Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

This fact sheet is part of a set of eight on Research Granting Agencies produced by the Association pour la recherche au collégial. It introduces the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, an agency that supports public research in the area of social sciences throughout Canada, and situates it within the overall configuration of agencies that, in Québec and in Canada, support public research in the areas of health, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences, humanities, fine arts and literature, as well as the acquisition or maintenance of the infrastructures needed for conducting such research.
ARC?
As a professional association, ARC fosters the development of research throughout the college system, in particular through the dissemination of position papers on research issues, the hosting of research-related activities and conferences, the establishment of research support measures, the awarding prizes and, more recently, through meta-research projects.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
CIHR are the primary federal agency responsible for funding health research in Canada. They report to Parliament through the Minister of Health.

www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca
CIHR's Funding News
The Research Highlights section of the CIHR website lists some of the CIHR-funded research, and the outcomes and impacts of these projects.

Mandate
CIHR's mandate is to support the creation of new scientific knowledge and its application to improve or have an impact on, the health of Canada’s population, to offer improved health products and services, and to strengthen Canada's health-care system.

CIHR's structure brings together, within a virtual network, researchers from various disciplines and geographical locations in 13 institutes involved in 13 separate areas of health research.

These institutes also work together to shape a national health research agenda for Canada; each has its own strategic plan that is aligned with CIHR’s mandate and orientations.
Eligible projects

CIHR provides funding opportunities based on four themes of health research:
- Biomedical
- Clinical
- Health systems services
- Social, cultural, environmental and population health

Research areas
Each of the 13 CIHR institutes funds projects in one of the following areas of health research:
- Aboriginal Peoples' Health
- Aging
- Cancer
- Circulatory and Respiratory Health
- Gender and Health
- Genetics
- Health Services and Policy Research
- Human Development, Child and Youth Health
- Infection and Immunity
- Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis
- Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction
- Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes
- Population and Public Health

CIHR recognizes that some research projects in areas related to health and psychology can overlap into more than one research area, so that in some cases, a project may be funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) or by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Researchers can refer to the General Guidelines for Submitting and Accepting Applications to make sure they are submitting their applications to the right funding agency.

Applying for a grant

Roles of individuals participating in a grant application
Under the eligibility conditions for individuals set out in the CIHR Grants and Awards Guide, an individual may participate in a CIHR grant application in four different ways: as a nominated principal applicant, a principal applicant, a co-applicant, or a collaborator. The nominated principal applicant is the individual who is responsible for the grant application and supervises the proposed activities. This person must also assume administrative and financial responsibility for the grant and receives all CIHR-related correspondence. The principal applicant shares responsibility with the nominated principal applicant for supervision of the proposed activities. The co-applicant is an individual who contributes to the proposed activities. The collaborator is an individual whose role is to provide a specific service, such as access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc. Unlike the other three parties, the collaborator is not given access to grant funds.

Status of nominated principal applicant, principal applicant and co-applicant
Each CIHR funding opportunity includes specific rules which set out the criteria that researchers must meet in order to qualify as a nominated principal applicant, principal applicant or co-applicant. Generally, these rules specify that these three roles must be filled by an independent researcher, a director of research, or a knowledge user. An independent researcher is one who conducts research autonomously. That individual must also hold a research appointment making it possible to continue the proposed research project for the entire duration of the funding period, supervise trainees, and publish the research findings. The person holding the research position must also comply with the institution’s regulations governing the conduct of research, the supervision of trainees, and the employment conditions of staff paid with CIHR funding. The director of research acts as a mentor, supervises trainees, and holds an independent research appointment in areas of research that have been clearly established as involving health. The knowledge user is likely to be able to use knowledge generated through research in order to make informed decisions about health policies, programs or practices. This person’s level of engagement in the research process may vary in intensity and complexity, depending on the type of research and the information required. For example, that individual can be a practitioner, policymaker, educator, decision-maker, health care administrator, community leader, or member of a patient group, health charity, private sector organization or media outlet.

Management of federal grants

Institution or organization
CIHR accepts applications from nominated principal applicants from Canadian postsecondary teaching institutions, including colleges and their affiliated institutions and research centres. Under CIHR rules, these organizations or institutions are required to administer the funds awarded to projects led by nominated principal applicants associated with them. Consequently, researchers who plan to submit an application to CIHR must verify whether their institution is eligible (consult the list of eligible institutions).

Eligible and non-eligible expenses
Under the rules governing the Use of Grant Funds, which apply to all three federal granting agencies—CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC—, CIHR grants must be used primarily to fund direct research costs. They therefore do not cover, in whole or in part, the salaries paid to nominated principal applicants, applicants, or co-applicants for funded projects.

Salary research allowances provided for and included in certain funding opportunities, allow for the use of funds to facilitate the participation of a knowledge user in a research program. These funds provide compensation to the organization for the time that its knowledge user has spent engaged in the project, but they cannot be used to cover the cost of teaching time to allow the individual to participate in the research.

Regular CIHR operating grants
CIHR has a wide variety of funding opportunities, subject to various terms and conditions and eligibility criteria. They can be viewed at the inventory of CIHR funding opportunities.
Grant program specific to colleges

The College and Community Innovation Program (CCI) is a joint initiative of the three federal granting agencies—the NSERC, the SSHRC, and CIHR.

This program is addressed specifically to colleges. Its objective is to increase innovation at the community and regional levels by enabling Canadian colleges to increase their capacity to transform the results of research and development into useful economic activities notably in the health sector, in partnership with the private sector.

Under the CCI program, the applicant is a college administrator who assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant. In this case, applicants are members of the faculty and professional or technical staff of the applicant college. They must be qualified to undertake research independently, but are not required to meet the requirements of the regular CIHR programs. The college uses its own criteria to determine who can participate in the funded project.

Applications submitted for a project covered by the health sector of the CCI program must be forwarded to NSERC, which manages the process of assessing and approving all applications. Once a project is approved, the grant file will be forwarded to the CIHR, which will handle the transfer of funds.

According to the guidelines in the Use of Grant Funds section, the CCI program provides financial measures tailored specifically to the realities of colleges. In particular, it allows for part of the grant funds to be used to cover some of the costs associated with the reduction in the teaching load so that faculty can take part in applied research projects. As well, for certain types of grants offered under the program, colleges may apply for funding to cover overhead and administration costs associated with the project; such costs may not exceed 20% of the grant.

The six types of grants offered under this program are:

- Technology Access Centres (TAC) Grants
- Applied Research Tools and Instruments (ARTI) Grants
- Industrial Research Chairs for Colleges (IRCC) Grants
- College-University Idea to Innovation (CU-I2I) Grants
- Applied Research and Development (ARD) Grants
- Innovation Enhancement (IE) Grants

Submitting applications

The CIHR Web site describes the general application procedure for filing a funding application.

Other funding opportunities

The Indirect Costs Program (IPC) awards grants to institutions that qualify for CIHR funding or are receiving CIHR funding to cover the indirect costs of research or research infrastructures. However, colleges that receive funds under the CCI program are not eligible for the IPC.