

# BCNRI Research Project Program Guidelines and Application Procedures

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## *BC Nursing Research Initiative (BCNRI)*

### *Vision*

Better health outcomes for British Columbians and a high quality work life for nurses achieved through excellent, practice-relevant health services research focused on the roles of nurses within the context of the broad health services practice community.

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Funded by the BC Ministry of Health Services through the BC Nursing Research Initiative (BCNRI), the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) announces a competition for **research project funds**.*

*This program was developed with the advice of the Nursing Research Advisory Council (NRAC) and is one of several being launched to build capacity for and to support practice-relevant health services research focused on the roles of nurses within the context of the broad health services practice community.*

*For more information on the BC Nursing Research Initiative [http://www.msfhr.org/special\\_initiatives/nursing\\_research\\_initiative](http://www.msfhr.org/special_initiatives/nursing_research_initiative)*

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

- *To provide financial support for research projects that address one of four priority areas selected for attention through this funding initiative.*
- *Research synthesis, research demonstration, pilot/seed research, or research knowledge exchange projects are eligible for support.*
- *Applications must have a minimum of one BC researcher and one BC practitioner as project co-leaders.*
- *One of the co-leaders should be a nurse or nurse researcher and the team should have strong involvement of nurses.*
- *Awards will be up to \$100,000 per year for a maximum of two years. Synthesis and knowledge exchange projects will usually be a maximum of one year duration.*
- *An additional \$25,000 per year (maximum grant of \$125,000 per year for two years) is available to buy out the time of a co-leader or team member who does not have “conducting research” as part of their job description.*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 4:30 P.M. APRIL 28, 2010**

## I. Program Description

The Research Project Program is aimed at building linkages and collaborations among academia, nurses and the broad health services practice and policy communities to develop, conduct and apply the findings of practice-relevant health services research that addresses one of the following BCNRI priority areas:

- Care Delivery: exploring innovations in health service delivery to better meet the needs of clients, nurses and the health system across a full spectrum of health services
  - New models of health service delivery
  - New models of staffing: defining the skill mix of nurses or nurses working with other health professionals for achieving optimum team composition in the delivery of safe, efficient and effective services.
- Nursing Health Human Resources: exploring innovations that enhance recruitment and retention of the nursing workforce.
- Nursing Practice-Relevant Education: exploring innovations in education related to:
  - Undergraduate, graduate and specialty education related to the development of clinical judgment and skills
  - Education for nursing practice: supporting nurses to adapt to and implement changes in practice to meet the needs and improve health outcomes of diverse populations
  - Best practices for orienting and mentoring newly recruited nurses.
- Quality and Safety of the Nursing Practice Environment: research that evaluates the impact (intended and unintended) on the practice environment resulting from the implementation of policy change.

The Research Project Program will provide funds to cover the direct operating costs of four types of research projects:

- Research Synthesis Projects;
- Research Demonstration Projects;
- Pilot/Seed Research Projects; or
- Research Knowledge Exchange Projects.

### ***Research Synthesis Projects***

Research synthesis is the systematic summary of research evidence that does not involve personnel views or comments. The purpose of the synthesis should be to inform practice or to identify areas for further research. Standard research synthesis protocols appropriate for the intended use of the findings should be employed. At a minimum, the synthesis should include a comprehensive systematic search, uniform application of established selection criteria, rigorous critical appraisal, and inferences that are evidence-based.

### ***Research Demonstration Projects***

Demonstration projects are those projects that assess whether research findings can be applied in a specific setting or are projects that assess the implications of introducing certain factors that are significantly different from those associated with the original research. Evaluation of the introduction of a novel program may be included under this category. However, evaluation of a program already in practice without the introduction of a significant novel aspect will not be eligible.

### ***Pilot/Seed Research Projects***

Seed funding will enable the implementation of small research projects for the purpose of collecting preliminary data, or demonstrating/exploring the feasibility of a larger research project. Scoping exercises undertaken for the purpose of identifying where further research is necessary can be included. It is expected that research carried out under this category will inform (is preparatory to) the development of a larger research project/program.

### ***Research Knowledge Exchange Projects***

Research knowledge exchange projects would include interactive activities that promote the exchange and uptake of knowledge between stakeholders in the research and practice/policy communities. This could include the exchange of knowledge between the practice and the research community for the purpose of identifying priorities or clarifying applicability of research directions/priorities or the exchange of knowledge to inform practice or system-level decision making. All projects must have a rigorous evaluation component to measure the effectiveness of the mechanism(s) employed.

## **II. Definitions**

Within the context of this program, MSFHR and BCNRI employ the following definitions:

***Health services research:*** (source: CIHR Grants and Awards Guide – 2008-2009):

Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately, Canadians' health and well-being.

***Practice-relevant research:*** (source: King G, Currie M, Smith L, Servais M, McDougall J. A framework of operating models for interdisciplinary research programs in clinical service organizations. *Eval Program Plann* 2008; 31(2):160-173)

Research that is done in partnership and is informed by different perspectives; respects the content and procedural knowledge (i.e., "know how") of practitioners and decision makers; and addresses the reality of client- or family-centered practice.

***Practitioner:*** An individual directly involved in the development and implementation of health policy at a provincial or regional level and/or the delivery of publicly funded health services offered in BC.

***Researcher:*** A researcher is an individual who holds or has recently held research operating funds as either a principal or co-investigator at the time this competition closes. Such funding must be from an organization that uses a peer-review process for making funding decisions and is open to all researchers in BC.

***Nurse:*** Refers to the full range of regulated nursing roles within the health services practice community.

### III. Eligibility

- The project must address one of the BCNRI health services research priorities outlined in I. Program Description.
- The project must have implications for local relevance and impact but also demonstrate the potential for wider applicability (i.e. can serve as a model to other health authorities, the province and possibly beyond).
- Program development or knowledge exchange projects must include an evaluation component.
- Applications must have a minimum of one BC researcher and one BC practitioner as project co-leaders.
- One of the co-leaders should be a nurse or nurse researcher and the team should have strong involvement of nurses.
- All team members must have an active, meaningful role in the planning and implementation of the full project.
- The project team should include inter-professional/interdisciplinary representation as appropriate for the research focus or project objectives.
- All applicants must have the support of their organization for participation in the project.
- One of the co-leaders must be affiliated with an institution eligible to hold MSFHR funds (for currently eligible institutions see *Memorandum of Understanding* [http://www.msfhr.org/resources/public/Funding/MOU\\_List\\_of\\_Institutions.pdf](http://www.msfhr.org/resources/public/Funding/MOU_List_of_Institutions.pdf)).
- Co-leaders are limited to two applications per competition, but may hold only one BCNRI Research Project award at a time.

### IV. Amount and Term of Award

Awards of **up to** \$100,000 per year for a maximum of two (2) years are available to cover the direct project costs. Synthesis and knowledge exchange projects would be expected to take a maximum of one year to complete.

It is anticipated that most awards will be in the range of \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year; however, with sufficient justification, the maximum allowable will be considered. An additional \$25,000 per year (maximum grant of \$125,000 per year for two years) is available to buy out the time of a co-leader or team member who does not have “conducting research” as part of their job description.

Funding for this competition is sufficient to support between eight (8) and ten (10) projects. Future competitions may be considered pending a review of the outcomes of this competition and the availability of funding.

## V. Use of Funds

Funds may not be used to provide health care services. A full list of eligible and ineligible expenses is provided in Appendix A.

## VI. Reporting Requirements

Awardees will be required to submit a final report written in the standard 1:3:25 format: one page of key messages; a three-page executive summary; and a 25-page (maximum) final report (excluding references and appendices). The final report will be due within three months following the end of the award term. Projects that are two years in length will be required to submit a progress report within one month following completion of the first year of the award term. MSFHR reserves the right to discontinue funding of projects for lack of progress.

## VII. How to Apply

There is a two stage application process:

Stage I – Preliminary Application

Stage II – Full Proposal

### Stage I – Preliminary Application

The Stage I Preliminary Application must be submitted by April 28, 2010 and consists of:

- Preliminary Application Cover Form (available on the MSFHR website); and
- Project Summary:
  - The summary should not exceed four pages.
  - References should be attached as an additional page (maximum one page).
  - Letters of support for the project may also be attached as additional pages. These should not be form letters signed by multiple individuals; they should be individualized, clearly articulating why they support the research project. Letters of support will not be accepted from project team members.

To be eligible for review, all submissions must adhere to the following instructions for presentation:

- All materials, except appendices, must be a minimum 11 point size, Arial (regular), single-spaced, on one side of a letter size (21.25 x 27.5 cm / 8.5" x 11") page, with a one-inch margin on all sides of the page.
- All print must be black, of letter quality and easy to read.
- Do not exceed the four page limit for the Project Summary.

The **Project Summary** must include the following, labelled accordingly and in the sequence described below.

Purpose – ensure that each of the following is clearly described:

- Purpose
- How the project was identified
- How the project addresses a nursing health services research issue within one of the BCNRI priority areas
- Target audience for the project
- Names, titles, organizations and roles of the team members, including how they are relevant to the project

Significance – describe the significance of the health services issue or topic:

- High volume/high impact
- Relevance to nursing decision makers and/or service providers
- Potential impact on quality of work life for nurses, improved patient/client outcomes, health system
- Future research opportunities

Design, Methods and Evaluation – overview:

- Hypotheses or specific question(s) to be addressed
- Population or sample size and justification (if applicable)
- How the project will be carried out (methods, delivery systems, personnel, etc.)
- Expected outcomes
- Plan for supporting the dissemination and uptake of outcomes by the target audience(s) (using findings to inform policy and practice)
- Research/evaluation plan and standards to be used to demonstrate achievement of the project purpose and any detailed outcomes

Costs – identify the costs of:

- Project personnel (applications from health authorities requesting the additional funding must delineate the salary contribution for the appropriate co-leader)
- Equipment (not to exceed 10% of the total costs)
- Supplies
- Travel and other costs

A complete list of eligible and ineligible expenses is available in Appendix A.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Stage I applications will be reviewed by MSFHR staff for eligibility. Those that clearly do not meet the program guidelines will not be eligible for further consideration. The criteria to be used for the preliminary review are:

- The topic area is within one of the BCNRI priority areas.
- The project addresses practice-relevant nursing health services research.
- The project group has the appropriate membership (as described in [III. Eligibility](#)).
- The project group is co-led by a nurse or a nurse researcher and has strong involvement of nurses.
- The application is complete and presented in the manner requested.
- The application does not exceed the budget limit without identifying additional funding sources.

An external merit review panel will assess the eligible applications based on the following criteria:

- Appropriateness and experience of the applicants
- Potential impact as related to the goals and priorities of the BCNRI
- Quality – clarity of the questions and/or objectives, appropriate project design and justification
- Realistic budget and expectations

### **Stage II – Full Proposal**

A select number of highly rated Stage I applications will be invited to submit full proposals for Stage II of the application process. Application forms and guidelines will be provided at that time. All applicants will be notified of the status of their preliminary application by June 18, 2010.

## **VIII. Timelines**

Deadline for Stage I Preliminary Applications: **4:30 p.m., April 28, 2010**

Invitation to submit a Stage II Full Proposal: **June 18, 2010**

Deadline for Stage II Full Proposals: **September 21, 2010**

Anticipated implementation (release of funding): **December 1, 2010**

## **IX. Inquiries/Submissions**

For inquiries please contact, Valerie To, Program Coordinator, Special Initiatives, phone: 604-714-2783, or email: [vto@msfhr.org](mailto:vto@msfhr.org)

One hard copy (with original signatures) and one electronic copy of the completed Stage I Preliminary Application (with cover form) must be submitted to:

Nancy Mathias, Senior Director, Special Initiatives  
Health Services and Policy Research Support Network  
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research  
200 – 1285 W. Broadway  
Vancouver, BC, V6H 3X8  
Email: [nmathias@msfhr.org](mailto:nmathias@msfhr.org)

Deadline for the receipt of completed Stage I applications is 4:30 p.m. April 28, 2010.

**If only the electronic copy is received by the deadline, the hard copy must be couriered to MSFHR on the day of the competition deadline and received within 48 hours to be considered eligible.**

All applications received will be acknowledged by email within 48 hours following receipt.

## BCNRI Research Project Program

### Appendix A - Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

#### I. General Principles

BCNRI Research Project Program funds must be used for the reasonable and incremental costs of items that directly support the objective of the approved project.

Funds should be used effectively and efficiently, and should not be used to fund items that would normally be funded by a host institution.

Award recipients may seek approval to fund items not included on this list of eligible and ineligible expenses, and/or items not included in the original funding proposal, so long as those items comply with the principles above. In such cases, approval must be obtained from MSFHR prior to making any expenditures.

MSFHR reserves the right to withhold approval of expenses that do not satisfy the principles above, and to seek reimbursement for funds used for ineligible expense items.

Expenses have been categorized into four broad groups:

- Human Resources
- Services and Supplies
- Travel
- Other

#### II. Human Resources

##### ***Eligible expenses***

- Salaries, stipends, and benefits for research personnel, support staff and other personnel working on the project.
- Stipends and salaries for students and trainees (including post-doctoral fellows).
- Buy-out/release time from work, teaching or clinical activities, capped to a combined maximum of \$25,000 CDN per year for co-leaders and any team members who do not have “conducting research” as part of their job description.
  - Buy-out/release time must be justified, must be used exclusively for replacement cost of the co-leader/team member at his/her institution/organization, and must be accompanied by a letter of support from the co-leader’s/team member’s institution/organization.

##### ***Non-eligible expenses***

- Salaries and benefits for researchers and other team members (with the exception described in point three, Human Resources Eligible expenses).
- Other fees and/or honoraria for faculty.

### **III. Services and Supplies**

#### ***Eligible expenses***

- Fees for consultants (other than team members) providing administrative, technical or other research support services.
- Fees paid to research subjects, such as modest incentives for participation, where ethically acceptable.
- Costs for personal computers for staff supported by the BCNRI Research Project Program funds to a maximum of \$1,800 CDN per computer when absolutely necessary for conducting the project.
- Costs for printers/faxes for staff supported by BCNRI Research Project Program funds up to a total combined maximum of \$750 CDN when absolutely necessary for conducting the project.
- Costs for office support, including supplies, telecommunications, stationery, photocopying, and network or internet access (including webcams but not including the purchase or maintenance of network/computer servers or photocopiers).

#### ***Non-eligible expenses***

- Office and equipment costs associated with purchase, leasing, warranty, maintenance and service (with the exception of the specific equipment items listed in the eligible expenses list).
- Capital costs, including costs associated with construction, renovation or rental of offices, laboratories or other supporting facilities.
- Costs of purchasing and maintaining research animals.
- Purchase of alcohol.

### **IV. Travel**

#### ***Eligible expenses***

- Travel to attend workshops and meetings for the purpose of supporting research and collaboration.
- Travel for speakers and other invited guests if integral to the knowledge exchange activities of the project.

#### ***Non-eligible expenses***

- Travel for candidates under recruitment consideration, or for relocation purposes.

## V. Other

### ***Eligible expenses***

- Costs associated with bringing researchers, practitioners and policy makers together for the purpose of collaboration, networking and the development of research collaborations.
- Costs associated with knowledge exchange activities.
- Honoraria or gifts for speakers and other invited guests to a maximum value of \$500 CDN per person.

### ***Non-eligible expenses***

- Secondary grants and awards issued by, or on behalf of, the award recipient.
- Cash contribution for the purpose of matching funds.
- Costs associated with fee submissions to ethics review boards or other regulatory bodies, or the operations of such entities.
- Patent-related expenses.
- Facility operating costs such as:
  - general research administration (human resources, finances, purchasing, etc),
  - overhead charges,
  - recruitment,
  - library holdings and library operations,
  - facilities (offices, laboratories, space rental, furniture, utilities),
  - facilities maintenance, cleaning and renovation,
  - security and insurances.

**All items not otherwise specified should be deemed non-eligible expenses unless prior approval from MSFHR is received.**