CIHR UD Meeting (Webcast) August 6, 2020

Hello everyone,

The August CIHR-UD meeting was held by webcast on August 6, 2020. Here are the highlights:

1. ***Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (Louise-Michelle Verrier, SSHRC)***

The Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (CRCEF) was announced on May 15, 2020, as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. CRCEF is temporary and was established to help sustain research that has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. CRCEF is a Tri-Agency program but is administered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The program provides wage support to universities and health research institutions, which are ineligible to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) to help them retain research-related personnel during the pandemic (up to $325 million). In addition, it will support costs associated with maintaining existing commitments, and then ramping-up to full research activities ($125 million).

Institutions include universities eligible for the Research Support Fund (RSF) and associated health research institutes. Health research institutes will receive funding through the universities with which they are affiliated. Non-affiliated health research institutions that are already eligible for agency funding are also included.

The program is being implemented in three funding stages. The deadline for the first two stages of the program was in July. These provided wage support for eligible research personnel; $225 million in stage 1, and $100 million in stage 2.

Stage 3 will support costs associated with maintenance and ramp-up of research activities. The details have not yet been finalized but will be available in early September. Up to 75% of the costs incurred for maintenance and re-start after the pandemic will be reimbursed. Institutions will be able to request funding as of mid-September 2020, with a final deadline for applications on November 15, 2020. An update will be provided at a future UD Network meeting. Questions can be directed to crcef-fucrc@chairs-chaires.gc.ca.

Questions from members:
Will stage 3 applications be first come first served?
There will be a notional allocation for the third stage. Each eligible institution will receive an allocation representing the maximum amount of funding that they can obtain. There could be a reallocation of any leftover funds after Stage 1 and Stage 2.
Are core facility costs eligible in stage 3?
The program was developed to reimburse direct costs of research, incurred by specific research projects. While the institutional costs are not eligible, if those costs are charged to researchers and are included as incremental expenses to their project, they could ask for that expense to be reimbursed.
What is the institutional allocation amount based upon for stage 3?
It is based on the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) total research income data included in their dataset. The allocation is calculated on an annual average over three years for the total research income from all sources (including governmental sources).

2. *Spring 2020 Project Grant Competition*

The remote peer review meetings began August 4 and will continue until August 21. The preliminary feedback that CIHR has received to date has been positive. At the end of the remote peer review meetings, CIHR will send a short survey to reviewers, Chairs, and Scientific Officers to obtain their feedback.

Starting with the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition, CIHR is reintroducing the Notice of Recommendation (NOR), which was last used in 2015 in the Open Operating Grant Program. This was requested by the community and research administrators to provide applicants extra time before they receive their Notice of Decision to consider their scores, ranks, and reviews when deciding whether to resubmit their application for a subsequent competition. CIHR will provide a more detailed overview of the NOR in the coming weeks.

As announced on July 31, CIHR will compensate peer reviewers for dependent care and internet and phone costs associated with participation in virtual peer review meetings. Peer reviewers will be permitted to claim up to $50 per household, per day, with a declaration for dependent care, up to $100 per dependent, per day, with receipt and declaration for dependent care, incidental per diems for days of peer review meetings for phone and internet costs, with justification

3. *Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Project Grant Competitions*

The Fall 2020 Project Grant competition funding opportunity will be launched soon. The UD Network was assured that CIHR has kept the key components of the program the same; however, some changes will be implemented to reflect the context of COVID-19 and are designed to make the Project Grant competition work better for all applicants and reviewers. CIHR has shifted the timelines for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Project Grant competitions to ensure that a gap continues to exist between when applicants receive their results and the registration and application deadlines for the next competition. This will allow researchers to due consideration if they choose to resubmit unsuccessful applications to the following competition.

Fall 2020 Project Grant Competition timelines are:
- Registration deadline: September 16, 2020
- Application deadline: October 14, 2020
- Notice of Recommendation: February 16, 2021
- Anticipated Notice of Decision Date: March 3, 2021
- Funding Start Date: April 1, 2021

For the Spring 2021 competition:
- Registration deadline: February 17, 2021
- Application deadline: March 17, 2021
- Anticipated Notice of Decision Date: July 7, 2021
- Funding Start Date: October 1, 2021

CIHR recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many people's work and personal lives. Applicants to the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition will have the option of completing a COVID Impact Statement (one additional page in their application) to highlight how COVID-19

has affected their work, (e.g., reduced productivity). It will also be important that any potential impact on the feasibility of the research to be undertaken is addressed within the research proposal. CIHR will create guidelines for reviewers when considering the impacts and delays caused by COVID-19.

CIHR is aware that the disruptions caused by COVID-19 are disproportionally impacting early career researchers (ECRs). CIHR plans to extend the timeframe to be considered an ECR for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Project Grant competitions. CIHR will share more details shortly.

CIHR is committed to helping build a healthier future for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, by increasing Indigenous health research capacity. Following consultations with representatives of Indigenous communities, and in the spirit of being more inclusive, CIHR is updating the eligibility criteria for the Project Grant competition. Starting with the Fall 2020 competition, individuals affiliated with Indigenous non-governmental organizations in Canada with a research or knowledge translation mandate will be eligible to apply to the Project Grant competition as Nominated Principle Applicants. Our Contact Centre staff will be standing by to help these applicants create a ResearchNet account, register for a CIHR PIN, and navigate the application process more generally, as required.

CIHR is aware that Canadian Common CV (CCV) requirements are a barrier to application for some groups, including Indigenous Peoples, knowledge users and international applicants. To address this issue, CIHR has been piloting a new PDF CV template in our recent COVID-19 applications. The template, referred to as the Applicant Profile CV, is based on the National Institute of Health Biosketch and has been refined with input from various stakeholders including Indigenous community members and researchers. This pilot has allowed CIHR to learn valuable insights about the process and template. While CIHR is not able to roll out the Applicant Profile CV for the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition, we plan to implement it for knowledge-user roles starting in 2021. More information will be available closer to the launch date.

Applicants who choose to respond to previous reviewer comments will be required to include all of the reviews they received on their previous application—not just a selection of the comments as has previously been the case. CIHR made this decision following feedback received from peer reviewers who participated in the Fall 2019 Project Grant competition. CIHR has updated instructions to applicants to reflect this change.

4. Update on Indirect Support for Students, Trainees and Research Support Personnel
CIHR announced on June 4th, 2020, additional funding to support trainees (students and postdoctoral fellows) and research support personnel. On July 27, 2020, CIHR began contacting eligible grant holders directly to offer a supplement for each eligible grant that they hold. To accept a supplement, the recipient must confirm the following for each grant: that the research and work of trainees and research support personnel was disrupted by COVID-19 from April 1 to June 30, 2020, and that the grant was used to pay the salaries and stipends of trainees and research support personnel during this period of disruption. Note that the value of the supplement will be commensurate with the average level of support provided to trainees and research support personnel over a three-month period. This amount was calculated using historical reported data

on the average percentage of grants that are used to support trainees and research personnel and will be based on the average annual amount of the grant. CIHR also emailed the lists of eligible grant holders at each institution to the Research Grant Offices on July 27, 2020. The grant holders have until August 13th, 2020, to respond to this offer of a supplement. CIHR asked Research Grant Offices to use their internal processes and communications to help ensure that eligible grant holders at their institution are aware of the supplements and the deadline for responding. Once the deadline has passed and the final list of supplements has been approved, CIHR will email the revised Authorization for Funding documents to the grant holders and their Institution. The institutions will also receive a final list of the grant holders who accepted or declined the supplements.

Questions from members:
Can you think about re-enabling the chat function for reviewers as this function helps with the flow?
This is being considered. It was explained that there is some apprehension about making the change during the current remote peer review meetings. One UD member recommended that CIHR implement the direct chat function as well as the delete chat function for remote peer review meetings.

When will applicants receive the NOR for the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition?
The NOR will be sent to applicants at the end of August 2020. The Notice of Decision (NOD) is currently planned for September 16, 2020.

How will the page limit work for responding to reviewer comments?
Applicants will have a two-page response limit. The applicants will also be required to attach the reviewers' comments without edits. This attachment does not count towards the two-page response limit.

Will the Indigenous agencies/institutions also sign on to the Tri-Agency agreement so they can hold the funds directly?
CIHR is currently exploring the option of creating a separate agreement for Indigenous agencies and institutions. However, this will not be implemented for the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition.

Are Foundation grants eligible for the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants?
The support for students, trainees and research support personnel through CIHR research grants will include most active grants, with some exceptions. CIHR is currently finalizing the list of eligible programs and will share the list with members. CIHR confirmed that there are 4363 eligible grants which represent approximately 120 programs.

Are grants from the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) eligible to receive the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants?
The NFRF provided top ups to Exploration grantees, and therefore would not be eligible to receive the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants. NFRF grants are administered by SSHRC, not CIHR.

Are those whose grants expired on March 31st eligible to receive the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants?
Grants that expired on March 31st are no longer active and are therefore not eligible to receive the support for students, trainees and research support personnel through CIHR research grants.

Next CIHR-UD meeting is on September 3, 2020. Bye for now!

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