

Questions and Answers 2024



To request an alternate format, please contact us at:
1-800-668-2642 700 Montreal Road,
contactcentre@cmhc.ca Ottawa, ON K1A 0P7



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Use of funding	3
Eligibility	4
Focus	6
Completing an application	6
Supporting documentation	7
Other questions	8

USE OF FUNDING

1. What are the fund stacking rules, e.g., with other federal funds and provincial funds?

Projects applying for funding or receiving funding from other institutions, organizations, programs, etc., are eligible to apply for funding through the NHS Research and Planning Fund. Stacking and leveraging of funds to undertake projects is permitted. The section of the application form titled “A.5 Other Funding Requests” is intended to highlight whether the proposed project is subject to and contingent upon any (pre-)existing funding arrangements or funding requests that may impact the feasibility or viability of the proposed project proceeding.

2. Are staff salary costs an eligible use of project funding?

Direct personnel costs associated with new or existing staff positions funded specifically to carry out the proposed project are an eligible use of project funding. Funds can also be used to purchase services from external contractors or consultants.

Salary costs of staff in leadership roles acting in an oversight or advisory capacity for the project are considered core operating costs and are not an eligible use of project funding. The estimated value of staff time contributed to the project by those in leadership roles (in the lead applicant organization or a project partner organization) to provide advisory support to the project is eligible as an in-kind contribution.

3. Can a lead applicant or project-partner organization include salary costs for staff time as an in-kind or cash contribution?

Yes, salary costs are eligible as an in-kind or cash contribution if these costs directly relate to time allocated to overseeing or carrying out project activities.

4. Does the research need to be national in scope? Can it be regional or local?

The proposed activities do not have to be national in scope and can be conducted regionally or locally. However, strong applications in past funding cycles described the potential of the project to achieve significant regional and/or national impact. Applicants are encouraged to consider how findings from their project could inform knowledge, policies, or practices beyond the local jurisdiction.

5. What percentage of the budget may be allocated to administrative overhead?

There is no set cap on the percentage of funding that can be allocated for administration. Costs are assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the project. The evaluation committee will examine the budget and consider the reasonableness and comparability of administrative allocations based on the project proposed.

6. Can the budget include dissemination activities and delivery of knowledge transfer tools?

There is no specific process for the budget’s format. It is helpful for reviewers to be able to clearly see, in the budget, the project phases (if applicable) and key deliverables, as well as all associated cost descriptions for the proposed project activities. Where appropriate, the budget should account for knowledge dissemination activities.

7. Is it possible to be considered for more than one activity stream?

There are three streams of activity under the NHS Research and Planning Fund. The differences between the three streams are considerable, and an application can only be submitted in one of the three. The evaluation criteria vary from one stream to another. If the wrong stream is selected for the proposed project, the project’s assessment may be based on less suitable criteria, which may jeopardize the application. Your application will only be considered for the stream to which you apply.

8. Does the NHS Research and Planning Fund grant partial awards, i.e., if the funding request exceeds the amount CMHC is able to allocate to one project, would CMHC adjust the amount or decline the submission?

The NHS Research and Planning Fund does not grant partial awards.

9. Can the funding requested be used to purchase equipment needed to complete activities?

Funding provided through the NHS Research and Planning Fund cannot be used to purchase equipment needed to complete activities.

ELIGIBILITY

10. Which types of organizations are eligible to apply for the NHS Research and Planning Fund as lead applicants?

The types of organizations that are eligible to apply for the NHS Research and Planning Fund as lead applicants are: Canadian not-for-profit organizations, registered charities, Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations. Other types of organizations are eligible as partners. Lead applicant organizations are encouraged to partner with community-based organizations, academics, consultants, municipalities, or other organizations that bring expertise to the project.

11. Under the NHS Research and Planning Fund eligibility criteria, a lead applicant must be an active not-for-profit, charitable, or Indigenous organization, or an Indigenous government, in Canada. What is required as proof of non-profit status?

Non-profits are formed pursuant to provincial or federal legislation and would typically have a registration number and certificate. If the non-profit is a charitable organization, it would have to be granted charitable tax status under the *Income Tax Act* by the Canada Revenue Agency.

12. If an organization applies for a Planning Activity stream this year, would they be able to apply for a Research Project for later stages of the same project in future years?

Yes, the intent of the Planning Activity stream is to provide resources for organizations to do the foundational work necessary to develop a strong research proposal, whether this be to apply for funding from the NHS Research and Planning Fund or elsewhere. Once developed, this research proposal can be submitted to the NHS Research and Planning Fund in a subsequent year, subject to the availability of funds.

13. How do I determine which stream to apply for?

The NHS Research and Planning Fund has three activity streams: Planning Activities, Research Projects, and Knowledge Mobilization Projects.

Organizations that do not have direct experience leading a research project in the past are encouraged to apply for a Planning Activity grant.

A Research Project is suitable for projects seeking to undertake new research or to synthesize existing research in new ways. The project must have a clearly defined research question, methodology, deliverables, and knowledge mobilization plan.

A Knowledge Mobilization Project is suitable for sharing existing research.

14. For the Knowledge Mobilization stream, do we have to have completed the research before applying?

The Knowledge Mobilization stream is for completed research only, and the research must be completed at the time of application.

15. Can we be penalized if our university charges an administrative fee (which is a fixed fee) that exceeds what you have determined is reasonable?

Fixed administrative costs should be explained in the context of the project and the budget, and administrative overhead costs associated with academic institutions would not unduly disadvantage a proposal. Reviewers will assess whether the budget provided in the application is feasible to achieve the proposed activities and project outcomes. Please note that academic institutions are not eligible as a lead applicant for the NHS Research and Planning Fund.

16. Can municipalities be research partners with a non-profit organization as the lead applicant?

Yes, municipalities are invited and encouraged to partner with eligible lead entities.

17. Can a lead applicant submit more than one application? (e.g., a research proposal for a project focused on refugees and another proposal focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ population)?

A lead applicant cannot submit multiple applications in a single proposal call. The lead applicant can only apply to the NHS Research and Planning Fund for one project each year. An organization that applies as a lead applicant to the NHS Research and Planning Fund can, however, be a team member (and not a lead applicant) on another project submitted to the Fund in the same year.

18. Can a lead applicant be part of another project submitted by a different lead applicant?

An organization can apply as a lead applicant only once per funding cycle. Organizations that apply as lead applicants to the NHS Research and Planning Fund can be a team member on another project submitted to the Fund where they are not the lead applicant.

19. Can CMHC be a stakeholder contributing to the research once the grant is awarded? (I.e., during the application period, CMHC must remain neutral; however, during the research, CMHC would be a critical stakeholder for an organization’s proposed project.)

CMHC cannot be listed as a partner or a team member on the application form. CMHC requires all grant recipients to follow a structured reporting process. During the research, CMHC will review progress reports, and interim and final deliverables to provide assurance that the project adheres to the scope, tasks and timelines described in the contribution agreement.

20. If conventional housing is not the focus of the project, but the results can help to better understand what constitutes a place to call home, is the project eligible?

CMHC cannot comment on the application’s content prior to the funding decision. Applications must primarily focus on technical or socioeconomic aspects of affordable housing. Applications must show how the project will provide critical knowledge to support selected National Housing Strategy priority areas for action and priority vulnerable groups. Funding programs and initiatives under the National Housing Strategy do not apply to the conventional or market-rate housing sector.

21. Are data collection activities conducted abroad considered eligible expenses? (The analysis of innovative practices used abroad is one way to guide practices in Canada.)

Projects funded by the NHS Research and Planning Fund must be conducted in Canada, and the lead applicant organization must be Canadian. Projects may include a variety of research activities, such as literature reviews, the study of national and international contexts, surveys, interviews, tests, evaluations, data collection and analysis, profiles, case studies and reports.

FOCUS

22. Can the research address other issues in addition to housing?

Applications will be evaluated based on the criteria, which include the relevance to the National Housing Strategy. As such, housing should be the focus of the research, though previous successful projects have integrated other topics, such as health, into their projects.

23. Do projects targeting individuals with mental health also need to include addiction issues?

Applicants may focus their project on individuals with mental health issues, addiction issues, or both.

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

24. Are we required to identify at least one National Housing Strategy priority area and at least one priority vulnerable group for our project?

Proposals for the NHS Research and Planning Fund need to focus on at least one National Housing Strategy priority area for actions. If you select the priority area “housing for those in greatest need” then you will also need to identify one or more priority vulnerable groups. The National Housing Strategy priority areas for action are described in detail at the National Housing Strategy [website](https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/nhs/guidepage-strategy/priority-areas-for-action)¹.

25. Do the word limits for each section include references?

If you include references in your responses, they are included in the word count for each section.

26. I am having trouble with the online application submission portal. What can I do?

The browser that you are using can sometimes affect your experience with the submission system. If you encounter issues, please try using an alternative browser. If you still experience issues, please contact us so we can assist.

26. What is the timeframe for securing the 25% in partner contributions?

Confirmation of in-kind or cash contribution must be provided at the time of your Stage Two application, should you be invited to submit, as you must include a signed letter of contribution from each organization making contributions to your project. These letters are a required component of the Stage Two application.

28. What is the difference between ‘contribution letter’ and ‘organization description’?

The ‘organization description’ is a document that says what an organization does, etc. its content is usually similar to that would appear on an “about” page on a website.

The contribution letter is required from an organization that is making an in-kind contribution for the work to be done. This could include a cash contribution or if an organization is committing staff or other resources (i.e. in-kind contribution).

29. Does the lead applicant organization have to write a letter confirming its contribution, or is it only the partners who must meet this requirement?

If the lead applicant organization is making an in-kind or cash contribution, they must also provide a signed letter confirming their contribution.

¹ <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/nhs/guidepage-strategy/priority-areas-for-action>

30. Can partners join if they don't have funding to contribute?

Organizations that will be making financial or in-kind contributions are to be listed on the application form as project partners. The team member section is where you list all members of the project team, which includes everyone involved in delivering the project, regardless of whether or not their organization is providing funding or in-kind contributions.

31. The link to the PDF application form on NHS Research and Planning Fund's website doesn't seem to be working. Can CMHC send the form to applicants, or is there a timeline for when the PDF copy will be available on NHS Research and Planning Fund's website?

The application form can be found in the "Resources" section of the NHS Research and Planning Fund [website](#)². The application form shall be download in the applicants' computers and then open it with Adobe Acrobat DC.

32. If an application is submitted in advance of the deadline, is there an opportunity for CMHC staff to review and provide feedback to potentially strengthen the application?

CMHC cannot provide comments on the content of an application before the funding decision.

Some applicants may have worked closely with CMHC staff in developing applications for other National Housing Strategy initiatives, such as the National Housing Co-Investment Fund. For the NHS Research and Planning Fund, CMHC must remain impartial, because the process is merit-based and very competitive.

CMHC can help applicants if they are having difficulty determining which initiative is the best fit for their project, or if they have questions about the application process.

CMHC staff cannot provide applicants with assistance in developing or submitting applications to the NHS Research and Planning Fund.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

33. How should we format the budget to account for in-kind or cash contribution?

There is no specific process outlined for the formatting of the budget. It is helpful for reviewers to be able to clearly see which proposed activities will be supported through in-kind or cash contribution and which will be supported through funding requested from CMHC. It may be useful to break down the budget in terms of project phase/activity, key deliverable, cost category, and funding source.

This is to help reviewers draw connections between the key activities/project components described in the application and the allocation of resources to these activities. For example, if a project involved a focus group to collect data, line-item costs associated with doing the focus groups (e.g., room booking, materials, participant honoraria, refreshments, etc.) could be listed under "focus group" in the budget.

34. Is there any value in outlining where there is potential to rationalize the budget?

Reviewers will be looking at the reasonableness of the budget in relation to the activities and outcomes described in the application. Costs should reflect what is reasonably required to accomplish the work. Over-representing or under-representing project costs could raise concerns of project feasibility.

35. If we receive funding for the project, we will be hiring a new staff person. Do we need to identify a candidate and include their CV?

It is not necessary to identify a candidate when submitting your application. You can include details on an intended candidate (if you have one) or describe the skills/expertise you will seek in a potential candidate.

² www.cmhc.ca/rpf

36. Our organization is making in-kind or cash contribution that fulfill the 25% requirement. Should we also include in-kind or cash contribution of project partners in our budget?

Yes. The project budget should reflect the total project cost, which should include total contributions from partner organizations and the amount requested from CMHC. Applicants are required to demonstrate that at least 25% of the total project cost are in-kind or cash contribution.

39. Regarding the application scoring, and the 80% threshold, is that applied in Stage One or Stage Two?

The minimum score threshold of 80% is applied to each evaluation criterion. Stage One will look at the concept and relevance criteria and will be scored using the 80% threshold. Depending on the stream, the relevant criteria – methodology, feasibility etc., will be scored in Stage Two also using the 80% threshold.

OTHER QUESTIONS

37. The applicant guide indicates that only one application can be submitted to the NHS Research and Planning Fund and that applicants must select only one stream for their application. Does this also include other National Housing Strategy initiatives?

No, applying to the NHS Research and Planning Fund does not prevent an organization from applying to other National Housing Strategy initiatives such as the Solutions Labs or NHS Demonstrations Initiative.

38. When will a decision be made on my application? What is the timeframe for funding to begin?

CMHC will review Stage One applications after September 27th, 2024. Applicants will be notified in November 2024 whether they will be invited to submit a Stage Two application. Those invited to Stage Two will be asked for complete applications to be submitted in December 2024. Notification of successful applicants is expected to be in February 2025.

40. Can team members or project partners be added between Stage One and Stage Two?

Team members and project partners can be added if your project is invited to Stage Two. If new project partners are added between Stage One and Stage Two, you will need to add a description of the new partner organizations. You will also need to submit a letter confirming the contribution of each partner organization during Stage Two application.