

Healthy Starts Catalyst Grant 2023 - Competition 2 Guidelines

We are pleased to announce that we have funding available to launch a second call for proposals for Healthy Starts Catalyst Grants in 2023.

Healthy Starts Catalyst Grants

The Healthy Starts Research Theme of the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR) invites its members to submit new project proposals to the Healthy Starts Catalyst Grant 2023 Competition 2. The purpose of the Competition is to provide active Healthy Starts Theme Investigators with the opportunity to conduct collaborative research projects that will contribute to the long-term vision of Healthy Starts. The overarching goal of Healthy Starts is to understand how child health and development is influenced before birth and in early childhood, with the aim of preventing lifelong health challenges as well as infectious and chronic diseases. The Healthy Starts Research Theme receives core funding from the BC Children's Hospital Foundation, through which these Catalyst Grants are supported.

A Healthy Starts Catalyst Grant should:

- Fit the long-term vision of Healthy Starts and have clear significance for child health;
- Catalyze a new research project that in turn lays the groundwork for future research activity (e.g., generation of preliminary data to support applications to external funding opportunities);
- Not be for a project that has existing funding or be part of a larger project, as the intent of this Competition is to catalyze new research projects;
- Support research activity – PHSA has a helpful [tool](#) to determine if your project counts as research, or you can reach out to the Healthy Starts Office to discuss your project scope and which funding opportunities are appropriate.

Funding Availability

We invite applications for funding **up to \$40,000 over two years**. We expect to award one or more Healthy Starts Catalyst Grants in Competition 2. All grants will have start dates of March 30, 2024.

Overview of Competition Process

All teams are required to submit a **Letter of Intent** (LOI) in line with the requirements listed in **Appendix 1**. In the first instance, the Healthy Starts Office will use this LOI to complete an eligibility check. This will include checking that the scope of the proposal, initial budget, and composition of the project team meet the Competition guidelines. The Healthy Starts Office reserves the option to implement a streamlined peer review of applications to shortlist proposals that will be invited to move forward to the Full Application stage. All applicants should submit their LOIs with the understanding that they may be used for shortlisting. Applicants will be notified shortly after the LOI deadline whether this shortlisting process will be necessary.

Teams are then required to submit a **Full Application** in line with the requirements listed in **Appendix 2**. Full Applications will be reviewed against the Competition review criteria by a Healthy Starts peer review committee. The review criteria are set out in **Appendix 3**. The review committee will make a funding recommendation to Healthy Starts leadership, who will ratify the final funding decision. Teams can expect to receive decisions on their applications in early 2024.

The guidance in **Appendices 4 and 5** explains what you need to consider in terms of team eligibility/composition and expense eligibility for Healthy Starts Catalyst Grants.

Deadlines

- **LOI deadline: December 6th, 2023, 4:00 PM**

- **Full Application deadline: January 22nd, 2024, 4:00 PM**

Both the LOI and Full Application should be submitted to Becci Venema, Healthy Starts Theme Research Manager (healthystarts@bcchr.ca). Becci must receive your complete application packages via email by the deadlines or they will not be accepted.

Award Terms and Conditions

Successful teams will be provided the full terms and conditions when awards are offered, but should note that:

- Recipients should request ethics approval as soon as they have received notice of award, since start dates will be March 30th, 2024;
- Recipients are asked to acknowledge the award funding in any communication, presentation, or publication related to the project;
- Recipients may be asked to present their study findings in a relevant BCCHR seminar series, as agreed with Healthy Starts;
- The awards are subject to ongoing reporting requirements.

Contacts

Please direct questions about the Competition to Becci Venema, Healthy Starts Theme Research Manager (healthystarts@bcchr.ca).

Appendix 1: LOI Requirements

Your LOI should contain each of the sections described below. You should generate a single PDF including each section in the order described.

For all documents use letter size pages (8.5 x 11" or 21.2 x 27.5 cm), with 2 cm margins on all sides and single line spacing. Use Times New Roman font (uncondensed) in 12-point font size.

Please note that modifications to the project details (e.g., title), plan (e.g., methods) and budget between LOI and Full Application are permitted, but should not substantially change the proposal. Changes to the team composition are also permitted but must be reported to Becci Venema immediately as these may impact the peer review assignments.

1) Cover Sheet

Available to download [here](#). The cover sheet must be completed and signed by both the PA and Co-PA. Electronic signatures will be accepted.

2) Project Summary (maximum two pages including any references, tables, charts, figures and photographs)

- a) Scientific Summary: Describe the project rationale, objectives and/or hypotheses, and methodology that will be used.

- b) Relevance: Describe how your project is catalytic, and relevant to the goal and aims of Healthy Starts.

3) Budget

Complete the budget spreadsheet, which can be downloaded [here](#). The spreadsheet includes space for a brief description of any leveraged funding that will be used to support the project (if applicable), including total amount, proportion used towards proposed activities, and how the Healthy Starts funds will catalyze a new project that would not otherwise be possible even with these leveraged funds.

Appendix 2: Full Application Requirements

Your Full Application should contain each of the sections described below. You should generate a single PDF including each section in the order described.

For all documents use letter size pages (8.5 x 11" or 21.2 x 27.5 cm), with 2 cm margins on all sides and single line spacing. Use Times New Roman font (uncondensed) in 12-point font size.

1) Grant Cover Sheet

Available to download [here](#). The cover sheet must be completed and signed by both the PA and Co-PA. Electronic signatures will be accepted. This can be an updated version of the same sheet provided at the LOI stage.

2) Project Proposal and Supporting Documents

- a) Scientific abstract (maximum 300 words).
- b) Plain language abstract (maximum 100 words).
- c) Proposal (maximum three-pages, not including references, tables, charts, figures or photographs). The following elements should be addressed:
 - Background and rationale;
 - Hypothesis(es) and/or objectives;
 - Research plan, including specific aims, project design, methodology, analysis plan, and preliminary data (if any);
 - Feasibility in the context of the team's expertise and the timeline/budget;
 - Discussion of future directions/sustainability;
 - Potential impact/significance of the project to child health;
 - Risk identification and mitigation strategy;
 - Approach to incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations in the proposed project and working environment of the project team.Note that the description of methods, as well as the discussion of data, should be included in the body of the proposal and not in figure legends nor included as an appendix.
- d) Competition-specific supplement (additional to the proposal page length):
 - Relevance of the project to the vision of Healthy Starts (maximum of 300 words) and description of team members' involvement and engagement with the Healthy Starts Theme (maximum 300 words). Examples may include attending research seminars, presenting or having trainees present at seminars, serving as a judge for Research Day, inviting speakers, involvement in collaborative projects/initiatives, etc.
- e) Supplementary materials – references, tables, charts, figures and photographs (maximum two additional pages).

- f) Resubmissions from previous Competitions may include a letter of response to previous reviewers (half page maximum).

3) Budget and justification

- a) Complete the budget spreadsheet, which can be downloaded [here](#). The spreadsheet includes space for a brief description of any leveraged funding that will be used to support the project (if applicable), including total amount, proportion used towards proposed activities, and how the Healthy Starts funds will catalyze a new project that would not otherwise be possible even with these leveraged funds. This can be an updated version of the same sheet provided at the LOI stage.
- b) Written justification of your budget explaining the purpose of the items included, in the context of your proposal (half page maximum).

4) CVs

Common CV of all applicants based in Canada (PA, Co-PA, and Co-As) in the [CIHR Biosketch format](#) (same CCV as used for CIHR Project Grant submissions). For Co-As not based in Canada, CVs can be provided in any format.

5) Research Project Information Form

Available on UBC's website [here](#). Investigators based at BCCHR must send RPIFs signed by themselves and their Department Head to Nur Eisma (neisma@bcchr.ca) at the Office of Research Services (ORS) **by January 15th** to ensure that institutional signatures are obtained in time. Electronic signatures will be accepted.

Note: Letters of Support are not required and will not be included in the application package provided to reviewers if submitted along with the proposal.

Appendix 3: Review Criteria

For the LOI Stage, the Healthy Start Office will complete an eligibility check to ensure that the scope of the proposal, initial budget, and composition of the project team meet the Competition guidelines. The Healthy Starts Office reserves the option to implement a streamlined peer review of applications to shortlist proposals to move forward to the Full Application stage. In that situation, the following review criteria would be used:

| Letter of Intent Review Criteria |
|---|
| Project: Is it catalytic (i.e., is this a new study/initiative that would not be possible without the grant funding)? |
| Scope: Is there clear alignment with the long-term vision of Healthy Starts and clear significance for child health? |
| Scope: Is the proposal for a research project that lays the groundwork for future research activity? |

For the Full Application, the following review criteria will be used in addition to the basic LOI review criteria outlined above:

| Full Application Review Criteria |
|--|
| Rigor and quality of the research proposal or evaluation plan; |
| Clarity and feasibility of the objectives, methods, budget, and timelines; |
| Strength of the PA/Co-PA's expertise to guide the project, the appropriateness of each team member and their roles, the team's capacity to do the proposed work; |
| Extent to which the proposal identifies a pathway for future activity/sustainability, including (where applicable) the ability to leverage additional funding sources or partnerships to support future activity/implementation; |
| Degree to which the proposal considers equity, diversity, and inclusion with respect to the project (including in its aims and methods/evaluation plan) and working environment. |

In light of the review criteria, the reviewers will score each proposal according the following scoring scale (from CIHR).

| Descriptor | Range | Definition | Potential Impact |
|-------------------|--------------|--|-------------------------|
| Outstanding | 4.5 – 4.9 | The application excels in most or all relevant aspects. Any short-comings are minimal. | Extremely Significant |
| Excellent | 4.0 – 4.4 | The application excels in many relevant aspects, and reasonably addresses all others. Certain improvements are possible. | Very Significant |
| Good | 3.5 – 3.9 | The application excels in some relevant aspects, and reasonably addresses all others. Some improvements are necessary. | Significant |
| Fair | 3.0 – 3.4 | The application broadly addresses relevant aspects. Major revisions are required. | Moderate |
| Poor | 0.0 – 2.9 | The application fails to provide convincing information and/or has serious inherent flaws or gaps. | Limited |

Regardless of their funding outcome, all teams submitting Full Applications can expect to receive feedback on their application.

Appendix 4: Research Team Eligibility

Please review the below table to understand the eligibility of individuals to hold roles in the application team.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Principal Applicant</p> | <p>May only be listed as PA or Co-PA on one application, but may be listed as an Additional Co-A on other projects. The PA cannot hold an active Healthy Starts Grant (as its PA or Co-PA) at the time of the new Grant commencing*.</p> <p>PA must have current full Investigator status with the BCCHR Healthy Starts Theme and hold an active University faculty position.</p> |
| <p>Co-Principal Applicant</p> | <p>Applications require a Co-PA. An individual can only be listed as a Co-PA on one application, but may be listed as an Additional Co-A on other projects. Co-PAs cannot hold an active Healthy Starts Grant (as its PA or Co-PA) at the time of the new Grant commencing*.</p> <p>Co-PA must be a Full or Affiliate Investigator at BCCHR with membership in any Theme, although representation from Healthy Starts is preferred.</p> <p>New collaborations between Investigators are encouraged, but not mandatory (i.e., you can have previously collaborated).</p> |
| <p>Additional Co-Applicants</p> | <p>Co-As should include individuals appropriate for the particular project proposed. There is no set number of Co-As for a project. Interprofessional collaborations and involvement of trainees (e.g., residents, clinical fellows, research associates, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students) are encouraged but not required. However, it is expected that individuals listed as Co-As will contribute substantially to the intellectual content, design, and implementation of the research project.</p> <p>Representation from Healthy Starts members is encouraged, but not required. Co-As can be members of any BCCHR Theme and the inclusion of others outside of BCCHR is encouraged where appropriate to the project.</p> |

**If you are approaching the end of a current Healthy Starts Catalyst Grant and wish to clarify your eligibility, please reach out to Becci Venema, Healthy Starts Theme Research Manager (healthystarts@bcchr.ca).*

Appendix 5: Eligible Expenses

Please review the below table to understand the eligibility of expenses.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Eligible Expenses | Direct costs of research only. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salary support for trainees and technicians;• Expenses directly associated with conducting the project (materials, supplies, and services);• Patient/family support (e.g., honoraria, compensation for travel and child-care) or recruitment costs;• Database development for data collection. |
| Ineligible Expenses | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment (greater than \$5,000);• Conference expenses, including associated travel;• Salary support for Investigators;• Indirect costs. |