**The Health System Impact Program**

**A key initiative of Canada’s health services and policy research Training Modernization Strategy**

# **Overview**

The challenges facing Canada’s health systems are extensive, multifaceted, and complex. Sophisticated research and analytic expertise are critically needed to help inform, design, implement, and evaluate evidence-informed solutions. Embedded research is a strategy to accelerate learning health system development and organizations’ use of evidence to inform decision-making. The potential contributions of a well-prepared PhD researcher to health policy and system transformation are considerable. **Consider adding PhD talent to your team with a CIHR Health System Impact Fellow or Early Career Researcher.**

# **The Program**

The Health System Impact (HSI) program provides PhD trainees, postdoctoral researchers, and **(new!)** early career researchers in health services and policy research/related fields with the opportunity to develop embedded research projects/programs that address the most pressing problems faced by health system organizations and to support evidence-informed decision-making. The program provides health system organizations with highly qualified researchers to help address pressing problems with robust evidence.

Overall, the HSI program aims to:

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| Support emerging leaders to develop their embedded research experience, **professional competencies**, and potential for impact | Grow a strong cadre of embedded researchers positioned to play a key role in **evidence-informed health system improvement** that advances the Quadruple Aim and health equity | Develop embedded **research capacity within health system organizations** and catalyze collaborations between academic and health system organizations to contribute to advancing learning health systems across Canada | Support diverse and impact-oriented **career pathways** for health system embedded researchers |

# **Streams**

The HSI program comprises three streams aligned to different career stages:

* **PhD & Postdoctoral Fellow** Streams: These streams are for PhD [trainees](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/34190.html#t2) and postdoctoral researchers who are currently enrolled in a doctoral program or have completed their PhD, and provides a one or two-year embedded research experiential learning opportunity within a health system organization.
  + **Doctoral Fellows** receive a one-year experiential learning opportunity where they are embedded in their health system partner organization for at least 60% of their time focused on an impact-oriented project of direct relevance to their partner organization. The remaining time (up to 40%), is protected to continue with their Doctoral program commitments.
  + **Postdoctoral Fellows** receive a two-year experiential learning opportunity where they are embedded in their health system partner organization for at least 70% of their time focused on their impact-oriented program of work. The remaining time (up to 30%), is protected for academic research.
* **Early Career** **Embedded Researcher** Stream: This stream is for [early career researchers](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/34190.html#r14) and provides a four-year award to develop their role, program of research, and contributions as embedded researchers within health system organizations.
  + Through this 4-year award, **Early Career Researchers (ECRs)** are embedded within a health system organization for 60% of their time. The remaining 40% is protected for other scholarly and organizational activities within the health system organization and/or the university. *The awardee must have a confirmed embedded scientist or equivalent role at a health system organization and a confirmed academic faculty appointment at an eligible Canadian university by the start date of the award.*

# **Funds Available**

* **HSI Award for Doctoral Trainees:** The maximum amount per doctoral award is $50,000 per year for up to 1 year ($45,000 stipend plus $5,000 professional development training and research allowance).
* **HSI Awards for Postdoctoral Fellows:** The maximum amount per post-doctoral award is $155,000 total for 2 years ($70,000 stipend per year, plus $7,500 professional development training and research allowance per year).
  + Note: CIHR, FRQS, Health Research BC and Mitacs will contribute up to a maximum of 70% of the total award value (i.e., $35,000 of the $50,000 doctoral award, and $108,500 of the $155,000 post-doctoral award). Applicants must secure the remaining 30% of the award value in cash from the host partner organization at the time of application.
* **HSI Award for Early Career Researchers:** The maximum amount per Early Career Researcher award is $400,000 total for 4 years (**Salary:** Up to a maximum of 70% including benefits, or $70,000 per annum, may be requested; **Research and professional development allowance**: A minimum of 30% or $30,000 per annum must be requested).
  + Note: applicants must also secure 1-1 or $100,000 per annum, in partner contributions from their host health system organization and academic institution (the amount paid by each is not prescribed and will be determined independently of CIHR). Of the $100,000 total partner contribution, at least $50,000 must be a cash contribution towards the applicant’s salary and/or research and professional development allowance. The remaining amount, up to $50,000, may include research-related supports that directly benefit the applicant’s research program such as: salaries for trainees, research assistants, administrative support and/or other research program personnel. This contribution must be outlined and confirmed at the time of application.

# **Why Get Involved?**

The Health System Impact program provides organizations with direct access to a cohort of the country’s rising stars in health services and policy research and related fields like population and public health. These highly-skilled, research-trained individuals have expertise in cutting-edge methods and analytics that can be readily harnessed to advance an organization’s goals and priorities, generate innovative solutions that are grounded in the best available evidence, support evidence-informed decisions, and build in-house capacity for research.

# **How To Get Involved**

**Anticipated Timelines for PhD and Postdoc streams:**

* **Launch of funding opportunity on CIHR’s website:** Late Fall 2022
* **CIHR application deadline:** Winter 2023
* **Notice of decision:** Summer 2023
* **Award (and funding) start date:** September 1, 2023

**Anticipated Timelines for Early Career Researcher stream:**

* **Launch Date:** Early Winter 2023
* **CIHR application deadline:** Spring 2023
* **Notice of decision:** Fall 2023
* **Award (and funding) start date:** Winter 2024

If you are a health system organization interested in adding PhD talent to your team, contact Erin Thompson, Project Manager, CIHR-IHSPR, [**ethompson.ihspr@ices.on.ca**](mailto:ethompson.ihspr@ices.on.ca).

# **Resources**

Visit the CIHR Health System Impact website for additional information, including profiles of Health System Impact Fellows, career profiles of alumni fellows, and more: [**https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51211.html**](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51211.html).