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2016-2017

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1. **Q. What types of research does the Heart and Stroke Foundation fund?**

   A. The Heart and Stroke Foundation supports research that relates to heart disease and stroke across the four health research themes (basic biomedical, clinical, health services/systems, social, cultural, environmental and population health). All applicants must clearly demonstrate that their research is directly relevant to heart disease and/or stroke.

2. **Q. What funding is available to Canadian researchers outside of Canada?**

   A. The Heart and Stroke Foundation currently does not provide funding to Canadian researchers working outside Canada.

3. **Q. How are funding decisions made?**

   A. All applications submitted to the Foundation are assessed by a panel of experts - a process known as peer review. The Heart and Stroke Foundation's peer review process engages national and international researchers and includes over 200 members of the Scientific Review Committee (SRC). The Scientific Review Committee (SRC) reviews all grant applications submitted to the Foundation.

   There are fourteen SRC peer review sub-committees active in 2015-2016, with varying numbers of members depending on the number of applications received. Members of the sub-committees are considered "internal reviewers". In addition, "external reviewers" may be sought to provide written reviews for the Grant-in-Aid (GIA) program.

   Applications to the GIA program that are eligible for funding will be ranked by fixed percentile within each research committee by the SRC. These rankings will drive which applications are put forth to the Budget Review Committee (BRC); a sub-panel of the SRC, which works alongside other SRC sub-panels in appraising GIA applications.

4. **Lay Reviewers and Structured Lay Summaries**

   a. **Q. What is the role of lay reviewers on the Scientific Review Committee?**

   A. The Heart and Stroke Foundation includes a lay reviewer on each of its peer review sub-committees as a measure of accountability and transparency to its donors. As a representative of the general public, the lay reviewer, through comments on the lay summary, assists the Foundation in ensuring that donor dollars are spent on research that fits squarely into the HSF mission, as reflected in the SRC sub-panels.

   The lay reviewer evaluates and comments on: (i) the extent to which the lay summary text can be understood by the general public; (ii) the clarity of expression of the work to be done; and (iii) the clarity of expression of the direct relevance to heart disease and/or stroke. The lay reviewer participates in the Scientific Review Committee meeting and comments on the lay summary. The lay reviewer does not contribute to the scientific scoring of an application but does take part in a vote on relevance. If an application is accepted for funding but its lay summary has been rated unsatisfactory, funds will be encumbered until the lay summary has been amended and declared satisfactory.

   Applicants must ensure that all information on the application form is clear and concise and that the structured lay summary describes clearly how the proposed research will improve the lives of individuals affected by heart disease and/or stroke.

   b. **Q. What is a lay summary? How do you write one?**

   A. A lay summary is a clear, plain-language explanation of a research project, its goals, and its desired outcomes. It explains in non-technical terms why the research is important. A lay summary can be understood by the general public as well as by researchers in other fields of study. A complete lay summary will address six questions:

1. Statement of health problem or issue
2. Objective of your project.
3. How will you undertake your work?
4. What is unique/innovative about your project?
5. How is the proposed research directly relevant to heart disease and/or stroke?
6. What is the impact of the proposed research to heart disease and/or stroke (e.g. to the health and quality of life of people with heart disease and/or stroke)?

c. **Q. What is plain language?**

A. Plain language is clear, concise language that the reader can understand quickly and completely. It avoids jargon, verbosity, and convoluted sentence constructions. A plain-language description does not leave out information: it simply presents information clearly to a non-scientific person.

****Important***: *Using plain language does not mean talking down to people*.

Use this scenario as a guide:

- The Foundation invites you to a reception to "meet and greet" members of your community who support the work of the Foundation through gifts of time or money. You approach a trio of supporters. One is a mechanic who works on airplane engines; another is a history professor with a passion for the Punic Wars; the third is a personable stay-at-home mom. Regardless of their level of formal education, each of these people – like you – has a specialty. That specialty is simply not medicine/science. Explain your proposed research to these specialists in appropriate, non-technical language.

Useful links for more information on writing a text in plain language:

- http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tcdnstyl-chap?lang=eng&lettr=chapsect13&info0=13
- http://www.nih.gov/clearcommunication/plainlanguage/index.htm

d. **Q. How do you write a lay summary in plain language?**

A. Here are some recommendations for writing at an appropriate lay level (*note that you can view examples of each recommendation by clicking 'example'*):

- **Simplify vocabulary** by using simpler, shorter words. Example.
- **Get rid of extraneous words**. For example: "Heart failure is characterized by the inability of the heart to pump …" could read "Heart failure is the inability of the heart to pump …"
- **Use shorter sentences**. Readers get lost in run-on sentences. Example.
- **Avoid convoluted phrasing** using a noun plus "of". Use a gerund or an infinitive instead. Example.
- **Write out in full an abbreviated term or acronym** the first time it appears in the text. Example.
- **Explain complicated concepts or specialised procedures** in broad terms. Example.
- **Use analogies** to compare a scientific concept to an ordinary-life situation. Example.
- **Write out in words math, science, or similar symbols:** Example.
- **Numbers less than 10 should be written in words**: 1-year intervention → one-year intervention
- **Be careful of terminology that has a different meaning** (or no meaning) outside the medical domain. Example.
- **Use jargon or other technical words judiciously** and as needed. Example.
- **Use the active voice** where possible. Example.
- To **test or gauge the readability** of your lay summary, ask a handy lay person – a parent, a neighbour, an assistant in another department – to read the text prior to submission to the Foundation.

e. Q. What tool is available to help determine readability?

A. Microsoft Word © uses the Flesch-Kincaid grade formula and Flesch Reading ease formula to assess writing level. The Flesch-Kincaid grade formula calculates an overall reading grade level while the Flesch reading ease formula calculates a reading ease score from 0-100, with 100 being easier to read. Both formulae use average sentence length and average syllables per word. Note that Microsoft Word© readability statistics will not display a grade level greater than Grade 12 (American). The Flesch-Kincaid grade formula may be used as a guide, but is **not** used by the Foundation in determining acceptable lay summaries.

Follow these instructions for displaying readability statistics from Microsoft Word©:

- Click the Microsoft Office Button (upper left corner of screen)
- Select “Word Options”
- Select "Proofing"
- Check off “spelling with grammar”, as well as “readability statistics” options
- Click the “OK” button

f. Examples of Lay Summaries that follow the Foundation’s required format from Foundation funded researchers:

Anonymous: *The anti-inflammatory role of a low molecular weight heparin lacking anticoagulant activity.*

Dr. Kathryn Todd: *Investigations of novel strategies to improve cellular and behavioral outcomes after focal embolic cerebral ischemia*.

Dr. J. Weitz: *Improving the effectiveness of thrombolytic therapy*.

5. Q. What does the phrase "unable to continue" mean?

A. The phrase "unable to continue" refers to any reason why a researcher would not be able to finish his/her research project. Examples of these situations are: serious illness, death of researcher or Principal Investigator, or other personal circumstances, which would prevent a researcher from continuing their project.

6. Q. When I move within Canada from one province to another, how is my funding affected?

A. Please refer to the Award Administration webpage: http://hsf.ca/research/en/award-administration

The onus is on the applicant to notify the Heart and Stroke Foundation as soon as there is a change in the province of residence.

7. Q. Under which circumstances would an award be terminated?

A. Awards may be terminated for a number of reasons including, but not limited to: misuse of funds, plagiarism, insufficient progress, or a lack of available funds.

8. Grant-in-Aid

a. **Q. Who is eligible to apply for a GIA?**

A. Principal Investigators must have a full-time academic or institutional appointment in Canada as of July 1, the start date of the award. Any applicant in an adjunct position must submit a letter from their

dean/chair/division director to clarify their specific appointment, including the amount of protected time available and local infrastructure in place to carry out the research proposal.

b. **Q. How do I apply for a GIA?**

A. Application for a Grant-in-Aid must be submitted online using the Heart and Stroke Foundation's online system (CIRCUlink) by 16:00 (EDT) Tuesday, September 01, 2015. CIRCUlink will not accept submissions after this deadline. Any applications attempted or submitted after the deadline will NOT be accepted.

c. **Q. If I am unable to submit my GIA application by the deadline, do I have any options?**

A. There will be no appeals process for late submissions. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that a complete application is submitted online via CIRCUlink prior to the deadline.

d. **Q. How many Grant-in-Aid (GIA) applications can be submitted in one year and how many funded GIAs can be held at one time?**

A. GIA applicants are allowed to submit one grant application (new or renewal) to the 16/17 GIA competition as either Principal or Co-Principal Investigator. Applicants may hold no more than two HSF funded GIAs as Principal and/or Co-Principal Investigator at any one time. If an applicant holds ongoing funding as Principal and/or Co-Principal Investigator for two GIA awards that are not scheduled to be completed within the coming year, no new applications can be submitted.

e. **Q. What are the different categories of applicants on a GIA application?**

A. There are three categories of applicants on Heart and Stroke Foundation Grant-in-Aid applications.

- A Principal Investigator is responsible for the intellectual direction of the proposed research, and assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant. A Co-Principal Investigator shares the responsibilities for the intellectual direction of the proposed research with the Principal Investigator, however administrative and financial responsibility for the grant lies with the Principal Investigator. Principal and Co-Principal Investigators are considered the same when it comes to application submission limits (see 8d). The PI and/or co-PI cannot receive salary support through a GIA.

- A Co-Applicant (or Co-Investigator) is a researcher who contributes substantially to the intellectual content of the research. He/she/they cannot receive salary support through a GIA.

- A Collaborator provides a special service (such as access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc.) but who is not involved in the overall intellectual direction of the research.

f. **Q. What is the difference between research equipment and materials/supplies? What is maintenance and facility?**

A. Research equipment is defined as any item (or interrelated collection of items comprising a system) that meets all three (3) of these conditions: non-expendable tangible property, useful life of more than one (1) year, and a cost of $2,000 or more. Materials/supplies are items that cost under $2,000. Laboratory equipment such as thermocyclers, centrifuges, spectrophotometers, computers etc. would be research

equipment. Supplies such as test tubes, palm pilots, and sample tubes would be classified as materials/supplies.

Maintenance and facility refers to costs associated with purchasing new equipment. Examples would include small renovations such as installation of shelving to facilitate new equipment, plugs required for new computers, and installation contracts.

g. **Q. Can a Grant-in-Aid be used to fund centres outside of Canada?**

A. No, the funds from a Grant-in-Aid must be used to fund research centres in Canadian institutions.

h. **Q. Can participants who are part of a study be paid out of a Grant-in-Aid budget?**

A. The HSF allows well-justified and reasonable reimbursements for required travel, parking, childcare, honoraria, or other items that would reduce barriers to participation.

i. **Q. What is the maximum amount that can be requested from the Foundation for the Grant-In-Aid program?**

A. The maximum dollar amount is $100K/year for a maximum duration of three years.

j. **Q. Does a Grant-in-Aid application need to be registered before submission?**

A. There is no pre-registration required; you can start applying for a GIA as of July 1 2015, using CIRCUlink.

k. **Q. Can a currently active Grant-in-Aid be renewed?**

A. Yes, it can be renewed by applying to the annual Grant-in-Aid competition. It should be indicated that the application is a renewal of an active grant in its final year of funding. If a grantee applies for a renewal earlier than this, he/she immediately forfeits all remaining years of the active grant, except the current year.

l. **Q. What is the maximum number of pages allowed for the Research Proposal?**

A. The number of pages should reflect the size and scope of the proposed research. The Research Proposal should be predominantly text and is limited to eleven (11) pages.

m. **Q. Does the Foundation allow top-up funding if a grant is received from another agency?**

A. The Foundation does not allow top-up funding for applications that have had their budgets reduced by another funding agency.

n. **Partnered Funding**

i. **Q. How do we go about informing HSF of our intent to partner (including identification of partner(s))?**

A. Write a letter outlining the project and identifying any funding (i.e. potential and/or confirmed) partners (including amounts).

ii. **Q. To whom should the letter of intent to partner be submitted?**

A. The letter should be emailed to the HSF Research inbox (research@hsf.ca), and attached within your GIA submission on CIRCUlink.

iii. **Q. When should a letter of intent to partner be submitted?**

A. The applicant is required to declare proposed partnered funding (submitted in the same funding cycle) by the 04 August, 2015 submission deadline in order for HSF to confirm the appropriateness of the proposed funding partner.

iv. **Q. How long should the description of the research project be?**

A. Provide an overview of the project and partner (confirmed and/or potential).

v. **Q. Does a budget need to be included as well and how much detail is needed?**

A. Only the total budget amount to be requested will be required for the letter.

o. **Q. How is ethics approval obtained?**

A. Proof of ethics approval (i.e. documents from your institution) must be provided if applicable to the project. Please see your institution for the appropriate documents.

p. **Q. Are there guidelines available for student stipends?**

A. Stipend levels must be aligned with institutional guidelines. The HSF does not provide support for benefits towards summer students, undergraduate students, graduate students, and/or post-doctoral fellows. The HSF encourages junior trainees (particularly doctoral students) to be included in the proposed research with a defined and clearly written role, as well as properly justified in the budget notes should there be financial implication(s). Stipend levels cannot exceed the maximum stipend levels of HSF's National Personnel Awards. http://hsf.ca/research/en/national-personnel-awards-stipend-amounts-award

q .**Q. What is the responsibility of the Budget Review Committee (BRC)?**

A. The prime responsibility of the BRC is to evaluate each GIA application's budget based on HSF guidelines, in order to determine a budgetary recommendation for the grant. The goal is to ensure equity between the researcher/application being reviewed and the Foundation's use of donor dollars. The Foundation strives to allocate the funds necessary to complete the project in a manner that is both effective and economical.

r. **Q. Why was a Budget Review Committee formed?**

A. A single Budget Review Committee (BRC) was established to undertake the budget review of GIA applications for HSF funding and to provide support and advice on budgetary items.

s. **Q. How does the Budget Review Committee (BRC) relate to the scientific review?**

A. The BRC is a sub-panel of the SRC and works alongside other SRC sub-panels in appraising GIA projects.

The BRC consists of a Chair and Deputy Chair, appointed by nomination and approved by the SRC Chair and Vice-Chair. Budget peer reviewers (15-18 members) are selected for their level of expertise related to the mandate of the review committees and their experience in reviewing and evaluating research-funding

applications. As with membership on all SRC committees, the BRC balances geographical representation and ensures that each committee has the capacity to review applications submitted in English or French.

9. Emerging Research Leaders Initiative (ERLI)

a. **Q. What is the Emerging Research Leaders Initiative?**

A. The Emerging Research Leaders Initiative (ERLI) is an establishment grant program for researchers at the transition stage from post-doctoral fellow to early professional career stage in the areas of cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, and/or respiratory health research. This initiative aims to support successful early career launch of new investigators. Through this initiative, partners will provide establishment grant funds that will create a set of conditions conducive to the successful career launch of emerging research leaders in the cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, and/or respiratory health research domains.

b. **Q. What is an establishment grant?**

A. Establishment grant programs are intended to assist new investigators in establishing independent health research programs and achieving the research productivity necessary to obtain major funding from national and other external granting agencies.

c. **Q. Who are the partners?**

A. This multi-partnered initiative, led by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Canadian Lung Association, includes organizational partners from non-profit, government, industry, and emerging / existing networks. Partners include Allergy, Genes and Environment Network (AllerGen NCE), the Brain Canada Foundation, the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation, Pfizer Canada Inc., Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS), the Canadian Stroke Prevention Intervention Network (C-SPIN), the ICRH Vascular Network (CVN), the ICRH Canadian Respiratory Research Network (CRRN), Canadian Arrhythmia Network (CANet), Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS), and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

d. **Q. Who is eligible to apply for an ERLI grant?**

A. Applicants must have an MD, PhD, PharmD, DVM, or equivalent degree and a full-time academic or institutional appointment in Canada as of July 1, the start date of the grant. Any applicant in an adjunct position must submit a letter from their dean/chair/division director to clarify their specific appointment, i.e. amount of protected time available, local infrastructure in place. This information can be included within the institutional support letter.

At the time of submission, no more than five (5) years may have passed since the date of the first faculty appointment at the Assistant or Clinical Assistant Professor level or equivalent. This would include Adjunct positions in a research track for which the applicant is eligible to write a Grant-in-Aid/operating grant (as a Principal Investigator). Also, at the time of submission, principal investigators are ineligible if they hold or have already held a nationally peer reviewed operating grant as (co-) principal investigator in the amount of $75,000 or more per year for a period of more than one (1) year.

Applicants must also be a confirmed and recommended member of a partnering initiative network; for those applications in the heart disease and/or stroke field, this includes CIHR-ICRH Canadian Stroke Prevention Intervention Network (C-SPIN), CIHR-ICRH Canadian Vascular Network, and/or Canadian Arrhythmia Network (CANet). For those applicants in the respiratory field, this includes CIHR-ICRH Canadian Respiratory Research Network.

Further details regarding eligibility criteria can be found in the Emerging Research Leaders Submission Guidelines http://hsf.ca/research/en/emerging-research-leaders-initiative-2015 .

e. **Q. How will my application be reviewed?**

A. All applications undergo peer review by HSF and include expert reviewers that align with research areas of partner organizations. For example, respiratory related applications will be assessed by reviewers with appropriate expertise in the field of lung health.

f. **Q. Can an ERLI applicant apply to the Grant-in-Aid (GIA) competition?**

A. Principal Investigators submitting an ERLI application to the Fall 2015 competition are allowed to submit no more than one (1) application (new and/or renewal) to the HSF Grant-in-Aid (GIA) competition, Fall 2015.

Recipients of an ERLI grant who are also successful in obtaining an open operating grant from HSF or another funding organization as a Principal Investigator (or co-Principal Investigator) after the start of a funded ERLI grant will be allowed to keep the ERLI grant for the entire duration, provided there is *no scientific or budgetary overlap with the research projects*. ERLI grant recipients are required to inform funding organizations of any newly acquired operating grants.

For information on multiple submissions or funded operating grant applications, please refer to the HSF Grant-in-Aid Submission Guidelines (www.hsf.ca/research).

g. **Q. How do you apply?**

A. There is a two stage approach:

i) Letter of Intent (LOI) for Participating Network
Applicants wishing to submit an application to the ERLI program must first submit a LOI to one of the participating networks for approval. This is to ensure that the proposed research program aligns with the objectives of the network.

Timelines:

July 15, 2015:	Letter of Intent submission deadline to Participating Network. *Applicants interested in applying to CRRN do not require the letter from a sponsor/investigator at the LOI stage.
August 14, 2015:	Notification of Letter of Intent stage; Invitations for full applications*

* Applicants will be notified in writing by the network whether the proposed program is relevant to the network. At that time, eligible applicants are invited to submit a full application to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

ii) Full Application (by invitation only)
Applicants successful in the LOI phase are eligible to submit a full application.

All full applications must be post-marked/courier stamped by 16:00 (EDT) on September 14, 2015.

h**. Q. How do you find out if your application has been successful?**

A. Official letters will be sent to the applicants in April 2016.

i. **Q. Who should you contact at the Heart and Stroke Foundation if you have more questions?**

A. If you have additional questions about the Emerging Research Leaders Initiative, you may contact Rebekah Harrison, Research Programs Administrator at (613) 691-4041 or rharrison@hsf.ca

10. Personnel Awards

a**. Q.** Are there any 2016/17 Personnel Awards being offered by the Foundation?

A. Yes. The Foundation will be offering a limited number of awards in the following programs:

- National New Investigator;
- Alberta New Investigator;
- Ontario Clinician Scientist I and II; and
- Ontario Mid-Career Investigator Award.

b. **Q,** Can a basic scientist apply for an Ontario Clinician Scientist award?

A. No, only clinicians based in Ontario are eligible to apply for the Ontario clinician scientist award. Please refer to the Ontario Clinician Scientist award guidelines for eligibility criteria.

c. **Q.** Can a clinician scientist apply to the New Investigator award?

A. Yes, provided that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the New Investigator award submission guidelines, found here

d. **Q.** How many years of support is the New Investigator award?

A. The award will be for a period of four (4) years. The award cannot be renewed for a second term.

e .**Q.** Can an applicant apply to both national and provincial HSF Personnel Awards?

A. Applicants may apply to both a national and provincial HSF Personnel Award; however, if successful in both competitions, the applicant may only accept one award.

11. Q. What are the 4 pillars of health research?

A. The 4 pillars of health research, as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research are:

Basic Biomedical (I)
Research with the goal of understanding normal and abnormal human function, at the molecular, cellular, organ system, and whole body levels, including the development of tools and techniques to be applied for this purpose; developing new therapies or devices with improve health or the quality of life of individuals, up to the point where they are tested on human subjects: studies on human subjects that do not have a diagnostic or therapeutic orientation.

Clinical (II)
Research with the goal of improving the diagnosis and treatment (including rehabilitation and palliation) of disease and injury; improving the health and quality of life of individuals as they pass through normal life stages. Research on, or for, the treatment of patients.

Health Services/Systems (III)
Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately Canadians' health and well-being.

Social, cultural, environmental and population health (IV)
Research with the goal of improving the health of the Canadian population, or of defined sub-populations,

through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational, and economic factors determine health status.

12. **Q. Where can I find application deadlines on your website?**

    A. Deadlines for grants/awards are located under Funding Opportunities / Deadlines.

13. **Q. Where can I find the research classification list on your website?**

    A. The research classification list is located under Funding Opportunities / Application Forms, and is the fifth item listed.

14. **Q. What would be considered an incomplete or unacceptable application?**

    A. Examples of unacceptable or incomplete applications include the following, but are not limited to:

    - Missing appropriate number of copies of full applications (where applicable).
    - Missing sections of the applications (e.g. research proposal, structured lay summaries, signatures, supervisors/mentor sections, etc).
    - Missing reference/institutional support letters (award dependant).
    - Missing any CVs (e.g. principle investigator, co-applicants – anyone identified on co-applicant signature page, mentor, supervisor, co supervisor).
    - Submitting on old application form.
    - Not adhering to the font, margin and page limits.
    - Un-collated applications.
    - Faxed / Emailed applications.
    - Handwritten applications.
    - Failure to successfully submit an application by the deadline.
    - Not following instructions for electronic submission.
    - For the ERLI competition: Missing network letter of recommendation confirming LOI success.

15. **Q. Will the HSF accept a scanned copy of an original signature?**

    A. HSF will accept a scanned copy of the original signature uploaded into CIRCUlink; electronic signatures will also be accepted. Applicants need not send an original copy of the signature page to HSF. (Note: The expectation is that an electronic signature will hold the same weight as an original (wet) signature.)

16. **Q. Does the Foundation provide funding for workshops or international conferences?**

    A. Currently, programs that are specifically dedicated to support general workshops and conferences are not available. However, as a funded HSF researcher you may be able to use grant funds towards conferences and workshops, as per the specific award's guidelines.

17. **Q. What is the Foundation's policy relating to indirect costs of research/overhead?**

    A. The HSF supports only the direct costs of research. No funding is to be used for indirect costs of research. The definition of indirect costs of research for the purposes of this policy is, costs which cannot be directly associated with a particular research program or operating grant including costs associated with the general operation and maintenance of facilities (from laboratories to libraries); the management of the research process (from grant management to commercialization); and regulation and safety compliance (including human ethics, animal care and environmental assessment).