

Request for Applications (RFA)

Development and Enhancement of Localized Networks to Optimize the Delivery of Spinal Cord Injury Care in Canada

About RHI

The Rick Hansen Institute (RHI) is a Canadian-based not-for-profit organization that drives innovation in spinal cord injury (SCI) research and care. By facilitating an international network of researchers, health care professionals, entrepreneurs, investors, people with SCI, and their supporters, we strive to improve the lives of people living with SCI in Canada and around the world.

Background

The objective of [RHI's Care Program](#) is to achieve evidence-informed equitable care for Canadians who sustain a SCI, with a focus on the following areas: preventing secondary complications, maximizing functional recovery, supporting long-term health, wellness, and community participation.

In order to achieve this, we fund innovative initiatives selected through strategic investments and open competitions that align to our program objective.

Description of this RFA

Significant effort and funding from RHI and other organizations have been invested in the development of evidence-informed clinical resources (e.g. evidence-informed practice, clinical practice guideline, clinical pathway) and toolkits to promote optimal and equitable care. However, implementation and adoption of these evidence-informed clinical resources are challenging and therefore the intended benefits of this available evidence on care and outcomes have yet to be realized.

To promote implementation and adoption of SCI evidence at the regional/provincial level, RHI is requesting applications for initiatives that will lead to strong localized networks that engage various SCI stakeholders and relevant organizations to facilitate and champion practice and policy changes to optimize the local delivery of care for people with SCI in Canada.

The intended outcomes of the RFA include:

- **New points of interconnection amongst stakeholders (Emerging network)** - This will be achieved by innovative leaders who can successfully bring together otherwise unconnected stakeholders.
- **Stronger localized networks (Existing network)** - This will be achieved through bringing stakeholders together to work on initiatives that are realistic, achievable, and sustainable.

These networks will serve as a platform for stakeholders to form partnerships to identify common goals, co-create action plans, and pursue opportunities for further collaborations focused on optimizing the local delivery of SCI care in a way that is meaningful to the SCI community and of local relevance. Through the synergistic collaborations in these networks, we hope efficiencies will be achieved by explicit leveraging of each partner's unique strengths and resources.

Applicants are invited to submit proposals that align to these intended outcomes for improving SCI care in Canada. The following are examples of activities that will be considered, however applicants are encouraged to think creatively and to go beyond what is mentioned below.

- Develop a new regional or provincial network or enhance an existing one
 - Example: Host a meeting bringing together stakeholders to co-create or validate a shared term of reference, an action plan or an implementation plan related to care
- Complete a needs assessment that addresses priority community care needs articulated by the SCI community and that will inform the implementation of an evidence-informed clinical resource
- Develop an implementation plan for addressing needs and priorities related to care identified from an existing needs assessment
- Develop and implement a communication strategy to share ongoing local/regional SCI initiatives and efforts related to care

The proposed initiative must be distinct in its objectives from those for which applicants currently receive funding.

For the purposes of this RFA, stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- Community-based organizations and other charities or non-profit organizations with a focus on SCI
- Clinicians, researchers, trainees, and other persons with specialized knowledge or interest in SCI
- Individuals with lived experience of SCI
- Health authorities including administrative, operational, or other leaders within these organizations

Preferences of this RFA are initiatives that include stakeholders from multiple representation groups (e.g. health care provider, researcher, individual with lived experience of SCI, community organization, and representative of an indigenous community).

Award Amount and Duration

The total amount available for this competition is \$75,000 CDN.

Up to 3 awards will be funded, each for a maximum of 1 year and to a maximum award amount of \$25,000.

Awards can only be used to support direct initiative expenses. Ineligible expenses include:

- Rent
- Capital expenses (e.g. computers, office equipment, furniture, fixtures, etc.)
- Indirect expenses (overhead, administrative costs)
- Travel and accommodation expenses in excess of rates as per RHI's policy (see [Appendix 1](#))
- Activities that are not part of the initiative

Eligibility Criteria

The Principal Applicant or Co-Principal Applicants must:

- Be affiliated with a Canadian organization eligible to hold RHI funds (see below)
- Be in a position which allows him/her to pursue and lead independent initiatives, including the proposed initiative
- Accept RHI's conditions of funding (see [Appendix 1](#))

The Host Organization must:

- Be a [qualified donee](#) registered with Canada Revenue Agency
- Not be a private, for-profit organization

All Team Members must:

- Have the support of their organization to participate in the initiative
- Have an active, meaningful role in the planning and implementation of the initiative

Applicants must disclose all real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Key Dates

Key Dates	Target Date
RFA Opens	September 17, 2019
Registration of Intent	November 4, 2019 @ 23:59 PST
Deadline to Apply	December 9, 2019 @ 23:59 PST
Review Process	December 2019 - January 2020
Notice of Decision	February 2020
Award begins	March 2020

Submission Process

Step 1: Registration of Intent

Applicants must register their intent to submit a full application by emailing funding@rickhanseninstitute.org with the following:

- Name of Applicant(s)
- Name of Host Organization
- Proposed Initiative Title
- Proposed Total Budget

Step 2: Full Application

Applicants must complete the Application Cover ([Appendix 2](#)) and include the following:

1. Lay Summary (200 words max) & 5 Key Words
2. Proposal (5 pages maximum for sections a - f, excluding appendices)
 - a. Background
 - What is the *problem or gap* this initiative is being address? *How big* is the problem or gap?
 - b. Objective
 - *What* is the initiative doing to address the problem or gap?
 - c. Activities Design
 - *How* is the initiative addressing the problem or gap? *Why* are the proposed activities the best approach?
 - d. Description of Proposed Partnership
 - List all partners including name, affiliated organization, representative group (e.g. health care provider, researcher, individual with lived experience of SCI, community organization, indigenous community).
 - Justify all required expertise to be involved (the relevance and benefit for each partner).
 - e. Expected Results
 - List the expected project activities, participation (reach), short-/medium-/long-term outcomes in a logic model (see resources and templates [here](#)).
 - Discuss the likelihood of success in achieving the expected outcomes and how this will be measured.

- Complete checklist ([Appendix 3](#)) of RHI's performance indicators that the initiative will contribute to.
 - Describe potential impact and potential for sustainability/scalability.
- f. Operational Readiness
- Describe experience and qualifications of the team to execute the initiative.
 - Describe the team's ability (time commitment, resources) to deliver the expected results on time.
- g. Budget Request and Work Plan
- Provide a detailed budget (use RHI budget template - [Appendix 4](#)) and provide justification.
 - Discuss actual and planned leveraging opportunities, if any, and impact to project scope, timeline, and budget.
 - Provide a work plan that is related to the budget and that includes a breakdown of major tasks, milestones, deliverables, and timeline in a Gantt chart.
- h. CV of All Team Members
- Detailed CV formatted for CIHR or other formats as appropriate to reflect member's role (e.g. non-researcher clinicians, community organization staff, etc.) may be used.
3. Attachments
- a. Letters of Support (e.g. from institutions/organizations, from partners)
 - b. Additional Information (e.g. evidence of existing relevant partnerships (Terms of Reference, meeting minutes), copies of relevant approvals)
 - c. Conflict of Interest Form signed by Principal Applicant(s) and Co-applicants (see [Appendix 5](#) for policy and [Appendix 6](#) for the form)

Formatting and Submission

Please format your application as follows:

- **Font:** Calibri 11-point
- **Margin:** 1.0 inch all sides
- **Spacing:** 1.5 line
- **Header:** Insert name of Principal Applicant(s) (Last, First) on the right-hand side
- **Footer:** Insert page number on the right-hand side
- **Budget:** Use the RHI template ([Appendix 4](#))
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Those formatted for other institution (e.g. CIHR) may be used

Please compile your application into a single and indexed (i.e. include a table of contents) PDF and submit it electronically to funding@rickhanseninstitute.org before the deadline. You will receive an acknowledgement of your application within 2 business days of submission. Please contact us at the same email address if you do not receive an acknowledgement after that time.

Applicants may withdraw their application at any time prior to the closing date and time. At closing, all incomplete and late applications will be rejected.

Review Process

A team of reviewers will evaluate the applications using the selection criteria outlined below.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Merit and Feasibility:** Is the initiative within the scope of the RFA? Is there evidence of excellence and scientific merit of the initiative? Are the initiative's objectives realistic given the scope, schedule, and identified resources?
- **Strategic Alignment:** Does the initiative align with RHI's strategic plan, vision, and mission?
- **Achievable Value:** Is the output or outcome meaningful and of value? Is there evidence of meaningful engagement with people with SCI throughout the initiative to make sure the outcome is meaningful to the SCI community?
- **Fulfilling a Defined Need:** Does this initiative address a clearly defined need? Is the potential impact of the initiative clearly articulated?
- **Evaluation Plan:** How will the outcomes be measured?
- **Operational Readiness:** Is the team appropriately trained, resourced, and capable of carrying out the initiative? Is there evidence of meaningful engagement with all team members to successfully carry out the initiative?

Questions

All questions regarding this RFA are to be directed to RHI by email at funding@rickhanseninstitute.org.