in three outcomes:

- **Accredited:** Assigned when there are zero noncompliant ratings during the site visit process. The INCP/NCIN will be shown on the Find an Accredited Program website and a certificate of accreditation is provided.
- **Not Accredited-Corrective Action Required:** Assigned when a new INCP/NCIN, even when consisting of currently accredited programs, receives a noncompliant rating on four or fewer standards during the site visit process. The INCP/NCIN does not show up on the Find an Accredited Program website and is given one year to resolve the noncompliant standards.
- **Not Accredited:** Assigned when a new INCP/NCIN receives five or more noncompliant ratings during the initial site visit process. The INCP/NCIN no longer has access to the Quality Portal or, if applicable, the National Cancer Database (NCDB). It does not appear on the Find an Accredited Program website. The INCP/NCIN may reapply as an initial applicant program after one calendar year of compliance with all applicable standards.

An initial site visit for INCP/NCIN that results in an Accreditation Status of **Not Accredited-Corrective Action Required** or **Not Accredited** will impact all individual sites within the network, including those that were previously accredited. Please review the full definitions for all Accreditation Awards in the [Optimal Resources for Cancer Care \(2020 Standards\)](#).

Network Contacts

Contacts and roles are managed via QPort. At a minimum, sites must:

- Retain/Assign a [primary contact](#) for each individual site to facilitate updates of contacts based on roles within the program.
- Retain/Assign a [billing contact](#) at the network level.
- Retain/Assign two Cancer Liaison Physicians at the network level.
- Retain/Assign an [uploader](#) for each individual site for uploading data for submission to RCRS.
- Retain/Assign [report viewer](#) for each individual site to access RCRS in read-only.

Data Submission to Rapid Cancer Reporting System (RCRS)

New networks with existing CoC-accredited programs

Before the initial network site visit:

- **Individual sites that are CoC-accredited will:**
 - Retain accreditation status until the network site visit is performed.
 - Retain access to QPort and RCRS so submissions to RCRS continue uninterrupted.
- **Individual sites that are not CoC-accredited before the network site visit will:**
 - Gain access to RCRS after becoming CoC-accredited as part of the network.
 - Begin monthly submission of cases to RCRS after Accredited status is achieved with the network.
 - Participate in the next scheduled Call for Data as required by Standard 6.4 after network Accredited status is achieved.

For additional information on the requirements for submitting to RCRS in 2024, please review the [Call for Data Submission Requirements](#).

Note: Survival Reports, Hospital Comparison Benchmark Reports, and Cancer Quality Improvement Program (CQIP) Reports are updated annually and will become available for the new sites(s) only after the site's participation in Call for Data and the subsequent annual update for these reports.

New networks with no CoC-accredited programs

Networks applicants that do not include any existing CoC accredited programs are exempt from submission of data to the NCDB until receipt of Accredited status. The first submission to the Rapid Cancer Reporting System (RCRS) must be completed within the month following receipt of Accredited status.

Call For Data Requirements for Previously Unaccredited Sites within New and Existing Networks

Sites achieving accreditation for the first time after the initial site visit with either a new or existing network must participate in the next scheduled Call for Data following receipt of Accredited status. For more information on Call For Data submission requirements to the NCDB for newly accredited sites, please review [NCDB Call for Data Submission Requirements for New CoC Accredited](#)

[Programs.](#)

Additional Cancer Accreditations Attached to CoC Accreditation

Participation in **The National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC)** and the **Pediatric Specialty Accreditation (CoC-PS)** must occur at the individual hospital, which is separate from the network accreditation.

Each site wishing to pursue NAPRC or CoC-PS must individually meet the NAPRC or CoC-PS criteria and standards and apply for accreditation separately.

The NAPRC accreditation standards are located in the [Optimal Resources for Rectal Cancer Care \(2020 Standards\)](#)

Information on the CoC-PS is found in the Specifications by Category section of the [Optimal Resources for Cancer Care \(2020 Standards\)](#).

Additional Resources

[Frequently Asked Questions for Network \(INCP\) and \(NCIN\) Accreditation.](#)

Please submit questions to coc@facs.org.

Definitions

INCP

An Integrated Network Cancer Program (INCP) is an entity that chooses to voluntarily select and participate in the Commission on Cancer (CoC) INCP category that offers integrated and comprehensive cancer care services and is overseen by a centralized governance structure/board and CEO.

All participating sites are independent, but the network is owned by a single entity (wholly owned, single owner) and the individual hospitals are working together on their CoC accreditation.

NCIN

A National Cancer Institute Designated Network Cancer Program (NCIN) is a group of hospitals working together on their CoC accreditation that hold a National Cancer Institute (NCI) peer-reviewed Cancer Center Support Grant. In an NCIN, all sites must be included within the NCI grant.

Facility Identification Number (FIN)

A specific number used by the Commission on Cancer (CoC) and the National Cancer Database (NCDB) to identify the facility earning CoC accreditation or reporting the cancer case to the NCDB. Each facility's FIN is a unique and individual number.

Primary Contact

This role has access to all sections of QPort. This is the only user able to add and remove users and update contact information. This role is the primary contact between the accredited program and the CoC.

Billing Contact

This role is authorized to receive the invoice for accreditation fees.

Report Viewer

Authorized role allowing access to RCRS in read-only.

Uploader

Authorized role allowing access to RCRS with ability to upload data for submission.