



Research And Innovation Fund Fellowship Program

Funding Guidelines for Applicants 2022-23

If you have questions or require further information, please contact Centre of Health and Medical Research at health.research@act.gov.au.



Acknowledgment of Country

ACT Health Directorate acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. The Directorate respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. It also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.

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1. Dates	1
2. Objectives	1
3. The RIF Fellowship Program – Overview	2
3.1 How do I apply?.....	2
3.2 Who is eligible?	2
3.3 What are the merit criteria?	2
3.4 How long is a fellowship?.....	2
3.5 What funding is available?	2
3.6 How is funding distributed between applicants?	2
3.7 How is funding paid?.....	3
3.8 What is the funding not for (exclusions)?.....	3
3.9 For early-to-mid-career researchers? How is this defined?	3
3.10 Where can I ask questions about the RIF?.....	3
4. Eligibility Criteria	4
5. Merit Criteria	0
6. Assessment process	2
6.1 Eligibility checks	2
6.2 Expert Assessment Panel	2
6.3 Approval	2
6.4 Announcement.....	2
7. Other Conditions	3
7.1 Obligations of successful applicants	3
7.2 Ethics, compliance and/or safety approvals	3
7.3 Data management.....	3
7.4 Publicity and Acknowledgement.....	3
7.5 Commencement.....	4
7.6 Reporting.....	4
8. Definitions	4
8.1 Academic partner	4
8.2 ACT Health System	4
8.3 Administering organisation.....	5
8.4 Host organisation	5
8.5 In-kind support.....	5
8.6 Practising professional in any field/discipline.....	5
8.7 Wrap-around research support	5



1. Dates

Applications open:	9am, Friday 2 December 2022
Applications close:	5pm, Friday 17 February 2023
	Late applications will not be considered.
Outcomes notified:	No later than Friday 28 April 2023
Agreements:	It is anticipated agreements will be executed by EOFY 2022/23.
Fellowship Commencement:	Expected commencement no later than 12 weeks following agreement execution.

2. Objectives

The ACT Government 2022-23 Research and Innovation Fund (RIF) Fellowship Program contributes to the ACT's learning health system by providing funding to support early-to-mid-career researchers employed in the [ACT health system](#), creating a cohort of potential future research leaders who will have opportunities throughout their fellowship to engage in networking and development. Guided by [Better Together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system](#), the RIF Fellowship Program invests in people to build their research capability, make high-value contributions to improving the health and health care of the people served by the ACT health system and to encourage collaboration, leadership and capacity building in the ACT's health and medical research ecosystem.

The 2022-23 RIF Fellowship program seeks to support research and researchers that will:

- Build the capability of people of the ACT health system and help to establish the ACT as a national leader.
- Respond to the health needs of the ACT and its surrounding region.
- Respond to inequities in health outcomes and service access for different cohorts.
- Enhance the capacity and diversity of the health research workforce, especially of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Enhance the ACT health system through innovation in the application of technology, digital systems, in models of care or prevention to improve health outcomes and environmental sustainability.

The RIF Fellowship Program is funded by the ACT Government and managed by the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) Centre for Health and Medical Research (CHMR). CHMR is responsible for supporting the ACT Government's investment in whole of ACT Health System health and medical research in a manner consistent with legislation, guidelines, and policies.



3. The RIF Fellowship Program – Overview

3.1 How do I apply?

Applications are made online by going to https://acthealth.smartygrants.com.au/RIF_2022. This link will be made live from 9am, Friday 2 December 2022. Before applying, please ensure that you satisfy the [eligibility criteria](#) and [merit criteria](#) set out in this guide. Late applications will not be accepted. Eligible applications will be assessed according to the [merit criteria](#).

3.2 Who is eligible?

Applications are open to [practising professionals in any field/discipline](#) employed in the [ACT health system](#). A full description of eligibility criteria is included below. In alignment with the objectives of the 2022-23 RIF Fellowship program, applications from people who enhance the diversity of the health research workforce – including (but not limited to) women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers – are strongly encouraged.

3.3 What are the merit criteria?

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Applicant** has suitable knowledge, skills, capabilities and career goals.
2. **Project** proposed will make a high-value contribution to improving the health and health care of the people served by the ACT health system.
3. **Context** includes investment and support (of funding, resourcing, wages covered or [in-kind](#) commitment) e.g. by a [host organisation](#) and/or [academic partner](#).

A full description of the merit criteria, evidence required to demonstrate merit and the assessment criteria to be considered by the [expert assessment panel](#) is provided [below](#).

3.4 How long is a fellowship?

Up to three years, depending on nature and context of the proposal. The applicant is expected to continue their employment in the [ACT health system](#) and undertake the RIF research up to 50% of their normal work hours (across the full duration of the fellowship).

3.5 What funding is available?

A total of \$1 million is available.

3.6 How is funding distributed between applicants?

Up to \$200,000 per successful applicant is available for the full duration of the fellowship. This is not recurring funding and is not an amount per annum – it is the total maximum amount per fellowship. All references to funding in these guidelines are GST exclusive.



3.7 How is funding paid?

Funding is provided to enable the research and can cover a combination of backfill for practising professionals to quarantine research time, as well as consumables, equipment, and other research related costs.

It is anticipated that the ACTHD, on behalf of the Territory, will enter into a funding agreement for a single one-off payment of up to \$200,000, paid to the applicant's [host organisation](#) or, if the applicant's host organisation is not able to manage funds across financial years for the full duration of the fellowship, the funding agreement can be made with an [administering organisation](#) which must manage the funds, submit financial reports and coordinate other reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement.

3.8 What is the funding not for (exclusions)?

The following items are out of scope of the funds arising from this program. RIF Fellowship funds may not be used for: capital works, general maintenance costs, organisational infrastructure or overheads, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment, such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities, and hospitality expenses.

3.9 For early-to-mid-career researchers? How is this defined?

As stated in the [objectives](#) above, one of the intents of the 2022-23 RIF Fellowship Program is to provide funding to support early-to-mid-career researchers. Typically, early-to-mid-career researchers (EMCR) are between 5 and 15 years post-PhD or equivalent highest professional qualification. For the purposes of this 2022-23 RIF fellowship program, applicants do not require a PhD but are expected to justify why they should be considered EMCR in their responses to the merit criteria, referencing for example: (a) the objectives of the RIF for building research capability, capacity and diversity; (b) the planned development of the applicant's research capability; (c) their track record relative to opportunity; and (d) their proposed contribution to the RIF priority themes.

3.10 Where can I ask questions about the RIF?

If you have questions or require further information, please contact CHMR at health.research@act.gov.au. Responses to frequently asked questions will be posted as required on the CHMR website: www.health.act.gov.au/research/centre-health-and-medical-research. Potential applicants are expected to review this website regularly in case of updates or announcements.



4. Eligibility Criteria

To apply, applicants must satisfy all the following eligibility criteria. Only one application per applicant will be considered. Evidence of eligibility must be provided at the time of application.

Eligibility Criteria	Evidence Checklist ¹
1. Applicant is an individual practising professional in any field/discipline employed in the ACT health system .	<input type="checkbox"/> Proof (e.g. a letter from employer or employment contract) of current employment.
2. Applicant's host organisation is supportive of the proposed fellowship and agrees to release the applicant from normal workplace duties for up to 50% of the applicant's standard working hours over the course of the fellowship to engage in RIF fellowship activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Proof (e.g. a letter from host organisation) of supportive working arrangements, including proposed release arrangements and approval that the applicant can commence within 12 weeks of funding agreement execution.
3. Applicant's host organisation (or an administering organisation) is able to enter into a funding agreement with the ACT Health Directorate (on behalf of the Territory) to receive and administer the full amount of grant funds over the duration of the fellowship, across financial years if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement (e.g. a letter from the host or administering organisation) that either the host organisation or an administering organisation is able to enter into a funding agreement with the ACT Health Directorate (on behalf of the Territory) to receive and administer the full amount of grant funds over the duration of the fellowship, across financial years if necessary.

¹ Evidentiary attachments should be provided in PDF, .doc, or .docx format.



5. Merit Criteria

Each application will be assessed against the following merit criteria. Proof of claims must be provided at the time of application.

Merit Criteria	Evidence Checklist ²	Assessment panel will consider:
<p>1. Applicant has suitable knowledge, skills and capabilities (30% weighting).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant statement of claims (up to 1,000 words). <input type="checkbox"/> Full publication list – highlighting up to five of the most relevant publications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant employment history. • Academic and relevant clinical qualifications. • Skills and experience directly related to the topic area(s). • Skills and experience related to the methodology of the research project. • Track record in research and research impact, relative to opportunity. • Ability to deliver the research outputs, outcomes and/or objectives within the grant period.
<p>2. Project proposed will make a high-value contribution to improving the health and health care of the people served by the ACT health system (40% weighting).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal (up to 2,000 words) which addresses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and rationale. • Research objectives, question, and method. • Milestones. • Consumer involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a gap in knowledge and a clearly articulated need for the research. • How the proposed project will advance existing knowledge and why this is important. • Strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology. • Potential outputs and outcomes of the research, including how the research will improve the health and health care of the people served by the ACT health system. • Scalability and generalisability of results. • Research translation and impact plan. • The plan for the applicant’s research capability development, in relation to the desired development of the ACT health system as a learning health system (see Better Together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system).

² Word limits exclude external references cited within an application. Evidentiary attachments should be provided in PDF, .doc, or .docx format.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected outputs and impact on patient care. • Translation and implementation plan. • Career development plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to addressing as many of the RIF priority themes as possible, to support research and researchers that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build the capability of people in the ACT health system and help to establish the ACT as a national leader. ○ Respond to the health needs of the ACT and its surrounding region ○ Respond to inequities in health outcomes and service access for different cohorts. ○ Enhance the capacity and diversity of the health research workforce, especially of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ○ Enhance the ACT health system through innovation in the application of technology, digital systems, in models of care or prevention to improve health outcomes and environmental sustainability.
<p>3. Context includes investment and support (of funding, resourcing, or in-kind commitment) (30% weighting).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Description of context (up to 1000 words). <input type="checkbox"/> Budget. <input type="checkbox"/> Letter(s) of confirmation from academic partner(s) and/or wrap-around research support providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from host/administering organisation (e.g. of funding, resourcing, percentage or other description of wages covered, access to research infrastructure, in-kind contributions). • Description of support from academic partner(s) and/or wrap-around research support, including itemised budget indicating funding, resources, access to research infrastructure, in-kind contributions (such as mentoring and training) and the skills of the proposed support team in relation to the project. • Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appropriateness of the funding amount and purpose. ○ Degree to which this investment would enhance existing investments. ○ Other contributions and in-kind support for the project.



6. Assessment process

Applications close on Friday 17 February 2023 at 5:00pm.

6.1 Eligibility checks

An administrative review is undertaken by CHMR confirming applicant eligibility, required supporting documentation, and conformity with these Funding Guidelines. Applicants that do not meet these requirements will not progress.

6.2 Expert Assessment Panel

Applications are subject to a formal panel assessment process in line with the [ACT Governments Grants Administration Framework](#), whereby a merit assessment against criteria outlined in these guidelines occurs using a scoring rubric. Applications will be scored according to the rubric and matrix to identify and rank a pool of applications recommended as suitable for funding.

Panel members are selected based on their relevant expertise and are appointed by the ACTHD Director-General. Panel membership will consist of a consumer representative, internal ACTHD employees and external local and interstate experts. The panel may also request additional expert reviews if necessary.

6.3 Approval

ACTHD will receive the Expert Assessment Panel report and pool of ranked applications suitable for funding and, considering the applications in this pool against the RIF 2022-23 policy objectives, will make a recommendation to the delegate on successful applications and amounts.

6.4 Announcement

Outcomes will be announced on or before Friday, 28 April 2023. Applicants will be notified beforehand.

The decision is final and may not be appealed. Successful applicants will have this decision confirmed in writing following the announcement and will be required to communicate acceptance within five days of the written notification.

7. Other Conditions

7.1 Obligations of successful applicants

It is anticipated that all successful applicants will be required to:

- Support negotiation of a Funding Agreement to enable the RIF payment to be made to either the host or administrating organisation before 30 June 2023.
- Be responsible for performance reporting against identified project milestones identified in the Funding Agreement.
- Participate where possible in RIF Fellowship Program cohort and alumni development and networking opportunities provided by the ACTHD and partner organisations as they arise.

7.2 Ethics, compliance and/or safety approvals

All research must be conducted in accordance with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) and the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#). All proposals are expected to be ethical by design and meet the standards of good research practice within the discipline most appropriate to the project methodology.

If Ethics, Compliance and/or Safety Approvals are required, the applicant must ensure clearances have been provided prior to research commencement. Evidence of clearance may be required by the CHMR prior to allocation of funds.

Researchers should be aware of their organisational research integrity policies and professional guidelines and behave accordingly.

7.3 Data management

Research data must be managed in accordance with applicable state and territory legislation and ACT Government Data Governance guidelines.

7.4 Publicity and Acknowledgement

Successful applicants will be required to support promotion of the RIF Fellowship Program and its research for example, through media activities, including interviews, a statement in any relevant ACT Government media release and attendance (where practical) at fellowship events. If you are a successful applicant, please advise the RIF Fellowship Program Manager if promotion of your funded project is also planned by your Administering Institution.

Successful applicants will also be required to:

- Include a statement in all communication activities relating to the funded research such as, for example: *'Undertaken with the financial support of the Research Innovation Fund Fellowship Program on behalf of the Territory Government through*



the ACT Health Directorate’.

- Include the above statement in any research outcome, for example, an interim and/or final research report.
- Present the research at the Canberra Health Annual Research Meeting (CHARM) and associated events.
- Where possible, establish an email signature block that acknowledges the RIF Fellowship Program.

7.5 Commencement

It is anticipated that each RIF Fellowship will commence within 12 weeks of executing a Funding Agreement. The successful applicant must immediately notify CHMR of any changes that may impact on the ability to deliver the agreed research or evidence-based practise implementation.

7.6 Reporting

The RIF Fellowship Program Project Manager will liaise with researchers to provide further details on annual reporting requirements against the milestones set out in the application. A final report will be required on completion of the fellowship.

8. Definitions

8.1 Academic partner

An academic partner is an institution of education and/or research which grants academic degrees at all levels. Academic partner institutions do not need to be situated in the ACT.

8.2 ACT Health System

Consistent with the [Better Together: A strategic plan for research in the ACT health system](#), the ACT health system encompasses all of the following:

- Health services including hospitals, community healthcare services, preventative health, private healthcare providers, and health and support services provided by non-government organisations (see p.11 of the [ACT Health Service Plan](#)).
- Policy, planning, regulation and research that supports or underpins health service delivery.³

³ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-system-overview>



8.3 Administering organisation

An administering organisation is an organisation which manages funds, submits financial reports, and coordinates other reporting requirements as outlined in a funding agreement. It is anticipated that, in relation to the RIF, an administering organisation will be required if the applicant's [host organisation](#) cannot manage and carry forward funds across financial years for the full duration of the fellowship (as the grant funds will be paid in full at the outset of the fellowship). If so, it is anticipated that the administering organisation – which may be a university, health service, medical research institute, non-government organisation or private health service – will enter into a funding agreement with the ACT Health Directorate before 30 June 2023.

8.4 Host organisation

The host organisation is the organisation in the [ACT health system](#) in which the applicant is practising as a professional, in which an appropriate delegate has the authority to release the applicant to engage in RIF fellowship research activities.

8.5 In-kind support

Non-cash contributions provided, which can include collaboration in the research, development efforts and may include personnel, services, facilities, equipment, intellectual property, donations of goods or services received towards the project.

8.6 Practising professional in any field/discipline

A practising professional in any field/discipline includes the following:

- Health practitioners who hold AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) registration.
- Other qualified professionals employed by organisations in the [ACT health system](#), such as non-AHPRA-registered allied health professionals, Aboriginal Health Workers, health economists, epidemiologists, health policy officers, health protection professionals, public/population/preventive health professionals, scientists, and researchers.

8.7 Wrap-around research support

Wrap-around research supports may include, for example:

- people e.g., academic support staff, professional or research mentorship, consumer, or service-user committee.
- funding for the project.
- access to training, software, hardware, or research infrastructure.

This research support does not need to be situated wholly in the ACT.