



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**



Western Australian  
Future Health Research  
& Innovation Fund

# FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19

# Guidelines and Conditions

**Closing Date: 1.00pm, Friday 16 October 2020**

[fhrifund.health.wa.gov.au](http://fhrifund.health.wa.gov.au)

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The FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19 Program is administered by the [Research and Innovation Office](#) (RIO) (formerly the Research Development Unit), Department of Health. Queries regarding the Program and the application process can be submitted to [RIO.DOH@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:RIO.DOH@health.wa.gov.au)

## 1. Introduction

The *Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012* (the Act), which commenced on 24 June 2020, is the enabling legislation for the Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund.

The Act provides that in 2020/21 the Minister for Health must give priority to research and innovation related to human coronaviruses with pandemic potential. The **FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19** Program has been developed to fulfil this legislative requirement. The **FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19** Program will provide grants to promote the health and wellbeing of Western Australians in the context of COVID-19 as follows:

- **Stream 1: Research Grants** – high-quality COVID-19 related research projects that will generate knowledge which has the potential to be translated into improved policy and/or practice.
- **Stream 2: Innovation Grants** – high-quality COVID-19 related innovation projects that will develop new ideas, research and/or technology to create new processes, products and/or services.
- **Stream 3: Infrastructure Grants** – essential infrastructure that supports COVID-19 related research and innovation.

The purpose of the funding is to address health and wellbeing challenges relevant to COVID-19, such as infection prevention and control, surveillance, diagnostics, therapeutics, acute medical impacts and direct and indirect repercussions across a range of health conditions, such as mental health and chronic diseases.

The purpose of both Stream 1 and 2 grants is to generate outcomes that can be clearly differentiated from “business as usual” quality improvement or quality assurance.

### **Stream 1: Research Grants**

Applications for these COVID-19 related grants must:

1. Propose high quality research which is likely to result in the generation of new and significant knowledge.
2. Demonstrate the potential for translation and the proposed pathway for implementation of research findings into improved health policy and practice.

### **Stream 2: Innovation Grants**

Applications for these COVID-19 related grants must:

1. Propose a project which is likely to generate highly innovative outcomes with the potential for major impact.
2. Demonstrate the potential for translation and the proposed pathway for implementation of the innovation to create new processes, products and/or services.

### **Stream 3: Infrastructure Grants**

Applications for these COVID-related grants must:

1. Relate to facilities, resources and services that are used by the research and innovation communities to conduct research and foster innovation. This includes: scientific equipment (or sets of instruments); knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives and scientific data; e-infrastructure such as data and computing systems and communication networks; and any other tools or resources (human or material) that are essential to achieve excellence in research and/or innovation.
2. Propose a high-quality plan for procurement and implementation of the infrastructure.
3. Demonstrate how the infrastructure has application across disciplines and institutions and will:
  - build WA research capability, drive research collaborations and accelerate the generation of research and innovation outcomes; and/or
  - enable the development, demonstration and delivery of new products, services or processes.

## **2. Eligibility**

Applications can be made by an individual or a team led by a Coordinating Principal Investigator (CPI) for Stream 1 (Research) or by the Project Lead for Stream 2 (Innovation) or 3 (Infrastructure). Grants must be managed by a WA administering institution with a registered Australian Business Number.

The CPI/Project Lead must:

- (a) be an Australian citizen or permanent resident in Australia
- (b) be employed by the WA administering institution for the period of the grant.

A CPI/Project Lead can submit more than one application for this Funding Program.

For applications to be considered eligible, all sections must be completed (including all required signatures) and submitted according to the application instructions.

## **3. Consumer involvement**

In line with the NHMRC's definition, consumers are people who have lived experience of a health issue. They include patients, their friends, families, carers and members of the general public. Consumers can also be people who represent the views and interests of a consumer organisation, a community or a wider constituency.

There is increasing recognition of the benefits of involving consumers in the research and innovation process. Effective consumer involvement can ensure research and innovation is relevant to the WA community and improves the uptake of findings.

For Streams 1 and 2, applicants should engage with health consumers during both the development of the proposal and for the ongoing project by including them in the research or innovation team where appropriate and providing a detailed description of their role and contribution.

Budget requests should consider funding to support, implement and acknowledge consumer involvement, e.g. honoraria and payments.

Guidance on consumer involvement can be found at the [Consumer and Community Involvement Program website](#) and the [NHMRC's Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research 2016](#).

## 4. Funding

### **Grant Monies**

Requested funding must reasonably reflect the proposed research and innovation activity or infrastructure requirement.

<b>Stream</b>	<b>Maximum funding and duration per application</b>	<b>Funding Disbursement</b>
1. Research Grants	\$250,000 (ex GST) / 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instalment 1 (50%) on signing of funding agreement and receipt of all relevant ethics and governance approvals and IP agreement (where required)</li> <li>• Instalment 2 (50%) subject to satisfactory progress being achieved against the project milestones, demonstrated in a mid-project Progress Report</li> </ul>
2. Innovation Grants	\$50,000 (ex GST) / 1 year	Considered on a case-by-case basis and will be based on key deliverable milestones identified in the project plan.
3. Infrastructure Grants	\$1 million (ex GST) / 2 years	Considered on a case-by-case basis and will be based on key deliverable milestones identified in the project plan.

### **Budget Requests**

Applicants should calculate budgets accurately, as requests for additional funding will not be considered.

Funding will generally not be provided for the salary of the CPI/Project Lead. However, in exceptional circumstances, RIO may consider requests where funding for these salaries is crucial to the success of the project.

Budget requests should be adequately described and justified. When the proposed research, innovation or infrastructure requires an ongoing funding source, a proposed plan for sustainable funding must be outlined in the Justification of Budget section of the application form.

It is intended that funds will be spent in WA only. An exception to this may be considered in the case where specific expertise or equipment is required and is not available in WA. When this situation occurs, adequate justification must be provided by the applicant.

Funding is only made available for the scope of work described in the application (or with any modifications requested by the Department). The Department is not obliged to underwrite any recurrent or capital costs beyond the funding awarded through this Program.

A project may receive additional funds from other sources to fully meet its budget requirements. A project could also be a part of a wider program, provided the project has its own discrete objectives that are not funded from another source.

### ***Partial Payment or Suspension of Funds***

RIO reserves the right to:

- pay Instalments in parts based on milestone achievement to date and risk assessment of future milestones
- suspend payment of Instalments or part-Instalments where project feasibility has become uncertain.

### ***Termination of Funds***

Funds shall revert to, or be recoverable by, the Department in instances where:

- the project is terminated by RIO as a result of insufficient progress being made at the time of the mid-point progress report or any interim progress report
- funds are not fully spent at the conclusion of the project, unless an extension has been agreed to by RIO
- funds are used for purposes other than those for which they were awarded
- the recipient is successful in obtaining funding for the project from another source.

Funding is offered subject to budget availability, which could be varied in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

## **5. Selection Process**

Funding will be awarded on merit, based on a process of evaluation and selection. The assessment process shall be conducted by an independent panel comprising of experienced researchers, experts and consumer representation.

Conflicts of interest that may arise will be treated in accordance with the WA Health [Managing Conflict of Interest Policy and Guidelines](#).

RIO reserves the right to:

- request further information from applicants in the event that the reviewers assess an application to be of particular benefit to the WA community but require further clarification before a final decision is made
- negotiate lower funding amounts than requested
- request modifications to research/innovation/infrastructure proposals/plans.

Other external parties may use the *FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19* Program's selection process to identify proposals that they wish to support. In such cases, the external party will negotiate directly with the funding applicant once the *FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19* Program's selection process is complete (subject to the applicant agreeing for their application details to be made available).

Applications must meet defined eligibility requirements and will be assessed based on the criteria and weightings set out in the tables below:

<b><i>Stream 1: Research Grants Assessment Criteria</i></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Significance of the project</b> Relevance and significance of the research in relation to COVID-19 in WA, including clearly described: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issues and/or gaps</li> <li>• anticipated contribution relevant to issues and/or gaps (e.g. advancing knowledge, improving health care or health outcomes)</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
<b>Novelty</b> Novel approach and distinction from similar or related research in this area Potential benefit and value of novel approach	<b>15</b>
<b>Consumer Involvement</b> Appropriate levels of consumer involvement throughout the research project timeline including project design	<b>15</b>
<b>Research Proposal</b> Quality of research proposal including well defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hypothesis, research questions and objectives</li> <li>• methodology, including objective measurement of outcomes</li> <li>• achievable timeline</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>
<b>Feasibility</b> Relevance and strength of qualifications of the investigators and policy and practice partners and their availability to conduct project Collective gain of the team to the project Access to required resources, including expertise	<b>10</b>
<b>Research Translation</b> Potential for translation and implementation of research findings into policy and practice, commercialisation and/or to lead to future funding proposals to external bodies.	<b>10</b>

<b><i>Stream 2: Innovation Grants Assessment Criteria</i></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Value proposition</b> Relevance and significance of the innovation in relation to COVID-19 in WA, including clearly defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issues and/or gaps</li> <li>• advantage/benefits of proposed innovation compared to current processes, products and/or services</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
<b>Potential reach</b> Strong understanding of the current customer(s) for the innovation Proposed market size and expected impact Potential for scalability of the process, product and/or service	<b>10</b>
<b>Consumer involvement</b> Appropriate levels of consumer involvement throughout the project timeline including project design	<b>15</b>
<b>Project plan</b> Quality of project plan including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aims and objectives</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>project design including suitable methodology and objective measurement of outcomes</li> <li>achievable timeline</li> </ul>	
<b>Feasibility</b> Relevance and strength of qualifications and availability of the team and policy and practice partners to conduct project Collective gain of the team to the project Access to required resources, including expertise	<b>10</b>
<b>Translation and implementation</b> Potential for translation and/or commercialisation and proposed pathway for implementation of new processes, products and/or services	<b>15</b>

<b><i>Stream 3: Infrastructure Grants Assessment Criteria</i></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Significance of the proposal</b> Relevance and significance of the proposal in relation to COVID-19 related research and innovation in WA, including clearly defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issues and/or gaps</li> <li>anticipated contribution relevant to issues and/or gaps</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
<b>Potential impact on research and/or innovation in WA</b> Potential to build WA research capability, drive research collaborations and accelerate the generation of research outcomes; enable the development, demonstration and delivery of new products, services or processes; and/or potential for application of infrastructure across disciplines and institutions	<b>20</b>
<b>Procurement and implementation plan</b> Quality of plan for procurement and implementation, objective measurement of outcomes and achievable timeline	<b>40</b>
<b>Feasibility</b> Relevance and strength of qualifications and availability of the team and policy and practice partners to conduct project Collective gain of the team to the project Access to resources	<b>20</b>

## **6. Approvals and Agreements**

### ***Research Governance***

All relevant research governance approvals (when required) shall be obtained and provided to RIO, before any funding is provided to successful project applications.

Research Governance approvals can include:

- (a) Ethics approvals, from relevant Ethics Committees (human and/or animal).
- (b) Research governance authorisation (also known as site specific authorisation) from each relevant institution/site conducting the project or providing access to data, participants or tissue samples.

For information on ethics and governance submission requirements please refer to the following websites:



- <https://rgs.health.wa.gov.au/Pages/Research-Ethics.aspx>.
- <https://rgs.health.wa.gov.au/Pages/Research-Governance.aspx>.
- <https://rgs.health.wa.gov.au/Pages/Multi-centre-Research.aspx>.

### **Data Linkage**

A project that includes a request for linked data from the [Data Linkage Branch \(DLB\)](#) requires the team to demonstrate feasibility to obtain, and adequate expertise to analyse, the requested data.

Where linked data are required, the DLB should be contacted for assistance with the Application for Data process. The DLB should provide both i) a cost estimate; and ii) an estimate of time required to obtain the data. All requests should state that the data request is associated with the *FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19* Program, which requires the project/research to be completed within a specific period.

The preliminary cost estimate should be included in the proposed project's Budget and the time-estimate built into the project's Milestones against timeline in the application form.

Following confirmation of funding support, a full Application for Data must be submitted to the DLB for feasibility assessment. Following feasibility assessment, in-principle data governance support will be provided via a Feasibility Letter from DLB.

Data Linkage Feasibility must be obtained before a submission can be made to the Department of Health WA HREC or Research Governance Office.

### **Intellectual Property**

Intellectual Property (IP) that arises out of the project will generally vest in the CPI/Project Lead's Administering Institution with an appropriate IP access agreement for other team members' organisations. It is the Administering Institution's responsibility to ensure that appropriate agreements are in place with the team members' organisations.

When a research or innovation team involves more than one institution and includes a member from the WA public health system, then the IP agreement must be authorised by the relevant WA public health system entity and the Administering Institution. The IP agreement must be finalised within two months of the first instalment of the grant being received by the Administering Institution.

RIO will advise if an IP agreement is required and provide an IP Agreement template as necessary. The IP agreement must be finalised prior to receiving the first grant Instalment.

## **7. Reporting**

The CPI/Project Lead will be responsible for coordinating the project and ensuring its timely execution. The CPI/Project Lead will also be responsible for meeting reporting requirements over the duration of the project and at its conclusion. Projects must be concluded within the allocated period which includes obtaining ethics and governance approvals, employment of research staff, data collection and analysis and submission of the final report.

A member of RIO will be assigned to each project and will liaise with the CPI/Project Lead to assist with grant payments, reporting and other operational issues as they arise. RIO liaison officers will provide researchers with the relevant reporting templates as required.

### ***Progress Reports***

A report outlining the progress against the milestones listed in the research/project plan is required mid-project. Interim progress reports may be requested at any point throughout the funding period. The Department reserves the right to suspend or withdraw funding for a project where insufficient progress has been made.

### ***Final Report and Community Stakeholder Brief***

A final report detailing the project outcomes is to be submitted to RIO at the conclusion of the project. Failure to submit the final report at this time may render all investigators/team members on the grant application ineligible for further funding from the FHRI Fund and RIO until the report is received.

In addition, in order to provide feedback to stakeholders, a one-page *Community Stakeholder Brief* which includes an outline of the research or innovation project, its outcomes, and next steps is to be provided to all participating consumer groups (including Aboriginal communities) and a copy submitted to RIO.

### ***Financial Acquittal Statement***

An acquittal statement outlining the expenditure of funds must be submitted to RIO at the project's conclusion. Acquittal statements must be certified by an authorised finance officer at the Administering Institution.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

The Minister for Health (Minister) and/or Department of Health will publicly announce the recipients of the *FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19*. As such, all other parties must withhold announcement/media coverage promoting their association with the selected projects until after RIO advises that the announcement of recipients has occurred. Full acknowledgment of FHRI Fund support must be made as opportunities arise in publications, conference presentations, public discussion, press statements etc.

The suggested citation is: *"this project was/is funded by the Future Health Research and Innovation Fund scheme through the FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19 Program"*

## **9. Complaints**

Applicants who feel that their interests have been adversely affected by a decision made by the Review Panel and/or RIO may lodge a complaint. Complaints can only be considered when they refer to the administrative process and not to the actual outcome of a particular decision. Complaints must be submitted in writing to:

Executive Director, Clinical Leadership and Reform  
Clinical Excellence Division, Department of Health  
PO Box 8172  
Perth Business Centre WA 6849

## 10. Publications

Researchers are requested to forward copies of publications resulting from the funded project to RIO. In order to maximise knowledge exchange, researchers are asked to comply with the [NHMRC's 'Publication and dissemination of research: a guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research'](#).

## 11. Evaluation

The Department of Health will undertake an evaluation of the *FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19* Program and funded projects will need to participate in this.

The evaluation will focus on matters such as the extent of implementation of the research findings into practice and health policy, product development, commercialisation, contribution to capacity building, knowledge transfer, publications and further research funding/grants received as a result of activity of infrastructure funded by the *FHRI Focus Grants: COVID-19* Program.



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