



**Alberta Health
Services**

**Inspiring solutions.
Together.**

Neurosciences,
Rehabilitation &
Vision SCN™

Neurosciences Rehabilitation and Vision Strategic Clinical Network™

Seed Grant Program 2021

Call for Proposals

Timelines:

January 31, 2021

Applications Due

March 31, 2021

Notification of Awards

1. Description

The Neurosciences, Rehabilitation & Vision Strategic Clinical Network™ (NRV SCN) is very pleased to announce the 2021 Seed Grant funding competition. A maximum of four (4) awards of up to \$8,000 will be offered with a total funding support of \$32,000. Projects should address elements of the NRV SCN transformational roadmap, which includes improvements to clinical practice through innovation, implementation and evaluation of integrated and transitional care pathways, evaluation of novel treatment quality and efficacy, improvements to health service delivery, primary prevention strategies and advancing patient engagement and informed decision-making across the clinical landscape.

2. Context & NRV SCN priorities

The NRV SCN was created to encourage development and implementation of evidence-based innovations that will improve NRV-related health outcomes. The goal of this research program is to support foundational research in our three theme areas that seeks to transform patient outcomes and enhance the experience of patients and families encountering neurological, rehabilitation or vision-related health problems. The NRV SCN is reviewed by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences' performance evaluation criteria, which includes metrics in areas such as the advancement of knowledge, capacity building, informed decision-making, and impact to health care (health, economic, and social). Thus, research is essential to the success of the network.

From our stakeholders, the following priorities have been identified:

- Understand patient experience and determine areas to focus and improve clinical practice
- Develop and implement standardized evidence-informed provincial clinical pathways/care delivery systems
- Improve transitions in care for patients and families
- Identify and build partnerships and resources to better support patients in the community
- Identify, implement, and monitor standardized quality indicators in NRV areas
- Ensure appropriateness of testing and therapies
- Understand care gaps for equitable access
- Improve patient access to specialized resources

3. Eligibility

- The Principal Investigator must have affiliation with one of Alberta's academic institutions, but front-line clinicians are welcomed and encouraged to act as co-investigators.

- Project area of research will include one or more of the four themes of health research (biomedical, clinical, health services, population and public health).
- Proposals should focus on the creation and application of knowledge across the continuum, including:
 - Improvements to clinical practice
 - Integration of care
 - Contributions to new evidence for clinical decision-making
 - Improvements to access, prevention strategies related to neuroscience, rehabilitation, or vision-related conditions across the lifespan
- The Principal Investigator may only hold a single active seed grant from the NRV SCN but may be a collaborator on other proposals. One PI from the Co-PI team will hold the funds.
- A member of the research team must be affiliated with AHS (e.g. NRV SCN research community).
- NRV SCN leadership are not eligible to hold seed grants as principal investigators.
- Funding is a one-time investment (non-renewable).

4. Funding Criteria

The funds available is for direct costs up to \$8,000.

Funding may be requested for:

- Stipend support for trainees or salary support for research associates and technical/professional assistants
- Research operating expenses, including general office supplies
- Expenses for provincial travel that is essential for the conduct of the study (such as data collection or to attend study training).
- Other expenses will be considered (ie: equipment, expendables), but must be justified and meet AHS guidelines.

Funding will NOT be provided for:

- Previously incurred expenses: funding will not be provided for expenses incurred prior to implementation of the grant.
- Investigator salaries
- Indirect costs
- Publication costs, legal or patent fees, membership fees, academic fees, secretarial support; travel to conferences, symposiums, presentations or meetings
- Travel outside of Alberta

5. Evaluation Criteria:

Completed applications considered eligible for funding will be evaluated based on pre-established criteria provided within the template. The Review Panel will include select NRV SCN Core Committee members (a diverse group of stakeholders, including administrators, clinicians, and patients in the Province). The assessment of proposals by the Review Panel will be based on the following criteria and will be assessed according to established metrics from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

a) Research Approach

- Clarity of the research question
- Completeness of the literature review and relevance to study design/research plan
- Rationale for the research approach and methodology
- Appropriateness of the research design and methods
- Feasibility of the research approach (including recruitment of subjects, project timeline, preliminary data where appropriate, etc.)
- Anticipation of difficulties that may be encountered in the research and plans for mitigation

b) Originality of the Proposal

- Potential for the creation of new knowledge
- Originality of the proposed research, in terms of the hypotheses/research questions addressed, novel technology/methodology, and/or novel applications of current technology/methodology
- Appropriateness to the scope of the NRV SCN Seed Grant competition and alignment with NRV SCN priorities
- Potential contribution of the project to future PRIHS or Tri-council grant applications

c) Applicant(s)

- Qualifications of the applicants, including training, experience and independence (relative to career stage)
- Expertise of the applicants, as demonstrated by scientific productivity over the past five years (publications, books, grants held, etc.)
- Ability to successfully and appropriately disseminate research findings, as demonstrated by knowledge translation activities (publications, conference presentations, briefings, media engagements, etc.)
- Capacity and skill set of the selected research team to carry out the proposed research.

d) Environment for the Research

- Suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research, including personnel, facilities and infrastructure
- Potential of the project to contribute to training of highly-qualified personnel (HQP)

e) Impact of the Research

- Research proposal addresses a significant need or gap in health research and/or the health care system within Alberta
- Project has the potential to improve neuroscience, rehabilitation and vision care in Alberta
- Scientific rigor

The review committee will be using a rating rubric for evaluation based on the above criteria.

Ratings

Descriptor	Score
Outstanding	5
Excellent	4
Very Good	3
Fair	2
Poor	1

6. Reporting and Deliverables

Using the provided template, the PI will submit one interim (12 months) and one final (24 months) report to the NRV SCN Scientific Office within 24 months of receipt of funding. This report will include a summary of the research team and affiliates, research activities performed and key findings, dissemination activities (e.g. presentations, manuscripts etc.), and how the results of the Seed Funding grant have leveraged future research funding initiatives and ongoing research projects. Copies of any abstracts, presentations and publications arising from the grants will be sent to the Scientific Office of the NRV SCN. Seed Funding grants are intended to allow investigators to develop further grants for larger provincial, national, or internal competitions.

We will also invite the PI(s) to present their findings to the NRV SCN Core Committee approximately 12 months after receiving the funding. This will provide an opportunity for dissemination of findings and identification/development of future research collaborations within the NRV SCN community.

7. Program Policies

- The Principal Investigator may only hold a single active seed grant from the NRV SCN, but may be a collaborator on other proposals.
- One PI from the Co-PI team will hold the funds. Seed grants will not be awarded to the same project more than once.
- A research project may be supported by one single active SCN seed grant.
- All unused funds at the end award term (2 years) must be returned to the NRV SCN.
- Funding will be provided for only one year. The grant is non-renewable.
- All publications/presentations, including public messages, arising from the NRV SCN Seed Grant program must acknowledge the support of Alberta Health Services and the NRV SCN.
- Late or incomplete applications will be returned to the candidates.

8. Budget

Please include one-page budget that describes total proposal budget amount up to \$8000, which could include items outlined above in funding criteria.

Please provide justification and relevant budgetary details for requested amounts:

- In-kind Contributions: describe in kind support
- Indicate if this proposal has received other funding support (Other SCNs, external, Tri Council etc.)

9. Application Instructions

- Project proposals will be limited to four (4) pages (single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins)
 - Research proposal background (Please describe the significance of the problem and relevant background information, and alignment with NRV SCN priorities)
 - Research question, objectives and methodology
 - Describe how the research proposal will contribute to larger funding opportunities.
 - Describe how the outcomes of the planned research will be sustained long-term and the potential for integration within health care or community settings in Alberta.
 - Describe the role of each team member in the research study.
 - Appendices (schematic diagrams, figures, charts) up to 2 pages are allowed.
- One page references and lay abstract are permitted

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- The Principal Investigator must submit a 2-page curriculum vitae (CIHR, or Education/Publications/Grants/Trainees/Evidence of Knowledge Translation over last 5 years)
- Completed Approval of Research Proposal - Signatures (Required)
- Complete budget details and justification should be provided in 1 additional page

Please submit all documents as a single pdf to the NRV SCN Assistant Scientific Director by no later than 23:00 MST on the application deadline.

If you have any questions about this competition, please contact:
Dr. Kiran Pohar Manhas, Assistant Scientific Director, NRV SCN Phone: 587-774-7734
Email: kiran.poharmanhas@ahs.ca

Document: v. 2.0 (dated October 27, 2020)

Approval of Research Proposal - Signatures (Required) for the NRV SCN 2021 Seed Grant Competition

Principal Investigator

Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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Co-Principal Investigator (if required)

Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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Department Head (or Executive Director)

Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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Signature from Research Office (or delegate)

Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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