

Cancer research for screening and prevention (CRSP)

Program guidelines

JUNE 2023

Classification: Public

Alberta 

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Overview

The purpose of the Alberta Health Cancer Research for Screening and Prevention (CRSP) Funding Program, is to invest funding to support and encourage research initiatives that will promote the prevention or early detection of cancer and related chronic diseases, improve patient outcomes, and demonstrate opportunities for widespread implementation and value to the healthcare system. These guidelines ensure funds are awarded in a transparent and merit-based process to high-impact projects led by principal investigators at eligible institutions in Alberta. CRSP funding will support approved projects that align with Alberta Health's strategic priorities for up to \$1 million for a maximum project length of three years.

Please note that the program-funding envelope may vary from fiscal year to year based on strategic priorities. Project award amounts remain fixed as per their fully executed grant agreements.

Objectives

The objectives of the CRSP are to:

- Improve the overall health of Albertans by supporting cancer research on prevention, early detection and screening.
- Build capacity for cancer research and innovation excellence with eligible institutions to promote implementation, collaboration and investments.
- Promote investment in cancer research that supports the sustainability of the health care system.

Eligibility

Eligible institutions

Institutions eligible for funding under the CRSP include:

- Publicly funded post-secondary institutions
- Incorporated provincial non-profit community organizations
 - Organizations must be in operation for a minimum of one year and be in good standing with required filings and their status.
- Alberta Health Services, including the Strategic Clinical Networks, Primary Care Networks (PCNs), and Community Health Centres (CHCs).
- Métis settlements and First Nations communities and organizations
- Municipalities (cities, towns, villages etc.)

Applicants not eligible for funding include the private sector. For questions about whether you are an eligible institution, please contact cancergrants@gov.ab.ca

Eligible proposals (examples)

CRSP is accepting both project-based (implementation/evaluation-based) and research-based applications. For an application to be considered eligible under the CRSP program, a gap in cancer prevention and screening should be identified and addressed in the proposal.

Examples of proposals that will be considered include, but are not limited to, are:

- Research and/or proof of concept initiatives that promote improvements to cancer screening practices
- Cancer prevention and screening, which, for the purposes of this call, includes: health promotion/prevention research with improved cancer-related outcomes; early detection; chronic diseases; development, implementation and/or evaluation of care pathways

Note: Considerations for exceptions may be possible for proposals that consider other aspects of cancer (e.g., secondary or tertiary prevention, survivorship, treatment etc.); however, research/projects focused on primary prevention and cancer screening will be given priority.

Alberta Health strategic priorities

The CRSP encourages applications that align with the following Alberta Health priorities:

- Considers person-centered care and advances innovation in primary health care, particularly in rural/remote regions, to include integration, access, quality, and Albertans as partners
- Considers underserved populations, particularly Indigenous or vulnerable and marginalized populations, through a lens of culturally safe and acceptable service
- Considers a focus on cancers that have broad population impact and/or poor survivorship outcomes
- Promotes the inclusion of research on other conditions that share risk factors with cancer
- Supports partnerships with eligible organizations working with communities to develop local, culturally-safe and socially appropriate solutions
- Leverages other funding partnership opportunities to build project funds and increase the overall impact of funding

Project costs

Projects must not be currently receiving funding from another area of Alberta Health. Other funding sources or potential sources for the project must be disclosed. CRSP funding can build on an existing project or a portion of the project that has already been started.

Major infrastructure costs and ongoing operational funding for existing programs are not eligible for funding. Operational expenditures for expansion or pilot projects are eligible. Please see Appendix A for a detailed list of eligible and ineligible project costs.

Project evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated through a competitive process. All applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- The project aligns clearly with Alberta Health's strategic priorities listed above.
- For research-based projects: the project has a strong research plan and methodology, including appropriate indicators and outcomes that will answer the proposed research questions and address the project objective(s).
- The proposal demonstrates a clear path to the next steps for implementation
- The project team and organization have sufficient capacity and expertise to conduct research and project evaluation and to work collaboratively with health stakeholders to drive project results to implementation, practice, or scale as appropriate to the project.
- The proposal includes partnership, collaboration and training opportunities, where relevant, and accounts for early patient and system engagement such that the project, if successful, can be implemented.

Submissions and application process

Applicants must submit their completed packages (including attachments all in one pdf) to Alberta Health at cancergrants@gov.ab.ca. Alberta Health will use the application packages to plan the review process and review proposals in consideration of priorities, alignment and eligibility, and may provide recommendations where feasible.

Expression of Interest (EOI) Submission

1. Expression of Interest
 - a. Organization Information
 - b. Contact Information
 - c. Project Information
 - i. Project overview
 - ii. Stream indication
 - iii. Project duration

- iv. Funding requested
- v. Need & target population
- vi. Innovation
- vii. Expected outcomes and final deliverables
- viii. Potential partnerships
- d. Attestation

Application submissions for funding must be sent as follows:

1. Grant Application
 - a. Contact Information
 - b. Organization Information
 - c. Project Information
 - i. Project background and overview
 - ii. Need
 - iii. Team capacity
 - iv. Project implementation
 - v. Impact and evaluation
 - vi. Partnerships
 - d. Project Budget
 - e. Acknowledgments, Representations and Declaration
 - i. Signatures of designated representatives
 - f. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 - g. Appendices, if applicable
 - i. Research Team Contact List
 - ii. Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the research/project team

Application deadline

All applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM MST on **September 30, 2023**.

Review Process

The review process for the CRSP will be conducted in three stages.

Stage 1:

The first stage is reviewing the program guidelines and eligibility criteria, then submission by the applicant of an Expression of Interest (EOI) letter to support resource planning (see Appendix B for scoring). For only those EOI's deemed eligible, applicants will be invited to fill-in the full application and have the opportunity to review comments and suggestions to revise the proposed project in the EOI to meet eligibility requirements or withdraw their intent to submit a complete application.

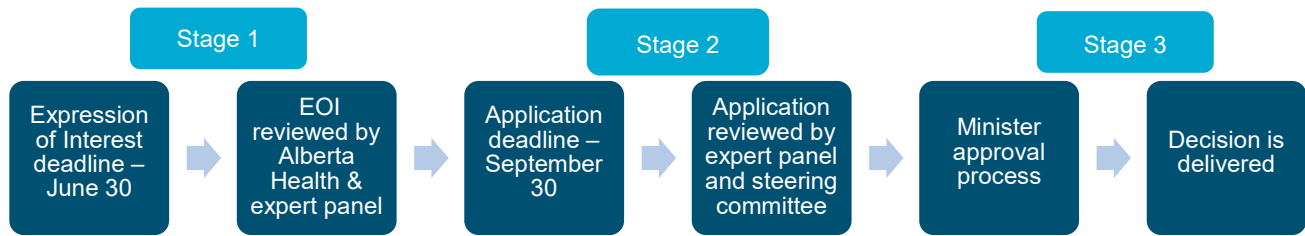
Note: You cannot move forward with the full application submission without first submitting an EOI.

Stage 2:

The second stage is the official submission of the application and its review by an expert panel. The expert panel, comprised of cancer experts from outside Alberta (to avoid conflicts of interest), will score applicants based on criteria and meet for deliberation and discussion. Other Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services executive leadership will also be included in the review process to ensure alignment to strategic priorities. This stage aims to ensure the proposal is scientifically sound and will address the identified research questions or problems. Strong applications will be short-listed and moved into the next stage.

Stage 3:

The third and final stage of the review, common to all Alberta Health investments, is approval by the Minister, based on the expert panel's recommendations. Final decisions will then be communicated to the applicants (anticipated before the end of March 2023).



Reporting

Grant recipients must submit interim and final financial and project activity reporting as outlined in the grant agreement. Reporting templates will be provided by Alberta Health and must be adhered to by grant recipients unless otherwise agreed upon. Alberta Health reserves the right to request additional interim reports as needed.

Note: Any applicant that does not comply with reporting requirements may be subject to legal action and may be ineligible to receive additional funding through any Government of Alberta funding program in the future.

Additional information

Communications

To measure and promote the impact of the research enabled by our funding contributions, Alberta Health expects institutions, communications staff and project leaders to acknowledge the Government of Alberta's support in all public communications. Activities and products include institutional and scholarly publications, presentations, media relations, and facility or lab openings. The official Government of Alberta logo is an appropriate identifier for acknowledging contributions.

Alberta Health will engage with project leads, and communications teams should a project be selected for any communications product.

Appendix A.

Eligible and ineligible expense guideline for grants

A Grant Recipient may only use grant funding as set out in the grant agreement for expenses that are directly related to the grant activities. If a Grant Recipient is uncertain if a proposed expenditure is eligible or ineligible, they should contact the Health grant manager prior to making the expenditure.

- Compensation related expenses – Expenses must be for individuals (E.g. trainees, (graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, residents, etc.), research assistants, research associates, technicians, etc.) whose duties are directly and primarily related to activities undertaken as part of the project and as set out in the grant agreement. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
 - Discretionary severance and separation packages
- Travel and Subsistence costs – Travel and subsistence costs include reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with standard Government of Alberta rates for fieldwork, research and other related activities directly related to and necessary to carry out the activities under the project as set out in the grant agreement. Travel and subsistence costs must not exceed the maximums allowable under the regulations governing the payment of travelling allowances pursuant to the Public Service Act. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
 - Commuting costs between residence and place of employment
 - Passport and immigration fees
 - Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points
- Equipment and supplies – Expenses include reasonable costs for the purchase of equipment and supplies which are directly related to and will be used primarily for the project as set out in the grant agreement. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
 - Insurance cost of equipment
 - Costs of construction, renovation of laboratories, offices
- Computers – Reasonable expenses related to the purchase of computers that are directly related to and will be used for the project as set out in the grant agreement.
 - Monthly telephone connection and rental costs
 - Voicemail
 - Cellular phones or Blackberries
- Services – Reasonable expenses for services that are directly related to the funded project activities as set out in the grant agreement. Expenses where a personal benefit could be derived are ineligible. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
 - Alcohol
 - Staff awards and recognition
 - Professional training or development costs
 - Insurance costs
 - Monthly parking fees (unless required for project field work)
 - Clothing costs
 - Patenting expenses

Common costs for more than one project should be allocated on an estimated usage basis by the various projects.

Appendix B. Expression of Interest - Scoring criteria tables

Scoring criteria A: Project-based (Implementation/evaluation-based) applications		Yes	No
Addressing need			
1. Cancer Prevention or Screening need is identified and explained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Proposal meets CRSP objectives and guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Clear alignment with identified Alberta Health priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Intervention is appropriate for the target population/cancer type	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Project feasibility			
5. Project is achievable given the budget and time frames	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Project is innovative – new or includes an efficient process change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Opportunity for scale-up and long-term sustainability is addressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Leveraging of partnership opportunities to maximize project outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcomes			
9. Expected outcomes will be appropriate measured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Final deliverables are appropriate and impactful/useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scoring total	Total yes	Weight	Total
Addressing Need (1-4)		X 5	
Project Feasibility (5-8)		X 4	
Outcomes (9-10)		X 2	
			/40
Comments:			

*Note: Scoring provides a guide for the qualitative deliberations of the Expert Review Panel. The Expert Panel will recommend grants based on a combination of factors including application scores, provincial needs, strategic priorities and available funding.

Scoring criteria B: Research-based applications		Yes	No
Addressing need			
1. Cancer Prevention or Screening need is identified and explained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Proposal meets CRSp objectives and guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Clear alignment with identified Alberta Health priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Intervention is appropriate for the target population/cancer type	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research approach			
5. The research question is clear and specific	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Research design and methodology is appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. The study is innovative – new or includes an efficient process change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. The study/research is achievable given the budget and time frames	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcomes			
9. Expected outcomes will be appropriate measured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Final deliverables are appropriate and impactful/useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scoring Total	Total Yes	Weight	Total
Addressing need (1-4)		X 5	
Research approach (5-8)		X 4	
Outcomes (9-10)		X 3	
			/40
Comments:			

*Note: Scoring provides a guide for the qualitative deliberations of the Expert Review Panel. The Expert Panel will recommend grants based on a combination of factors including application scores, provincial needs, strategic priorities and available funding.