The Fred Hollows Foundation

Photo: Michael Amendolia

Research Grants Applicant Information Guide

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The Fred Hollows Foundation Research Grants

1. Applicant Information Guide

The Fred Hollows Foundation actively encourages grant proposals from individuals, organizations or consortia, seeking to undertake research on specific initiatives that will advance The Foundation's goals of i) ending avoidable blindness or ii) improving the health of Indigenous Australians.

For the period of 2013-2015 The Foundation's Research Strategy concentrates on six priority areas including diabetic retinopathy, trachoma, cataract, Indigenous Australian health, technology and innovation, and quality of life improvements arising from eye care. For a more detailed explanation of these priority areas please see Appendix 1 in this information guide.

Any research proposal that aligns with The Foundation's current research priorities will be considered for funding.

2. Research Grant Funding

The Fred Hollows Foundation (The Foundation) offers three types of support for research grant funding:

1. In-kind support (specifically where The Foundation is a participating partner for the research project)
2. Co-sponsored funding (where multiple funding donors are sought)
3. Sole funding (where The Foundation is the sole provider of funding).

Research grants of between A$10,000 - A$100,000 value per annum can be sought from The Foundation. Applications for shorter term research proposals (delivered within 12 months) are equally encouraged as longer term, multiyear research proposals. Annual recurrent funding of up to a maximum of 36 month period will be considered. The process for seeking research grants is the same irrespective of the type of funding or the period of funding.

Please note, The Foundation does not fund people seeking to, or undertaking, University higher degrees by research.

3. Submission Dates

Research proposals can be submitted to The Foundation at any time. The cut-off date for research funding to commence during any calendar year is June 30th of that year. All proposals received after June 30th will be considered for funding in the next calendar year/s. Please note that provision of funding will be made on a case by case basis and all approved proposals are not guaranteed of funding in that calendar year.

4. Special Requirement of All Funded Research

All research funded by The Fred Hollows Foundation must include a translation and dissemination plan that describes how the research findings will be used to influence policy or practice in the local and international setting. This plan must be included in the original proposal and should clearly show how the findings will be explained and communicated across the sector, industry and/or local community in which the research was undertaken. This is a mandatory requirement before the disbursement of any funds.

5. Funding Process

Two separate stages are used in The Foundation's research funding process. Stage 1 involves the submission of a preliminary research proposal by the applicant (see further details below). This stage enables The Foundation to assess and compare the quality, impact and alignment of any proposed research with the organization's goals, strategies and needs and make an provisional offer of support. This stage is made up of steps 1-3 below.

Stage 2 (made up of step 4 below) involves the process of discussion and negotiation toward a funding agreement between the applicant and The Foundation's Research Unit. This can be straightforward, or might involve the submission of more detailed information, such as a comprehensive research plan, more detailed budget, or letters of support or other documentation. Recommendations for funding will be made to The Foundation's CEO after Stage 2 and are at the discretion of

The Foundation.

6. Application Process

Irrespective of the type of financial or in-kind support required, any individual, organization or consortium seeking support for a research activity must submit a research proposal for review by The Foundation in the prescribed format. (See the following section/s on the proposal submission.)

Step 1	Applicant submits research proposal in the format prescribed in this guide to The Foundation (see section headings under Research Proposal Requirements). The Foundation acknowledges receipt of application. The proposal is reviewed for alignment with The Foundation's research priorities. If accepted, it progresses to the next step. If rejected, the applicant will be advised.
Step 2	The Research Steering Committee is convened to review the research proposal. Advice is then conveyed to the CEO. The Foundation corresponds to applicants within 21 days of submission of the research proposal with a response of either: i) provisional intention to fund OR ii) no intention of funding. The CEO of The Foundation receives and reviews the recommendations from the Research Unit.
Step 3	Applicants who receive notice of a provisional intention to fund then discuss and provide further information to The Foundation's Research Unit. The research plan and grant reporting requirements are finalised together with the applicant.
Step 4	When the final plan is agreed, a formal agreement for funding is developed and documented.

7. Research Proposal Requirements

All research proposals must include the following:

- Details of the applicant/s: Names of all researchers, their current employers and any affiliations. The contact details of the principle researcher, whom can be contacted by phone and email for a period of 21 days following the submission of the proposal. Please note, this person will be the sole recipient of correspondence from The Foundation.

- Section headings must include a problem statement; relevance (including target, significance and impact); conceptual framework (or theory or logic model where necessary); methodology; methods; ethics; implementation, translation and dissemination plan and references. (See Appendix 2.)

- Summary Budget that outlines the main costs and total grant requested.

- The proposal should be a maximum 1500 word limit (Excluding title, names, figures, tables, references.)

- The submission of a literature review is NOT required in the proposal. The demonstration of peer review and/or scientific supporting literature should be evidenced in other sections of the proposal. (Please cite using Vancouver, Harvard, or APA style only.)

8. Assessment of Proposals

Only proposals aligned with The Foundation's research priorities (see Appendix 1) and provided in the required format will be forwarded to The Foundation's Research Steering Committee (RSC). Each specialist panel member independently reviews and ranks the proposal based on the qualities of rigor, integrity, significance and impact.

9. Feedback to Applicants

The principle researcher/contact person identified in the proposal will be the sole recipient of correspondence from The Foundation.

Applicants whose proposals are not aligned with The Foundation's research priorities will be advised as soon as possible following receipt of their proposal.

Applicants whose proposals are assessed by the RSC will be notified that either:
 i) The Foundation wishes to proceed and make a provisional offer of funding; or
 ii) The Foundation requires further information to assist in review; or
 iii) The Foundation is interested in the research but is unable to make a provisional offer of funding at this time; or
 iv) The Foundation is unable to make a provisional offer of funding.

In circumstances where the RSC seeks further information or expresses an interest, the applicant will be advised of the specific information or reasons.

Applicants advised of a provisional offer of funding, will be contacted directly to discuss the next steps, including what further information (such as a more detailed research plan, budget, other documentation) needs to be provided and to discuss the process and timeline.

10. Grant Reporting Requirements

Grant reporting requirements will be clearly articulated in the final contract and will include quarterly reporting on progress and finances along with milestone invoices, progress reports and presentations as required.

11. Further Information

Please contact The Fred Hollows Foundation's Research Unit for any questions or query relating to the submission of a proposal for funding. The Foundation encourages any interested persons or organizations to contact Beatrice Iezzi, Research Coordinator, directly either by telephone on +61 3 8330 8103 or by email, biezzi@hollows.org

The Fred Hollows Foundation Research Priorities

2012-2015

Diabetic Retinopathy	- Strengthen the evidence for cost effective screening options for diabetic retinopathy (DR) (particularly focusing on Indigenous Australian communities, the Pacific model and the possibilities of telemedicine). - Research to develop and test new paradigms for earlier treatment of DR relevant to resource poor settings.
Trachoma	- Research into the impact and elimination of Trachoma (including environmental and policy solutions in relation to access to water and sanitation). - Experimental research into effective S.A.F.E. strategy implementation.
Cataract	- Ensuring quality outcomes in cataract surgery and outreach models.
Indigenous Australian Health	- Research into cost-barriers to good nutrition for Indigenous Australians. - Home and community hygiene (impacts on trachoma and general health). - Housing policy that supports improved health outcomes. - Research to investigate the barriers to access of eye procedures and services by Indigenous Australians right along the pathway of care.
Technology and innovation	- Innovation into affordable technology solutions for developing countries and remote locations.
Quality of Life	- Research to demonstrate and disseminate the economic, social and quality of life benefits of eye care to individuals and societies, relevant to remote or resource poor settings (at a national level/or in relation to the national health budget) and/or for Indigenous Australians.
Other	- Health systems (including health workforce planning and strengthening; health financing; appropriate technology; health education and management; logistics of good management; leadership and governance) relevant to eye health care in resource poor settings and/or Indigenous Australian health. - Academic research to establish best practice for quality assurance of treatment and surgery including the development and improvement of tools to measure progress in eliminating avoidable blindness. - Research to develop and test indicators, tools and information systems to monitor eye care service outcomes at the program, local, national and regional levels, as part of integrated health management information systems relevant to remote or resource poor settings.

Adapted from, *The Fred Hollows Foundation Research Strategy,* endorsed September 2012.

Supporting notes for Applicants on Proposal Format

All research proposals must address the following content headings (except for the conceptual framework which is only required for certain proposals). Proposals can be submitted using any word processing program however must not exceed 1500 words in total. A dedicated literature review is NOT required however, citations to support the evidence contained within the written proposal is considered essential.

Problem statement

This section must explain what the researchers are attempting to do in simple language. It must describe what and why there is an issue and how the research will help address, clarify or advance the issue in question. Please ensure this section is as clear and specific as possible, with all terms clearly defined and no unchecked assumptions. (Please double-check to ensure who, what, where and when is specified.)

Relevance

This section must explain why the research is important and relevant to the sector. It must also describe how or why the findings of the research will be significant and describe the impacts the research findings might have for policy makers, communities, the health sector, or other industry group.

Conceptual Framework

Where a research question sits within a complex interplay of relationships, theories, events or actions, a conceptual framework must be included. This can be illustrated either by a diagram with relevant peer reviewed citations (especially for causal events) or alternatively, provided as a written piece. It is vital that the location of where the research question sits in the conceptual framework is identified. (If you are uncertain if this is required, please contact The Fred Hollows Foundation Research Unit.)

Methodology

The methodology is the approach to be used to answer the research question/s or in other words, how the research will be done. For example, is this research an experimental study, observational, ecological study, cross-sectional, case-control, cohort or is this based in ethnography, phenomenology or grounded theory, etcetera. This section should be no more than 2-3 sentences long at the very most.

Method

The method is the technique or procedure used to collect the data/information. This must include information on how and where participants/samples will be selected; tested; randomized; interviewed; include sample size numbers. This section must also include information on how the data will be analysed and the specific techniques proposed to analyse the data.

Ethics

A clear statement must be made regarding all ethical considerations specific to the research that will need to be managed as part of the project. Applicants must also define the specific organization and process used to obtain ethics approval. Please be as specific as possible and avoid using generic statements, such as, "ethics approval will be sought from the Department/Ministry of Health". Please describe the particular type of approval and specific committee within the organisation.

Implementation

The implementation section must describe in simple statements:

i)   Who is part of the research team? For example, the names and what types of professionals will be required to undertake and complete the research.

ii)   Any stakeholders that must be involved for the research to be conducted (Note: this is NOT a statement of who will benefit from the research, but rather those organizations or groups that must consent or give approval for the research to be undertaken.)

iii) Any special considerations, such as special approval from a government agency, or community group or other issue.

iv)   Any special requirements for personnel or equipment, for example, replacement of key personal from substantive positions to perform a specific role.

Translation and Dissemination Plan

As stated under the special requirements every application for research funding must contain a section which clearly articulates how the research findings will be used to influence policy and/or practice through a translation and dissemination plan. This section should articulate clearly how the findings will be communicated across the sector, industry and/or local community in which the research is taking place.

Summary Budget

The summary budget can be provided in a table format if preferred. The budget should indicate the funding costs for i) direct labour or personnel costs (such as salary and labour on-costs) and ii) direct operational costs (such as consumables, equipment, travel and other), iii) any other costs to be incurred.

References

A dedicated literature review is NOT required however, citations to support the evidence contained within the written proposal is considered essential.