



2026 WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE CATALYST GRANTS

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Important dates:

Letter of Intent (LOI)	September 4, 2026 11PM PDT
Invitation to Submit Full Application	September 14, 2026
Application Deadline	October 7, 2026 11PM PDT
Anticipated Notice of Decision	November 30, 2026
Funding Start Date	December 1, 2026

Description

The WHRI Catalyst Grants support pilot studies in women's and/or newborn's health*, which aim to generate preliminary data; test new approaches, methodologies or tools; bring new teams together; and/or support new research in women's and/or newborn's health from established researchers. The funding supports activities that will generate data/information that is to be used to leverage larger funding applications in the future.

Quality improvement (QI) and Quality assurance (QA) projects will be considered only if they present a clear research question to be tested. Purely QI/QA projects are not eligible.

Funds Available

Seven awards, valued at \$30,000 each, for a one-year period. Recipients can apply for a no-cost extension should the project not be able to be completed within the one-year period.

One of seven awards is related to funding provided to the BC Women's Health Foundation by iA Financial Group and will support a research project focused on digital health innovations within women's and/or newborn health.

Applicant Eligibility

The Catalyst Grants are intended to support researchers in British Columbia engaged in research relevant to women's and newborn's health.

At the time of application:

- The Principal Applicant must be a resident of BC.
- The Principal Applicant must be a member of the WHRI at the time of the LOI submission.
- Principal Applicants must be a researcher and/or clinician (which includes those who hold a license to practice as a member of a regulated health profession as recognized by the BC Health Professions Act or who belong to a health profession requiring board certification and are in good standing with the relevant body), must have completed a post-

* We define women's health as encompassing both sex-specific conditions, sex differences across conditions, and gendered experiences affecting cis and trans women, and gender diverse people assigned female at birth.^{1,2}



graduate degree (PhD or MD), and cannot be enrolled as a student in a degree or diploma program. **Postdoctoral Fellows, Clinical Fellows and Research Associates are eligible to apply.** It is expected that applicants will have appropriate training and experience in conducting research.

- **Fellows and Research Associates are only eligible to apply as Principal Applicants if they have written approval from the Department Head where they work.** These letters must be submitted to Kathryn Dewar (kdewar@cw.bc.ca) by the LOI submission deadline in order to meet eligibility. Submissions that do not have this letter will be deemed ineligible to advance to the full application stage.
- The funds must be used for a single project that is not already funded from other sources. If the proposed project is related to, or has a direct connection to, an already funded project, it must be demonstrated that the proposed project addresses a novel and distinct question from the funded project and the budget of the proposed project should demonstrate the other source of funding for the project and how the current funding is distinct. Alternatively, if the recipient receives another grant for the same project after being awarded Catalyst Grant funding, it is our expectation that the Principal Applicant will notify the Executive Director of the WHRI and that one of those grants must be declined. The PI cannot hold two separate grants funding the same project.
- An individual cannot submit more than one application as Principal Applicant. However, a Principal Applicant can be named as a co-investigator on additional applications.
- The Principal Applicant cannot have received a WHRI Catalyst Grant as a Principal Applicant within the last 3 years. This means that three full grant cycles must elapse from the competition year in which the Applicant received their grant and the competition year in which they can reapply. For example, those who received a grant in the 2022 competition are now eligible to reapply for this year's competition.

Applicant Streams

There are two applicant streams for this competition which will be evaluated separately from one another: the Academic Researcher stream and the Clinician Investigator stream. Applicants will need to self-select the most applicable stream according to the criteria below. Only one stream can be selected for the application. In addition to the overall eligibility criteria:

Academic Researcher stream applicants must:

- Have a PhD, MD or equivalent, and commit a majority of their time to conducting research.
- Hold an appointment at, or have a commitment for an appointment that will begin by the award start date of December 1, 2026, be registered as a Postdoctoral Fellow or hold a Research Associate position, at a BC institution that must allow the applicant to:
 - a. Apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a Principal Investigator.
 - b. Publish their research results.
- Conduct research in one of the four themes of health research as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, and population health.



Clinician Investigator stream applicants must:

- Hold a valid license to practice as a member of a regulated health profession as recognized by the BC Health Professions Act or belong to a health profession requiring board certification and be in good standing with the relevant body.
- Be actively and directly involved in patient care for at least 50% of their role and hold a role which includes making clinical judgements/decisions.
- Have a level of research experience appropriate for the proposed study and have the resources and infrastructure to carry out the proposed research activities

Eligible Expenses

Research awards may be used for the following purposes:

- Operating expenses associated with the conduct of the study
- Research project materials and supplies
- Salary support for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research assistants and staff providing services to support the research activity (maximum of 50% of total budget)
- Release time to enable practitioners and/or researchers to conduct research activities (maximum of 50% of total budget)
- Statistician and data analyst services
- Database development for data collection
- Teleconference, meeting, knowledge translation and conference travel expenses
- Funding for equipment is not encouraged. However, if the equipment is necessary for an identified project, it may be considered.

Project Time Period

The time frame for the project is 12 months. Recipients can apply for a no-cost extension should the project not be able to be completed within the one-year time frame.

Communication Requirements

Catalyst Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the Women's Health Research Institute as well as the BC Women's Health Foundation in any and all communication, presentation, or publication related to the project.

Recipients are also expected to provide an academic report, a lay summary and three plain language key messages from the research project to the WHRI at the completion of the project.

Recipients are asked to present their findings at any of the following events: BC Women's Research Rounds, WHRI Public Forum, BC Women's Health Foundation 'Meet the Researcher' events.

Recipients must agree to serve as a reviewer on a future WHRI grant competition.

Review Process

A peer review committee will evaluate the full application for all complete eligible submissions.



Evaluation Criteria

General review criteria will include whether:

- The research focus is innovative and relevant to women's and/or newborn's health in B.C.
- The plans and objectives of the research activities are clear and well justified.
- The investigators comprise sufficient expertise relevant to the proposed research project.
- The appropriate stream has been selected based on the status of the Principal Applicant.
- The proposed activities contribute to the training of research trainees, students and other personnel (HQP) engaged in research.
- The proposed activities can be achieved within the funding period. Please note that recipients can apply for a no-cost extension should the project not be completed within the funding period.
- The budget items requested are appropriate and sufficiently justified.
- The plan for dissemination of findings is well constructed.
- The proposed activities integrate [equity, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\)](https://research.ubc.ca/vpri-competitions-initiatives/edi-resources-researchers) (<https://research.ubc.ca/vpri-competitions-initiatives/edi-resources-researchers>) considerations into the research design and into the research and training environment.
- The Principal Applicant has completed the LOI and fulfilled the requirements specified in "How to Apply".

How to Apply

The application process for this funding opportunity consists of a letter of intent and full application. It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that their letter of intent and application is complete prior to submission.

1) Letter of Intent

Applications that fail to submit a letter of intent by the deadline will not be eligible for funding. The Letter of Intent should include the following information:

- i. Information for Principal Applicant and Co-Investigators (if any). Provide the name, title, name of institutional affiliations and email address. **Please note that the list of co-investigators should not change (i.e., no new additions) between the LOI and the full application submission.** Conflict of interest declarations for grant reviewer assignments are based on the project team members listed in the LOI submission.
- ii. Contact information for Project Contact, if different from Principal Applicant.
- iii. Confirmation of whether the Principal Applicant is a Research Associate or Postdoctoral Fellow. Note that a letter of support from the Department Head is required at the LOI stage and should be emailed to Kathryn Dewar (kdewar@cw.bc.ca) by the LOI submission deadline in order to meet eligibility. Submissions that do not have an accompanying letter will be deemed ineligible to advance to the full application stage.
- iv. Project title



- v. Abstract (maximum length of 250 words)
- vi. Applicant stream (i.e., Academic Researcher or Clinician Investigator stream). This will be reviewed at the time of the LOI submission to ensure correct category assignment.
- vii. Keywords
- viii. Indicate if your application should be considered for the digital health-focused research grant.

The LOI is due on September 4, 2026 **at 11 PM** PDT. It must be submitted using the following link:
<https://rc.bcchr.ca/redcap/surveys/?s=PHMY4AF9PRC79CAC>

Please note: You will not be able to save the LOI in the online submission system once it has been started, so please ensure you can complete the LOI submission in a single sitting.

2) Full Application

On September 14, 2026, an email invitation to submit a full application will be sent to each Principal Applicant who meets the eligibility criteria, which will allow them to upload and submit the full application in pdf format. Each applicant will receive a unique link to upload their full application, and this link will only be able to be used to upload a single application. If someone (i.e., a primary contact) is submitting more than one application (i.e., on behalf of more than one Principal Applicant), please ensure that each application is submitted via its own unique link (which is provided in the email invitation to submit a full application) or this will cause an application to be overwritten/replaced in the submission portal.

Please note that for Principal Applicants with a UBC affiliation, a [UBC Research Project Information Form](https://research.ubc.ca/support-researchers/research-project-information-form) (RPIF) (<https://research.ubc.ca/support-researchers/research-project-information-form>) will **not** need to be completed at the time of application submission. Instead, an RPIF will be required only for funded applications at the time funding notifications are received.

The full application is due on **October 7, 2026 at 11pm** PDT. No late submissions will be accepted under any circumstances.

Format

Proposals must be written in Arial font (regular) minimum 11pt. Single-spaced text with 2 cm margins on letter size (8½ x 11" (21.2 x 27.5 cm) and saved as a pdf. **Note:** the application file name should be the last name of the principal applicant ('lastname.pdf').

A) Cover sheet (Up to 1 page)

- i. Contact information for Principal Applicant and Co-Investigators (if any). Provide the name, title, name of institution, department name, mailing address, phone number and email address for each investigator.
- ii. Contact information for Project Contact, if different from Principal Applicant
- iii. Applicant stream (i.e., Academic Researcher or Clinician Investigator stream)
- iv. If your application should be considered for the digital health-focused grant, please indicate so in your cover letter.
- v. Contact information for the financial administrator, including email address and phone



number.

- vi. Information on host institution. The host institution is most commonly a publically-funded BC health research institution or university responsible for administering award funds
- vii. Project title / Team name
- viii. Expected duration of the project, including anticipated start and end dates
- ix. Total budget amount
- x. Lay summary with title (maximum length of 250 words)

B) Proposal (4 pages)

The proposal should include a clear, concise description of the research plan that includes:

- i. Overall objectives
- ii. Rationale for the study (Including Background)
- iii. Study hypothesis and aims
- iv. Study design, methodology and analysis plan
- v. Anticipated results
- vi. Study timeline
- vii. Relevance to the health of women and/or newborns in British Columbia

C) Appendix (2 pages maximum)

- i. Dissemination or knowledge translation plan. In this section, please address the following points:
 - Describe the Knowledge Translation goal(s) of the project (e.g. to generate awareness, to inform future research).
 - List your knowledge users or target audience (e.g. clinicians, decision makers, patient partners).
 - Name the KT strategies you will employ to achieve your KT goals (e.g. presentations to specific knowledge user groups, engagement of knowledge users within the project team, create a plain-language social media toolkit of findings).
- ii. Future goals outlining how the catalyst grant will facilitate future funding and research.
- iii. Inclusion of highly qualified personnel (HQP). Briefly describe how research trainees, students and/or other HQP will be included in the project.
- iv. Consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). In this section, please describe how EDI considerations will be incorporated into the proposed activities, including in your recruitment (e.g., participants, trainees/employees), training of highly qualified personnel (HQP), experimental design and dissemination of project findings (as appropriate).



D) References (5 pages maximum)

E) Budget and Justification (1 page maximum)

Note that the WHRI Catalyst Grant Competition is exempt from the application of indirect costs of research.

F) Amounts and sources of other research funding (excluding salary funding), for the Principal Applicant (1 page maximum)

Give titles, brief description, amounts and duration of awards, along with nominated principal investigator and all co-investigators. Indicate percent overlap with the current application. If the list of other research funding for the Principal Applicant exceeds 1 page, please prioritize the funding presented in this list to the largest sources of funding and the sources of funding that are the most relevant to the proposed project (so that this list will fit within the 1-page limit).

G) CV and Letters of Support:

- i. Letter of departmental or institutional support which indicates how the research fits within the department or institution's strategic plan and/or addresses women's or newborn health.
- ii. Letter(s) of support from other organizations involved with the research study, if applicable.
- iii. CVs of Principal Applicant and Co-Investigators in either [CIHR Project Biosketch Application](#) or [CIHR Tri-Agency CV](#) Format. Note that if your research team includes patient partners, community partners, or knowledge users as Co-investigators, a letter of support can be provided in place of a CV or the [CIHR Applicant Profile CV format](#) can be chosen for these team members. If your research team includes international academics, a CV in any format (e.g., NIH Biosketch) can be provided.

Submission Instructions

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Please note: you will not be able to save the LOI in the online submission system once it has been started, so please ensure you can complete the LOI submission in a single sitting.

The full application is due on **October 7, 2026 at 11pm PDT**. A link to the application platform will be emailed on September 14, 2026 to principal applicants who submitted an LOI.

Questions about the application process can be sent to Kathryn Dewar (kdewar@cw.bc.ca).



REFERENCES

1. Partnership for Women's Health Research Canada (PWHR) and Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI). (2024). *Beyond the Binary in Canada Guide. Pathways toward equitable research with people who experience sex and gender-based health inequities*. Partnership for Women's Health Research Canada. <https://pwhr.org>
2. Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Gender and Health. (2024). *Research Priority Plan 2024-2029: Strengths to Solutions: Advancing Sex and Gender Science for Healthy Futures*. CIHR. <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/35752.html>