



Canadian Heart Function Alliance

EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATOR GRANT: TERMS OF REFERENCE

OVERVIEW

Award Value	\$40,000
Award Duration	18 months from September 1, 2026 – February 28, 2028
Application Deadline	March 30, 2026 at 6pm Pacific Time
Application submission	Completed application must be sent to leslie.hausermann@icm-mhi.org by the deadline
Eligibility	<p>Principal applicants must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An early career investigator at a Canadian Academic Institution within his/her first 5 years of his/her first academic faculty appointment• Be a member of the CHF Alliance <p>The project must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Related to one of the CHF Alliance teams/themes/projects.• Unfunded at the time of application
Areas of Focus	<p>This competition will fund projects that align with the mission and research priorities of the CHF Alliance.</p> <p>Project involving national collaborations, Indigenous focus, and/or the engagement of patient partners will be given priority.</p>

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Heart Function Alliance (CHF Alliance) is a Pan-Canadian, CIHR and Heart and Stroke funded, patient-driven network, which aims to improve the prediction, prevention, diagnosis, and management of heart failure (HF). It was developed, from its inception, in partnership with people with lived experience and is led by a team of internationally recognized clinician-scientists and a HF patient. CHF Alliance research priorities are based on identified patient priorities and include: receipt of rapid and accurate diagnosis, improving access to and equity of care, self-management and empowerment, improving access to reliable information, lifestyle issues, mental health, sex and exercise, virtual care and innovative interventions.



The CHF Alliance aims to support early career investigators across the network to develop their career and support their innovative research projects in the field of HF. In addition to offering financial support, the CHF Alliance is committed to fostering and strengthening new and existing collaborations between the stakeholders involved in the prediction, prevention, diagnosis, and management of HF.

For more information about the mission and vision of the CHF Alliance, please visit www.chfalliance.ca.

ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD VALUE

For the 2026 competition, the CHF Alliance will offer grants of \$40,000 each for a duration of 18 months. Funding will begin in September 2026 and terminate in February 2028. The grant duration may be extended to 24 months for project completion but with no additional funding.

Principal applicant must be a CHF Alliance member and an early career investigator within his/her first 5 years of first appointment at a Canadian Academic Institution. Applicants must:

- Describe a research proposal with specific aims/hypotheses, a description of the relevant background information, the scientific question addressed and the methodology to be employed
- Conduct research in the field of HF which aligns with the mission and the research priorities (listed below) of the CHF Alliance. The project must be related to one of the CHF Alliance teams, themes, or projects.
- Demonstrate how their research will integrate principles of inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and health equity.
- Highlight any collaboration/partnership within the network, including partnership with patient and/or Indigenous communities.
- Agree to complete a Patient Engagement Intake Form and submit it to the Patient Engagement and Empowerment Team for matching, if the project does not already include at least one patient partner. Funding will be conditional upon receipt of the intake form.
- Acknowledge CHF Alliance in all publications arising from this research

A tri-agency CV must be provided with the application form and document all sources of the applicant's current funding (Template and instruction for the tri-agency CV can be found on the [CIHR's webpage](#)). The CHF Alliance strongly encourages applicants to seek additional funding for this application from their institution/university, local health authority, provincial funding agencies or health charities. The efforts to obtain additional funding should be documented into the proposal.

CHF Alliance will be supporting projects that have not received other funding and preference will be given to researchers applying for their first grant or who have not yet received other grant funding. In addition, CHF Alliance will give priority to projects involving national collaborations, Indigenous focus, and/or the engagement of patient partners. However, their priority score should be within a fundable range in order to qualify for funding.

Available funding:

- CHF Alliance will offer two grants of \$40,000 each as research funding for 18 months.

Funding will begin in September 2026 and terminate in February 2028.

BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

A detailed budget must be submitted with the application form for the whole duration of the funding.

These grants are for research funding. They cannot be used to support the primary investigator's salary. Other staff salaries may be eligible if these are necessary for completion of the research.

NB: In accordance with the CHF Alliance Patient Engagement and Empowerment Platform Terms of Reference, patient partners should receive a financial compensation of \$50/hour for their involvement. The CHF Alliance strongly recommends applicants to consider this when preparing their budget.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application forms are available from the CHF Alliance [website](#) or upon request from leslie.hausermann@icm-mhi.org. All sections must be completed and must adhere to the word limits.

Inclusion of SGBAR, Patients, Community and EDI

Sex and gender-based analysis and reporting

Applicants are required to consider and integrate sex and gender-based analysis and reporting (SGBAR) in their project or research design. Any application that does not incorporate SGBAR must provide a rationale why it would not be relevant to the project.

Patient and community engagement

CHF Alliance is a patient-driven network and committed to engaging patients in their care and in decision-making to improve the quality of life and heart failure self-management. Applicants are required to illustrate how they intend to meaningfully engage patients in their project. Any application that does not engage patients must provide a rationale why it would not be relevant. Applicants who would like more information about the process for involving patient and caregiver partners within their projects can contact the [Patient Engagement and Empowerment Team](#) before submitting their application, ensuring that they allow sufficient time for this engagement. **NB: If at least one patient partner is not already involved in the project, successful applicants will be required to complete a Patient Engagement Intake Form for matching with a patient partner, before receiving their funding, unless they have provided a clear justification as to why this would not be relevant.**

Community-oriented initiatives must ensure community engagement in the planning, delivery, evaluation and knowledge mobilization of health programs and technologies. Initiatives with Indigenous organizations and communities must take the time to engage early and develop meaningful relationships, ensuring a sense of accountability and true cooperation, and “an ability to step aside and allow Indigenous people to lead.”¹ Applicants who would like more information about the process for involving Indigenous peoples within their project can contact Mitewekan (Indigenous Research Council) before submitting their application, ensuring that they allow sufficient time for this engagement.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Applicants must illustrate how their project will align with and advance CHF Alliance’s commitment to inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and health equity, whether in the composition of the research team, EDI training of research team members, or the considerations of EDI in research/project design.

Research priorities

The CHF Alliances adopted the identified patient priorities as its research priorities. These include:

- A rapid and accurate diagnosis
- The improvement of access to & equity of care
- The patient self-management and empowerment
- The improvement of reliable information
- Patient lifestyle issues, mental health, sex and exercise
- Virtual care & innovative intervention

Applicants must highlight how their project relates to these patient/research priorities and focus on how it will improve the quality of care and/or life.

Elements to include in the application

The application must include:

- **The application form with all completed sections.** Sections include applicant and co-applicant information, patient and industry partners, Indigenous focus, research priorities, project title, lay summary, proposal, collaborators, inclusion of SGBAR, patients, community and EDI, budget and signature. Information to provide for each section is available in the application form.
- **A Curriculum Vitae:** tri-agency CV for PI and co-applicants. CV must include documentation of all sources of the applicant’s current research funding.

¹ Hyett S, Marjerrison, S, Gabel, C. Improving health research among Indigenous Peoples in Canada. CMAJ 2018 May 22;190:E616-21. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.171538.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each of the applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Quality and excellence of the research proposal with clear goals, including impact on HF diagnosis, health system, and quality of care and/or life; evidence of established or emerging leadership of research team.
- Alignment with the mission and the research priorities of the CHF Alliance.
- Evidence of existing or new collaborations among diverse disciplines, perspectives, and CHF Alliance partners in achieving the project through research team, project design, and/or translation plan.
- Appropriate and explicit incorporation of SGBAR; patient community engagement; Indigenous community engagement; and inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and health equity.
- Demonstrated ability and experience to execute and achieve the research goals.

Applications will be reviewed and adjudicated by a panel comprised of CHF Alliance research investigators, trainees, and heart failure patients/caregivers.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Submit your completed application form and associated documents by **March 30, 2026, at 6:00 pm Pacific time** as a **single PDF document** via email to: leslie.hausermann@icm-mhi.org.

Please address any questions or requests for more information to Leslie Hausermann, Program Manager of the CHF Alliance, at leslie.hausermann@icm-mhi.org.

Receipt of complete/on-time submissions will be acknowledged. **Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. Please note that this is the applicant's responsibility to ensure his/her application is complete.**

The estimated decision date will be mid-June, 2026.

