

**New Investigator Research Grant Program**  
**Guidelines – Apply Online**  
**Deadline: 5:00 pm EST April 20, 2026**

#### **Overview**

SickKids Foundation seeks to strengthen Canada's capacity and knowledge to respond to children's health challenges and needs. To do so, we grant funds to research projects that have the potential for significant impact in areas of children's health needs based on scientific excellence and relevance to child health.

#### **Funding Objectives**

New Investigator Research Grants provide important early career development support to child health researchers. It is intended this program will enhance the grant recipient's ability to compete with more senior investigators for research grants from other funders. Through this grants program we are seeking to fund research carried out by new investigators across Canada who successfully lead, participate in, and translate outstanding child health research that will respond to children's health challenges and needs.

The New Investigator Research Grant Program is a jointly sponsored program of SickKids Foundation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research ("CIHR") - Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health (IHDCYH). Grant recipients may obtain up to three years' support for research in biomedical, clinical, health systems and services, and population and public health sectors.

#### **Funding for Research Operating Grant**

New investigator researchers may obtain up to a maximum of **\$100,000 annually** for up to three years **for a maximum of \$300,000** for their research project. The research operating grant may be used for:

- Research costs – materials, services, salaries of staff including research assistant /technicians etc., knowledge translation or dissemination of results, travel, supplies, resources, animals.
- Equipment purchase or rental (including computers) required for the project.
- Funding is paid to a Canadian institution that is a registered Canadian charity that the Principal Investigator has a formal affiliation with and agrees to administer the grant funds (the "Eligible Institution").
- The grant does NOT cover overhead (indirect) costs to the institution.

**We are unable to fund projects:**

- That have limited relevance to the health of children (conception up to 18 years of age).
- That will primarily benefit children outside of Canada.
- That are otherwise funded research projects.
- Where the principal applicant:
  - Is a trainee (i.e. a fellow or doctoral candidate)
  - does not have an affiliation with an Eligible Institution
  - currently holds an active SickKids Foundation grant

Funding is contingent upon availability of funds from both SickKids Foundation and the CIHR's Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health. SickKids Foundation and CIHR-IHDCYH will fund successful grants separately (as far as their budgets will permit).

**Who is Eligible to Apply**

The Principal Investigator must be eligible to apply for grants as an independent researcher (autonomous regarding their research activities and has an academic or research appointment) and be formally affiliated with an Eligible Institution, where that institution is willing to financially administer the grant.

The Principal Investigator will usually hold a doctoral degree (Ph.D) or equivalent medical/health care degree and have had formal research training. If there will be two applicants (Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator) on the same project, both must be eligible as a New Investigator.

Co-Investigators are researchers who may or may not have a formal affiliation (faculty appointment) with the Eligible Institution but will take responsibility for particular administrative and scientific aspects of the research project. Trainees (i.e. doctoral students or fellows) cannot be Principal Investigators but they may be Co-Investigators.

Eligible applicants **are required to work with a clearly-identified Mentor/Mentors (up to two)**. The mentor will work with the applicant on a plan; review the application before submission; provide advice throughout the project to ensure it is competitive in terms of both scientific excellence and relevance to child health.

**The applicant must be a new investigator at the date of application; i.e. at the application deadline of April 20, 2026.** For the purpose of this award, a new investigator is defined as an individual who:

- As a Principal Investigator has **not** been awarded combined Operating Grant funding of \$500,000 or more Canadian dollars. An "Operating Grant" is defined as a grant that can be used to cover administrative or any other research-related costs (including salary of trainees or students) in order to carry out a research project. This does not include startup funds, salary awards, equipment or infrastructure funds.

**Note:** Should an Operating Grant be received after the application is submitted, the applicant must notify SickKids Foundation immediately.

- Is within 5 years of their first academic appointment. Academic appointment is defined as an appointment that allows an individual to apply for research grants as an independent researcher. (See page 5, ‘**Recognition of a break in research career**’ for additional considerations).
- Has at least 50% of protected research time for the duration of the project.

### **Conditions for Grant**

- Where there are two Principal Investigators applying for funding for a project, both must qualify as new investigators. Co-Investigators who are not the Principal Investigator(s) are not required to be new investigators.
- A maximum of two Principal Investigators will be permitted per application.
- If in doubt about your status as a new investigator, please contact SickKids Foundation. SickKids Foundation reserves the right at its sole discretion to make the final determination as to whether, for the purposes of eligibility, an applicant will be considered a new investigator.
- We recognize that applicants can co-submit the same project to other agencies for funding support. **If funding is awarded from another agency in full or in part, the applicant must contact the Foundation immediately.** SickKids Foundation reserves the right to make the final funding decision.
- Only one proposal may be submitted by a Principal Investigator per funding round.
- The President and CEO of SickKids is not eligible to serve as a collaborator or mentor on any grant application and is also excluded from the review process.
- In order to best address the diverse range of paediatric expertise represented in our peer reviewers process we ask that you write the proposal using accessible language geared to the knowledgeable non-expert. Applications should be written in language appropriate for review by paediatric scientists with primary expertise in other domains.
- **This competition is highly competitive with a limited funding envelope.** All applicants should contact their institution’s research awards or grants management office to discuss any potential internal process that may be required that will enhance the strength of their application.

- Applicants will be **required to complete and provide a certificate** for one of the CIHR sex and gender-based analysis modules. Please choose and complete the training module most applicable to the research project. Information along with the modules can be found here: [How to integrate sex and gender into research \(with links to modules\)](#)
- SickKids Foundation has a goal to develop and implement a strategic framework that builds diversity in the workforce, creates a respectful and inclusive work environment, and weaves Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practices into policies, business plans, practices, performance expectations, programs and services. We are partnering with CIHR in achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise essential to creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to advance knowledge and understanding, and to respond to local, national and global challenges. Addressing EDI strengthens the scientific community as well as the quality, social relevance and impact of the research. Applicants are encouraged to consider EDI principles when building their team and developing their application. Applicants should consider approaches to promote an inclusive research and work environment, such as efforts to increase participation from underrepresented groups, consideration of meaningful and culturally safe practices and any considerations of equity, diversity and inclusion in the recruitment practices and training/mentorship activities. Information to help integrate best practices and a guide for applicants in EDI into research can be found here: [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research \(sshrc-crsh.gc.ca\)](#)
- Projects must adhere to ethical standards of SickKids Foundation, CIHR and the Eligible Institution. Grantees are responsible for making sure that their Research Ethics Approval (REB) and/or Animal Care Approval are up to date, and Health Canada approval, if required, is in place by the project start date. In addition:
  - If a project involves research on humans it must be in accord with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (for more information please visit the following website:  
[https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique\\_tcps2-eptc2\\_2018.html](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html)
  - If a project involves research on animals it must comply with guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care.
  - If a project involves research handling biological and chemical hazards it must meet CIHR "Guidelines for the Handling of Recombinant DNA Molecules and Animal Viruses and Cells."
- For the SickKids Foundation grant recipient, the Principal Investigator(s) and Eligible Institution must sign a Grant Agreement in the form provided by SickKids Foundation, in its sole discretion.

- For the CIHR grant recipient, the [policies and guidelines](#) governing the administration, award and use of CIHR funds will apply. The grantee will be required to submit an electronic Final Report to CIHR. This online report will be made available to the Nominated Principal Applicant on ResearchNet at the beginning of the grant funding period and can be filled in as the research progresses.
- Grant recipients must provide a report on the project funded by this grant as requested by SickKids Foundation, including, without limitation, an annual progress report that includes a financial statement produced by the Eligible Institution. Any equipment purchased with grant funds are to be property of the Eligible Institution where the grant funds are held.
- SickKids Foundation and CIHR must be given credit in publications, presentations or communication activities including media, symposia, research reports and promotional events arising from work funded by this grant.
- Grant recipients shall notify SickKids Foundation of any dissemination activities that they undertake from the project funded by this grant, including any symposia, conferences and any other promotional events.
- From time to time the grant recipient will be requested to complete a survey in order help measure the impact of the program.
- Any unexpended funds are to be returned to SickKids Foundation.

#### **Recognition of a break in the research career**

Individuals who have taken time off for personal reasons or for other reasons (such as to establish a private clinical practice, family or health reasons, or parental leave) within the first five years of their research career may be considered a new investigator. These individuals must include a letter documenting the duration of the interruptions and indicating whether or not there was any research productivity during that time. This time off will not count towards the five years. Please note that time spent doing industry or government research will count towards the five years.

#### **Assessment and Evaluation Criteria**

We are seeking applications from across research methodologies (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods) and research sectors (biomedical, clinical, health systems and services, and population and public health sectors).

Projects must be relevant to both SickKids Foundation's Mission to invest in health and scientific advances to improve the lives of children and their families in Canada and around the world and CIHR-[IHDCYH's mission which](#) is to foster growth and equity across Canada's human development, child and youth health research community to advance science, promote knowledge and ways of knowing, and address the needs of children, youth and their families in Canada and globally.

See: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/8695.html> for more information about CIHR-IHDCYH.

Applicants are also encouraged to show a high degree of innovation and incorporate a multi-disciplinary approach, including consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Funding decisions will be based on scientific merit and will be assessed on the following **5** criteria:

**1. Impact of the Research**

Consider the ability of this project to have successful outcomes of the research to meaningfully impact the lives of children and their families (the number of children affected; the potential for direct impact on the care of children; lack of knowledge on the topic; high incidence or high morbidity/mortality; highly relevant to the quality of the life of children).

**2. Scientific Methodology**

Ensure the research design, methodology, instrumentation, statistical analysis and project outcome measurement are well reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project. This includes appropriate integration of SGBA+ methods: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50968.html>

**3. Innovation/Originality**

Does the project challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice? Is the work being undertaken novel? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application being proposed? There are times where replicative studies will yield new knowledge that may be crucial to progress within a field, for example by conclusively verifying or refuting a central or novel hypothesis. It is the originality/innovation in these technologies and methodologies applied that is important.

**4. Knowledge Translation Plan**

SickKids Foundation is committed to advancing children's health and therefore support of knowledge translation (KT) is an important investment in ensuring that funded research will have impact on child health practices, policies and/or further research. To be **eligible** for consideration, applications **must include a KT plan**. The objectives of the KT plan are to ensure that the research is translated appropriately to relevant stakeholders and potential end-users. Up to 15% of the research operating grant may be used for knowledge translation activities. The KT plan should include methods for dissemination of research results appropriate to relevant stakeholders and potential end-users. For many fields, an adequate KT plan is simply the publication of the results in high impact peer-reviewed journals. For other fields, dissemination plans with more ambitious goals and comprehensive strategies to reach the relevant knowledge users may be required.

To assist in the development of your KT plan, we encourage you to use the knowledge translation resources available through SickKids Knowledge Translation Program:  
<https://www.sickkids.ca/en/learning/continuing-professional-development/knowledge-translation-training/#tools>

## **5. Mentorship, Research Team and Environment**

A key goal of this award is to support early investigators as they launch their career and, in this regard, a strong mentorship plan is ideal. The plan should describe the institutional support to be received in terms of resources as well as protected research time. A letter of support from the Mentor, must also be included, clearly outlining how the Mentor will support the project and the applicant.

## **Appendices**

Specific instructions will be included in the online application form:

- Institutional Support, a letter of support from the applicant's department or division head at their Eligible Institution
- Mentorship Support, a letter of support from the Mentor clearly outlining how the Mentor will support the project and the applicant
- CVs as per the instructions on application form
- Statement on how COVID-19 has impacted their productivity
- Proof of completion of one of the CIHR sex and gender-based analysis modules

## **Resubmissions**

A new investigator applicant who did not receive funding may submit a revised application in a future competition, providing they still meet the eligibility criteria. A maximum of one resubmission is permitted per project. New investigator applicant(s) of a resubmission should provide a letter (no longer than two pages) to the Grant Review Committee addressing itemized concerns raised by reviewers. Resubmissions will be assessed under the same criteria as first-time applications but with special attention to the responses to reviewers' comments.

## **Review and Selection Process**

The selection process is based upon expert scientific peer review. The Grant Peer Review Committee is comprised of child health experts from across the Country. The Committee members will critically evaluate each grant application for scientific merit and relevance to child and youth health based on the assessment criteria. To ensure integrity, SickKids Foundation is committed to ensuring that peer reviewers have no direct conflicts of interest (as defined by CIHR) with any proposals they are reviewing. If a conflict is identified, an alternative reviewer will be assigned. Reviewers in conflict do not participate in discussions of the application(s) for which they have declared a conflict. Reviewers are expected to complete the CIHR Bias in Peer Review Training Model.

### **Review and Selection Process (con't)**

Grants are funded in rank order based upon the recommendation from the Grant Review Committee. Final selection is provided to Audit and Finance, a Sub-Committee of SickKids Foundation's Board of Directors. SickKids Foundation, SickKids - Hospital, and the SickKids Research Institute are three distinct legal entities, each with separate governance structures, mandates, and operational responsibilities. SickKids Foundation recognizes, as the program funder, that staff from its associated organizations, the SickKids Hospital and the SickKids Research Institute, may be applicants or reviewers. Strict policies are in place to mitigate any real or potential conflicts of interest.

Please note that SickKids Foundation reserves the right to reject any application at its sole and unfettered discretion at any time. If you are selected as the recipient of a grant, any breach of these Guidelines at any time shall result in termination of the grant and the requirement to immediately return the awarded grant funds.

Applications written in French are welcomed. Review comments will be provided in English.

Ensure your online application is submitted by **5:00 pm EST on Monday April 20, 2026**.

**See Steps for Online Application Process Below**

**Questions should be directed to:**

[national.grants@sickkidsfoundation.com](mailto:national.grants@sickkidsfoundation.com)

#### **Online Application Process:**

##### **Step 1**

**Go to <http://www.sickkidsfoundation.com/aboutus/grantsandawards/newinvestigatorresearchgrants>**

Click: Apply Here: Online Application Portal



Click on the button at the bottom of the page for New Investigator Research Grant Registration:

Login

Email

Password

Login

[Forgot Password?](#)

[Learn more about us.](#)

Visit our Website

Welcome to SickKids Foundation

When SickKids Foundation was established in 1972, the founding trustees recognized the Foundation could build upon the leadership of SickKids to help children across Canada. Since inception, more than \$80 million has been granted coast to coast for children's health through our National Grants Program. By providing funding across Canada, we hope to strengthen Canada's capacity and knowledge to respond to children's health needs nationally.

**The National Grants Program has two main components:**

**New Investigator Research Grants**

A focus of this program is ensuring there continues to be well-trained researchers across the country working to address the most pressing childhood diseases and conditions.

**Community Conference Grants**

This program brings together families with researchers and clinicians for medical presentations and family-oriented discussions. It helps ensure knowledge exchange with families so that they are able to access the most up-to-date

## Step 2

**Complete Eligibility Form to ensure you can proceed to application stage:**

New Investigators Research Grant Registration - Eligibility Information

\* Are you within 5 years of your first academic appointment which allows you to apply for research grants in Canada as an independent investigator?

\* Have you received a combined amount of \$500,000 CAD or more in operating grant funding?

\* Are you formally affiliated with an Eligible Canadian Institution that would be willing to financially administer the grant?

\* Do you have at least 60% of protected research time for the duration of the project?

### Step 3

**Complete Organization Information by clicking the Search CRA Database and find your institution, click on it and the Organization information will auto populate:**

Organization Information

Instructions:

- Click on Search CRA Database
- Enter your organization's name (keyword search is sufficient, example: "Waco" instead of "The Waco Foundation") or Enter your organization's Canadian Registered Charities Number (do not include spaces or dashes, example: 123456789)
- Click "Search"
- Click on the name of your organization in the search results

\* Organization Name

Canadian Registered Charity Number

\* Address

Address 2

\* City

\* Province

Postal Code

Phone

### Step 4

**Complete Contact Information and click submit:**

Contact Information

\* Email

Prefix

\* First Name

Middle Name

\* Last Name

Title

\* Phone

\* Address

Address 2

\* City

\* Province

### Step 5

**Once you have found your charitable organization on the CRA Database and completed the Organization Information successfully you will receive this page:**

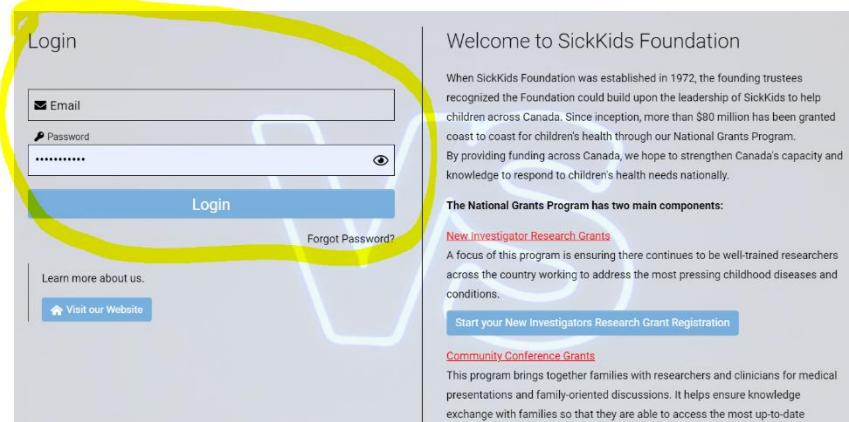
## Registration Complete

Thank you for registering.

Your username and password will be emailed to you. [Click here](#) to login.

## Step 6

**Once you have received your temporary password you can log into the application and begin:**



**For all inquiries please contact:**

Email: [national.grants@sickkidsfoundation.com](mailto:national.grants@sickkidsfoundation.com)