

PHRI Partnership Program – Transforming Tomorrow Today Call for Letters of Intent

Background

1. The Population Health Research Institute (PHRI) has had tremendous success identifying innovative ways of assessing and treating patients over the last 25 years. Although its initial focus has been on people with cardiovascular disease, the major driver of its success has been PHRI's enthusiasm for developing new fields of research, forging novel transdisciplinary collaborations, challenging established dogma related to the health of people and populations, and creating a non-exclusive culture that both welcomes new researchers from any health-related discipline and facilitates their research goals. It is because of this inclusive and open-minded approach that PHRI's researchers include physicians, nurses, dieticians, epidemiologists, computer scientists focused on artificial intelligence, geneticists, biomarker experts, and scientists involved in translational research. The scientific, open, and sharing environment within PHRI has allowed these individuals to enhance established areas of research and create new ones with a transdisciplinary focus.
2. PHRI's success rests on a systematic strategy to identify and collaborate with committed investigators in key areas, provide them with seed funds to initiate programs, support their efforts with a substantial infrastructure and extensive network of investigators in several centres, and facilitate their ability to obtain additional funds through peer review grants from several countries, and industry sources in Canada, Europe, the US and elsewhere. Underpinning all these efforts is careful mentorship of emerging investigators to ensure that: a) they design and execute their studies at the highest standards; and b) publish their work in the highest impact journals in the world. The success of this approach to date is illustrated by the fact that over half of all PHRI researchers have had first-author publications in the NEJM, Lancet, or JAMA, and almost all have first- author publications in top specialty journals.
3. The new PHRI partnership program is designed to broaden the extent and scope of PHRI's research even further and strengthen research further in Hamilton at McMaster University and its partner hospitals. In partnership with HHS, it will do this by providing 3 research development operating grants to 3 researchers who are currently not full-time members of PHRI to achieve the following objectives:
 - (a) Expand the scope of PHRI's research by developing new partnerships with other researchers or research groups
 - (b) Facilitate the development of new research themes and groups in Hamilton and enable them to do world class research
 - (c) Broaden the impact of PHRI within Hamilton, Canada, and the world.

These grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to support the research being conducted and cannot be used to support the researcher's salary.

Level of Funding

The total value of -funding for each project will be up to \$200,000 per year for 3 years with a 50% contribution from PHRI (i.e., \$100,000 cash or in-kind) and a 50% matching contribution (i.e., \$100,000 cash or in-kind) from a source identified by the researcher (e.g., peer review agency, HHS, industry, another research organization or other sources).

Applying for the New PHRI Partnership Program

1. Who is Eligible?

- Faculty at McMaster University and/or privileges at Hamilton Health Sciences or St. Joseph's Hospital
- Identification of at least 1 scientist or senior scientist at PHRI willing to mentor, collaborate with and/or advise the researcher at a level commensurate with the candidate's previous research experience
- Not a full-time designated PHRI researcher (i.e., not a current PHRI Investigator, Scientist, Senior Scientist or Emeritus Scientist) as of July 1, 2020
- Commitment to become a full-time or associate designated PHRI researcher and contribute to PHRI's academic culture (e.g., attendance at rounds, retreats, meetings, and openness to collaboration)
- Commitment to adhere to PHRI's research policies and procedures
- Evidence of a matching contribution (cash or in kind) to support or enhance the research program

2. What Kinds of Research Projects are Eligible?

- The research must answer a health-related question that is relevant to people or populations.
- The focus of the research must be on one or more diseases
- The results of the research must be directly applicable and relevant to patients or populations
- The research must be conducted using PHRI's data management, coordination, statistical, and/or information, communication technology (ICT) infrastructure

3. How will Proposals be Reviewed and Awarded?

- The application will include a letter of intent (LOI) that will be peer-reviewed by a 3-member panel
- Up to 9 LOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal that will be reviewed by a 6-member panel

- Up to 3 grants that are favourably reviewed will be awarded; if < 3 proposals receive a “fundable” score, fewer may be funded

4. *What are the Requirements for the Letter of Intent?*

- A completed LOI application form that includes the applicant’s Common CV (using the HHS Researcher template)
- A letter of support from a current PHRI scientist or senior scientist willing to mentor, collaborate with and/or advise the researcher, to facilitate their success at PHRI
- A research summary that is a maximum of two pages with 1-inch margins and 12-pitch font (excluding references) with up to 1 page of figures or tables and that contains the following elements
 - a) The problem being addressed, including background work
 - b) The specific research question with the PICOT elements
 - c) The design and feasibility of the research project
 - d) Members of the research team
 - e) The expected cost of the project and source of matching funds
- The completed LOI should be sent as ONE collated PDF to TTT@PHRI.ca

5. *What are the Requirements for the Full Application (after approval of the LOI)?*

- A 5-page, 1.5 line spaced, 1-inch margin, research proposal organized as follows:
 - a) The problem being addressed, including background work
 - b) The specific research questions with the PICOT elements
 - c) Research design including the elements appropriate to the design (see *Appendix*)
 - d) Statistical considerations including sample size, analysis plans
 - e) Relevance to other PHRI research
 - f) Matching contributions
 - g) Timetable and milestones
 - h) References (up to 25 in addition to the 5-page limit)
 - i) An Appendix (in addition to the 5-page limit) that may contain the following:
 - (a) Up to 3 tables and 3 figures
 - (b) Either a manuscript in preparation or a published manuscript
- 3 letters of support
 - a) At least 2 must be from people who can attest to the research achievements and/or potential of the candidate
 - b) At least 1 must be from the PHRI mentor/collaborator/advisor
- Budget and budget justification including the additional funds that the researcher has raised or plans to raise on their own to supplement this award.

6. *Reporting Requirements and Metrics of Success*

September 21, 2021

- It is expected that the successful candidate will hold and/or apply for research grants from either external research funders or industry
- It is expected that these studies will be conducted in conjunction with PHRI, and will use PHRI infrastructure and the expertise of its staff
- During the tenure of this award, the candidate is expected to:
 - a) Provide annual progress reports and be available for a discussion to assess the progress of the program
 - b) Submit at least one separate external proposal for additional funds if the study is not completely funded
 - c) Demonstrate industriousness and imagination with respect to identifying additional funds
 - d) Publish at least 2 papers related to the study

7. *Dates and Deadlines*

- a) LOI Deadline: November 26th, 2021; 5 pm
- b) Notification of successful LOIs: December 23rd, 2021
- c) Proposal Deadline: February 7th, 2022
- d) Notification of successful proposals: April 29th, 2022