



Health

Mid North Coast
Local Health District

MNCLHD RESEARCH SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

Guidelines & Frequently Asked Questions

CLOSING DATE:

**8am Monday 25
July 2022**

V1.4 Jun 2022

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Research Support Grant Program: 2022 Guidelines

Background

The Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) Governing Board and Executive are keen to promote a culture of research and innovation in the area. In 2014 the Health Services Development and Innovation Committee (HSDIC) allocated \$25,000 for five quality improvement projects. Upon the success and interest in this program, the Research Support Grant Program was established in 2015 providing funding for MNCLHD staff to conduct locally relevant research. The continued growth and success of this Program is due to the commitment of the MNCLHD to provide opportunities for its staff to develop their research skills and improve the health of our community.

In 2016 the NSW Ministry of Health through the Office of Health and Medical Research (OHMR) released the Translational Research Grants Scheme (TRGS). Examples of exemplar TRGS applications may be found on [the OHMR TRGS website](https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/translational-research-grants-scheme/) (<https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/translational-research-grants-scheme/>). The RSGP is modelled on this scheme to provide staff familiarity and practice for future funding opportunities through the OHMR.

Program Overview

The RSGP is available to all employees within MNCLHD including but not limited to medical staff, nursing staff, allied health professionals and population health practitioners. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with other healthcare organisations e.g. other Local Health Districts (LHDs), Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Primary Health Networks; universities and Medical Research Institutes. The Program is designed to increase research capabilities and capacity within the MNCLHD and improve health service delivery and patient outcomes.

Details of Funding

Funds must be used within the two year period (Sep 2022 – June 2024). Note that the requested funding allocation in Section E.1 of the Application Form will be used for the budget allocation over the two financial years. The funds **must** be expended within two years of its issue.

Applicants may apply for grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

RSGP funding may be used for costs associated with the research project but cannot be directed towards conference attendance (including travel and accommodation), publication costs, capital works, general maintenance costs, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent or the cost of utilities.

Note: The requested funding allocation in the application budget table (Section E.1) will be used for the distribution of funds over the two financial years as applicable. Six months of funding will be provided upon notification of a successful outcome and the remaining six months will be distributed upon receipt of the first progress report (at six months). It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all funds are expended before the end of the financial year. Where all of the funds are not utilised, it is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to liaise with their Business Manager. Funding will be allocated to the cost centre nominated by the Chief Investigator on the 'Acceptance

of Grant' form. The MNCLHD Research Office will liaise with the MNCLHD Finance Department for transfer of funds where allocation is over two financial years.

Eligibility Criteria

Employees of the MNCLHD **must** be the Chief Investigator; however the Project Team is encouraged to involve individuals from external organisations such as universities and/or other healthcare providers.

Selection Criteria

All applications for funding must meet the eligibility criteria which will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

1. The extent to which the project has the potential to generate new and relevant evidence for policy and/or practice and likely impact of the results of the project on disease prevention, patient care or health service delivery.
2. Strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research design, including the ability of the research team to carry out the proposed project in the timeframe.
3. The extent to which the project supports research translation of positive research outcomes into policy and practice, including formal and informal activities for research translation and knowledge exchange.
4. Consideration of sustainability and scalability of the results of the study in the research design and translation plan, including that the study design will provide evidence to support funding decisions regarding the implementation of positive outcomes.
5. Engagement with appropriate stakeholders (e.g. researchers, clinicians, consumers, policy makers and the community) including:
 - i. Consultation with partners and consumers in the development of the proposal.
 - ii. Inclusion of essential partners who will contribute to the conduct and management of the research project.
 - iii. Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders for the dissemination of new knowledge as it emerges, including clear links to the groups that will likely implement positive outcomes from the research.

Out of Scope

- Basic science research.
- Research only occurring in a primary health care network.
- Support for sponsored clinical trials or MNCLHD's participation in externally-led research is **not** funded. Contact MNCLHD-Research@health.nsw.gov.au if you have questions regarding project eligibility.
- Projects where the MNCLHD is not responsible for implementation of the research findings.
- Funds will **not** be provided to support conference attendance, seminars or workshops; unless the workshop etc. is an activity being conducted as part of the project.
- Travel expenses only directly associated with the project investigation will be considered.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting templates will be provided to successful applicants and are available on the MNCLHD Research Internet page under Research Support / Grants and Funding / MNCLHD RSGP Resources (<http://mnclhd.health.nsw.gov.au/research/research-capacity/grants-and-funding/>).

The following reporting requirements are a condition of acceptance of funds:

1. Six monthly progress reports at 6, 12 and 18 months after grant approval.
 - Note: receipt of six-monthly progress reports are required for the release of funds
2. Final report at 2 years after approval or as otherwise agreed.

Failure to provide reports as per the requirements may disqualify the Chief Investigator from applying or being involved in future MNCLHD Research Support Grants.

Grant Conditions

Successful grantees will be expected to fulfil the following conditions of the award:

1. Implementation of findings into practice or policy as applicable.
2. Submission of an abstract or poster of project and findings at MNCLHD Research Conference or similar within 12 months of completion of the project.
3. Submission of project to the MNCLHD Quality Awards within 12 months of completion.
4. Reasonable efforts to publish the project and findings in a relevant journal
5. Notification of the above to the MNCLHD Research & Knowledge Translation Directorate.

Research Support

In 2016 the Office of Health and Medical Research commissioned the Sax Institute to develop a framework to assist grant applications when refining research questions and identifying feasible research methods to answer these questions. The framework provides a number of prompts to help identify the steps required to:

- Demonstrate that a health service, program or policy innovation works;
- Understand the conditions under which it was successful (or unsuccessful);
- Where appropriate, identify how to scale up an innovation for greatest impact.

The Framework consists of two documents and can be found either by clicking the links provided below or visiting the MNCLHD Research internet page under Research Support / Research Roadmap / Where to Start?:

1. [Translational Research Framework](#)
2. [Translational Research Framework: Source book](#)

Additional resources including examples of exemplar TRGS applications may be found on [the OHMR TRGS website](#) (<https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/translational-research-grants-scheme/>)

Further Information

Nicole Raschke, MNCLHD Research Operations Manager: MNCLHD-Research@health.nsw.gov.au or (02) 5524 2490

Key Dates

Call for applications	6 June, 2022
Applications close	8am Monday 25 July, 2022
RSGP Review Panel assessment	Week commencing 4 August, 2022
All applicants notified of outcome	Week commencing 22 August, 2022
Funding Released	Week commencing 5 September 2022

Submission, Review and Notification Process

Submissions

All submissions must be received by **8am Monday 25 July, 2022** to MNCLHD-Research@health.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgement of receipt of the submission should be received within 2 business days via email. If no acknowledgement is received, send a follow-up email to: Nicole.Raschke@health.nsw.gov.au

Review of Applications

A panel will be constituted for the review of applications according to the selection criteria. The panel will comprise a combination of MNCLHD health professions and disciplines, senior staff and external independent experienced academic researchers.

Notification of Application Outcome

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by way of email from MNCLHD-Research@health.nsw.gov.au.

Individual feedback of each application will be provided.

Successful applicants will be emailed the following documentation:

1. Letter of offer.
2. Research Grant Acceptance and Transfer of Funds Forms for completion by the prospective awardee and to be returned to MNCLHD Research within 10 working days of notification.
3. Research Support Grant Program Agreement and Reporting Templates. This may also be found on the MNCLHD Research Internet page: (<http://mnclhd.health.nsw.gov.au/research/research-capacity/grants-and-funding/>)

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply for funding?

Does the Chief Investigator need to be from the MCLHD or could they be from a University partner?

The Chief Investigator must be employed by the MNCLHD.

Is the Chief Investigator required to have a permanent ongoing position in the MNCLHD?

The Chief Investigator may be a temporary employee of the MNCLHD. In this case the Chief Investigator would need to demonstrate the term of their employment at the MNCLHD is at least as long as the time required to complete the proposed project.

Does the Chief Investigator have to work in an area directly related to the proposed study?

The Chief Investigator will be responsible for leading the research. If the Chief Investigator does not work in an area directly related to the proposed study, they would be expected to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the issue being studied. They must also have strong links with key stakeholders in the field and capacity to manage the implementation of the research project.

Can one individual apply for funding for more than one project?

Individuals may apply for funding for more than one research project. Consideration will be given to the workload (FTE) of individuals applying for funding for more than project.

Can a project be co-led by two Chief Investigators?

Yes, two Chief Investigators may be nominated, however one must be an employee of the MNCLHD.

What types of projects will be funded?

What type of research will be considered?

The proposed research may be relevant to clinical, health service or population health practice. Rigorous evaluations of programs, interventions or service delivery innovations are included in RSGP.

Would funding be provided to pilot a surveillance system?

RSGP funding would only be provided for a pilot surveillance system if it could be demonstrated how the system was used to improve practice, enhance the provision of care or directly impact on health outcomes.

Can RSGP funding be used toward the costs of (a) piloting an intervention, and (b) evaluating this intervention?

RSGP is not intended to fund routine project implementation or service delivery. However, research into how to apply, adapt, scale up, fund and encourage uptake of existing evidence will be considered. A pilot of an intervention might also be funded if it could be demonstrated there is a gap between current practice and the best available evidence. The pilot must incorporate a rigorous evaluation of the impact of the intervention on identified outcomes such as the health of patients, effectiveness or efficiency of health service delivery, or population health and wellbeing.

Can applicants apply for RSGP funding for an existing research project, or for the NSW arm of an interstate or national project?

Possibly, depending on the situation. The case will need to be made in the application process. The application form requires Applicants to list all submissions to other funding sources for the project, including both applications already submitted and planned submissions. If funding has already been received, then an explanation of how this application for RSGP funding will leverage or value-add to the existing resources should be provided.

Project funding and duration

What is the minimum amount applicants can request under RSGP?

The minimum grant amount is \$5,000. The maximum is \$15,000.

Will the total annual funding amounts requested by applicants be awarded as requested in the proposed budget?

The RSGP Review Panel will recommend the amount of funding to be provided to each successful applicant from the funds available under the RSGP. The Panel may, at its discretion, determine not to award the full amount sought by the applicant.

How can I use the funding?

Can RSGP funds be used to employ new staff to conduct the research project?

Yes. RSGP funds may be used to pay the salaries of new staff who are employed to conduct the research project or who are providing an intervention component as part of the study e.g. if the intervention is an exercise program, but the trainer is not part of the research team.

Can RSGP funds be used to pay the salaries of existing staff to conduct the research project?

Yes. RSGP funds may be used to pay the salaries of existing staff who will be involved in conducting the research project.

Where there are existing part-time staff who take on additional hours to support the research, the RSGP can supplement additional salary costs.

If full time positions are involved in the research, their salary costs can be claimed only to support backfilling of their role.

For salaries listed as budget items in Section E.1 of the Application form, please ensure the appropriate salary level, on-costs and FTE are specified.

Can Associate Investigators be paid for their contributions if they are not employees of the MNCLHD?

RSGP funds may be used to pay the salaries of staff who are employed to conduct the research project as per the budget in the application.

Can the RSGP research project be conducted in conjunction with PhD or Masters Research?

The RSGP can be used as an enhancement, but not a substitute to existing funding for PhD research. The applicant will need to demonstrate how this project will contribute to the strategic priorities of the MNCLHD.

Are there any criteria or minimum requirements for the financial and/or in-kind contributions to be provided by Organisations?

It is expected the MNCLHD and partner organisations will provide in-kind and cash contributions to support and demonstrate commitment to the research. It is expected these would include, at a

minimum, the facilities necessary to the research that an institution would be expected to supply as a prerequisite to its involvement in research, such as: physical space and associated services; furniture for research staff; administrative services; office consumables that are not specific to the research; and computers and software needed for communicating, writing and undertaking simple analyses. Contributions by the MNCLHD and partner organisations towards additional equipment, services and expertise that are essential to the conduct of the project (e.g. advice on research design, statistical expertise), are encouraged.

Where can the research be conducted?

Does the research need to take place within the MNCLHD?

Yes, the research must take place within the MNCLHD. Part of the research may be conducted outside of the MNCLHD (e.g. in particular settings such as the community or in schools) – see below.

Can the research be conducted across more than one LHD?

Yes as long the MNCLHD is one of the LHDs.

Does ethics or site specific approval need to be granted at the time of applying?

Human Research Ethics and Site Specific Approval (SSA) does not need to be granted for each site at the time of submitting the application.

Section B.5 should indicate what ethics, SSA and other governance processes will need to be addressed with partners as part of the project.

Assessment of applications

Is there any flexibility around the application submission date?

Completed Application forms and attachments must be received by the specified due date. Applications received after this time will **not** be considered for funding.

If the Chief Investigator has limited research experience, will the support of co-investigators with considerable research experience meet the requirements for track record of the research team?

The ability of the whole research team to carry out the proposed project will be assessed based on the broad expertise of all investigators and the details of the proposed project, rather than the individual academic track records of investigators. Projects led by a Chief Investigator with a limited research track record, but significant clinical or policy expertise, will not be disadvantaged where the co-investigators have considerable research experience.

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by a panel of assessors consisting of MNCLHD Senior Managers/Clinicians and Executive and independent university academics. Where applications require further clarification to determine the outcome, the applicant(s) may be invited to interview.

Administration of funding

Can funding for successful projects be administered through a University where the Applicant has a dual appointment?

Funding for successful projects will be transferred to the MNCLHD cost centre nominated by the Chief Investigator only.

Local arrangements for the administration of project funding will be as per the budget outline in the application. Any external invoices generated for payment by the research funding must be managed by the cost centre owner, Chief Investigator and Business Manager. Note that funds awarded under RSGP are not to be used to cover any University or other Organisations' on-costs, overheads or infrastructure costs.

Will funding be provided in advance or will the Chief Investigator incur costs in the first instance and then recoup actual expenses?

Funding as stipulated in Section E of the application form will be provided to the nominated cost centre through the MNCLHD Finance Department. The Research Office requires completion of the Acceptance of Offer for Funding to be returned within 10 working days of notification.

Can the funding be quarantined, for example through a cost centre?

Funds may be distributed across two financial years and will need to be specified in the budget of the application. Any funds remaining in the grant holder's cost centre will need to be managed by the cost centre manager. The Research Office does not have any control of funds outside of its own cost centre.