



O'Brien Institute for Public Health Catalyst Grant

Learning Health Systems

Principal Applicant	
Project Title	
Catalyst Funds Requested	
Submission Date	

Maximum request: \$20,000 over two years.

Program Guidelines

1. The O'Brien Institute for Public Health (OIPH) Catalyst Grant provides seed funding to a maximum value of \$20,000 over two years to build the evidence, partnerships, and momentum needed to pursue larger external funding, subsequent academic outputs and meaningful societal impact. Applications must align with [the Learning Health System strategic priority](#).
2. The Principal Applicant must be a member of the OIPH who is eligible to hold funds at the University of Calgary. NB: this includes Postdoctoral Fellows. Trainees and other OIPH members ineligible to hold funds at the University, and non-OIPH members are considered eligible project team members.
3. **Catalyst awards are not intended to fund a complete project.** These smaller awards support the early stage(s) that are anticipated to yield larger projects and external funding awards within 24 months, academic outputs within the near term (1–3 years), and societal benefits in the longer term (2–5 years). Although early-stage projects are prioritized, Catalyst awards may also be used to bridge or complement concurrent external funding proposals. The submitted external application or pending draft submissions must be appended (to support Section 4). The limited extent of the Catalyst project, in relation to the broader project described in the external proposal, must be made clear in the Catalyst award application. A Catalyst award may be used in conjunction with a successful external award, to augment the total project funding and should be spent, as proposed in the Catalyst application, on the earliest phase of the broader project.
4. Use of Catalyst awards to launch new transdisciplinary teams is highly encouraged.
5. Eligible project costs include Research Assistant/Associate and trainee salaries; publication costs; database, software licenses, and other research infrastructure costs; project- and KT-related travel and events costs; research expendables; research participant gifts and honoraria.
6. Partner contributions are desirable, to ensure that all relevant interest holders are committed to the project's success.
7. Awarded principal applicants must submit annual outcomes reports at 12 months and 24 months and serve on ensuing Catalyst adjudication panels.
8. Projects must be aligned with priority areas identified by funding partners, listed below.



1. Project Alignment

The O'Brien Institute for Public Health Learning Health Systems Catalyst Award supports projects that generate and apply evidence to drive continuous improvement, innovation, and better health outcomes. Priority will be given to initiatives that leverage partnerships, data and technology to address real-world health system challenges and translate knowledge into practice. Multidisciplinary collaborations involving researchers, clinicians, health system partners, patients, and communities are strongly encouraged.

Projects must align with the [O'Brien Institute Learning Health System strategic priority](#). You may select one or more priority areas of a collaborating department. Please select the applicable funding partner(s) below and describe how your project aligns with **both** the Learning Health System strategic priority and the selected department priority.

- ☐ **The Department of Clinical Neurosciences** strongly supports Learning Health Systems as critical for improving outcomes in individuals affected by, or at risk of, neuro-related conditions or in need of rehabilitation. The goal of this research could include leveraging health systems to determine risk, enhance person-centered care, support self-management of chronic conditions, or to improve quality of care. To be eligible, the applicant must have a primary appointment within the Department of Clinical Neurosciences.
- ☐ **The Department of Emergency Medicine** invites projects that improve the delivery, quality, safety, and equity of emergency care through health services research, implementation science, learning health systems, and innovative digital health approaches. Priority areas include optimizing emergency care delivery and operations, improving patient and provider outcomes, advancing equitable care for marginalized populations, and generating evidence to inform policy and practice. Projects should demonstrate strong potential to build sustainable research programs with meaningful impact on emergency medicine. To be eligible, the applicant must have a primary appointment within the Department of Emergency Medicine.
- ☐ **The Department of Medicine** invites projects that integrate local clinical data and patient engagement approaches to implement, evaluate, and continuously improve evidence-based care practices for individuals living with chronic medical conditions, with a priority on delivering equitable patient-centred care for vulnerable populations and individuals living with complex medical comorbidities. To be eligible, the applicant or co-applicant must have a primary appointment within the Department of Medicine.
- ☐ **The Department of Psychiatry** supports projects with a focus on local challenges in mental health and addiction, that will help with the understanding of, and the design of solutions for, issues relevant to the local community. To be eligible the applicant must have a primary appointment within the Department of Psychiatry.
- ☐ **The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology** will support research that advances the health of females and women. This includes conditions related to the female reproductive system and reproductive life stages, as well as other female- or women-specific medical and mental health conditions, as well as conditions that disproportionately affect females and women. Preference will be given to projects using Alberta data or participants; however, research from other provinces or countries will be considered where there is clear potential to improve the health of females and women.
- ☐ **The Department of Surgery** invites projects that improve access to and optimize the surgical care pathway across the full continuum of surgical care. Priority areas include enhancing patient access to surgical care; improving and optimizing surgical care pathways; increasing the use of patient-reported outcomes to track patient vitality and recovery; strengthening systems to track, analyze, and address surgical outcomes, including cultural and equity disparities and patient-reported metrics; and building access to, and literacy within, large surgical datasets and databases at the provincial, national, and international levels. To be eligible, the applicant must have a primary appointment within the Department of Surgery.
- ☐ **The Azrieli Accelerator** welcomes proposals that serve people living with neurodevelopmental conditions, at any developmental period across the lifespan. For this competition, we define neurodevelopmental conditions as a group of conditions that emerge in early childhood. These conditions persist throughout an individual's lifespan, impacting behavioural, social, cognitive, and motor abilities in different ways with variable levels of impact from person to person. Multiple conditions meet this definition, including autism, ADHD, intellectual disability, and others. Proposals may focus on one or multiple neurodevelopmental conditions.



Describe your alignment

Maximum 300 words. The response box scrolls — text beyond the visible area is retained.



2. Project Description

Describe the proposed Catalyst project including background/relevance, objectives/aims, methods, challenges and mitigation strategies.

Maximum 2000 words. The response box scrolls — text beyond the visible area is retained.



3. Project Team

Attach a Tri-agency narrative CV for the Principal Applicant (including personal statement, most significant contributions and experiences, and supervisory and mentorship activities). Summarize the roles and expertise of any co-applicants and collaborators. Support with Tri-agency narrative CVs can be found [here](#).

Team Member Name	Affiliation	Role in this project	Expertise



4. Expected Outcomes and Impact

Outline the anticipated outcomes of the Catalyst project and how it will support longer-term research activities and impact. Include:

- **Planned external funding opportunities** (amount, timeline)
- **Anticipated academic outputs** (publications, training, dissemination)
- **Planned knowledge mobilization outputs** (articles, infographics, videos, other activities or tools)
- **Expected societal and/or public health outcomes** and how these will be achieved
- **Key partnerships and engagement activities**

Maximum 500 words. The response box scrolls — text beyond the visible area is retained.



5. Advancing Health Equity and Indigenous Engagement

The O'Brien Institute is committed to research that advances health equity and welcomes applications from researchers who identify as members of equity-denied groups and those whose lived experiences inform their research.

Equity and Indigenous engagement in this project. Address both parts below in the space provided: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) **AND** Indigenous engagement considerations.

Describe how equity and also Indigenous engagement considerations shape this work — who stands to benefit and who may be excluded. In line with CIHR's requirements for sex- and gender-based analysis, indicate how sex and/or gender are accounted for in your research question, design, and analysis, or explain why they do not apply. If equity considerations are limited in this project, please explain. Also describe how Indigenous Peoples, communities, and/or organizations may be impacted and/or how they may be involved in this project. If Indigenous engagement is limited in this project, please explain.

Maximum 350 words. The response box scrolls — text beyond the visible area is retained.



6. Timeline

Outline key project milestones and anticipated delivery dates.

Deliverable / Milestone / Activity	Target Date



7. Budget

Provide a budget outlining how the requested Catalyst funds will be used. Select the budget category from: research staff, trainees, consumables (materials and supplies), non-consumables (equipment), services (e.g., knowledge translation, publication costs, etc.) and/or travel.

Community relationships are an eligible cost. Building and maintaining relationships with communities, particularly Indigenous communities, is an eligible expense — including honoraria and gifts for Elders and Knowledge Keepers, ceremony and protocol, hosting and catering, travel for community partners, and compensation for community members' time. Enter these under the services or travel budget categories, as applicable.

Budget Category	Item / Explanation	Estimated Cost
TOTAL PROJECT COST		



8. Additional Funding

List any confirmed or anticipated additional support, including cash contributions (e.g. partner funding, other grants), and in-kind contributions (e.g. staff time, data access, infrastructure).

Source	Amount	Requested or secured?
OIPH Institute Catalyst Funds		
TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING		

Contingency plan

For any of the funds that are not yet secured, please provide a contingency plan — e.g. would a reduced project scope be feasible with the lower total budget, or would the project be cancelled indefinitely, with a Catalyst allocation offered by the O'Brien Institute being declined?

Maximum 200 words. The response box scrolls — text beyond the visible area is retained.

Adjudication Rubric

Reviewers score each criterion from 0 (poor) to 5 (ideal). The descriptors below indicate what distinguishes a weak, adequate and strong application; scores of 2 and 4 fall between the anchors shown. The overall result is the total across all criteria. Eligibility is confirmed separately: the Principal Applicant must be an OIPH member eligible to hold funds at the University of Calgary, and where a department priority area is selected, that department confirms the applicant's primary appointment.

Criterion	Where it is assessed	Score	What reviewers look for
Alignment and Fit	Section 1	0–5	1 – Alignment with the Learning Health System priority is unclear or asserted rather than explained; no department priority addressed. 3 – Reasonable alignment with the LHS priority and at least one department priority, but the connection stays general. 5 – Explicit, well-argued alignment with the LHS priority and at least one department priority area.
Quality and Significance of the Project	Section 2	0–5	1 – Limited originality; objectives or methods unclear or poorly matched to the aims. 3 – Sound project with moderate innovation; some methodological detail missing. 5 – Innovative and scientifically strong, with methods clearly appropriate to the stated objectives.
Team and Capacity	Section 3	0–5	1 – Gaps in required expertise; roles unclear or capacity to deliver in doubt. 3 – Competent team covering core expertise; transdisciplinary or partner perspectives limited. 5 – Full coverage of needed expertise, clear roles, demonstrated leadership, and meaningful transdisciplinary collaboration.
Outcomes, Impact and Partnerships	Section 4	0–5	1 – Future funding plans vague; outputs and benefits thinly described; partnerships nominal. 3 – Plausible funding pathway and outputs; engagement described but partner contribution unclear. 5 – Specific external funding target and timeline, concrete academic and knowledge mobilization outputs, credible societal benefit, and partners meaningfully involved.
Advancing Health Equity	Section 5	0–5	1 – Only one of the two required parts is addressed, or both are addressed generically with no bearing on the work. 3 – Both parts addressed: equity considerations and sex and/or gender identified at a general level, and Indigenous engagement described in general terms; limited influence on design or dissemination. 5 – EDIA: clear account of who benefits and who may be excluded, with sex and/or gender integrated into the research question, design and analysis (or a reasoned explanation of why they do not apply). Indigenous engagement: specific and evidenced, shaping the project's questions, methods or governance, and reaching the communities and practitioners who could act on the findings (or a reasoned explanation of why it does not apply).
Feasibility, Timeline and Budget	Sections 2, 6, 7 and 8	0–5	1 – Timeline unrealistic; challenges unaddressed; budget poorly justified or misaligned with activities. 3 – Workable timeline and budget; some costs or risks under-explained. 5 – Realistic milestones, credible mitigation of identified challenges, and a fully justified budget aligned with proposed activities.

Submit the completed application and CV to iph@ucalgary.ca